



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



**TO:** Common Core District Leads

**FROM:** Ellen E. Cohn, Interim Chief Academic Officer, *EEC*

**DATE:** March 24, 2015

**RE:** Academic Office March 2015 Newsletter

### **ACADEMIC NEWSLETTER**

This is the March 2015 installment of the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) Academic Office monthly newsletter. We hope you will find helpful information within the newsletter that will support your district's implementation efforts of the Common Core State Standards as well as other important standards, curriculum, instruction, and assessment work.

### **STUDENT ASSESSMENT**

- **Assessment Participation:**

By federal and state law, universal student assessment is required in ELA and Math in Grades 3-8 and once in high school annually. Also by federal and state law, assessment is required in science once in each school level (elementary, middle, and high school). In Connecticut, students participate in the Smarter Balanced Assessments in ELA/literacy and mathematics. These assessments are given in Grades 3-8 and 11. In science, students participate in the Science CMT in Grades 5 and 8 and the Science CAPT in Grade 10. Some students with disabilities participate in the Connecticut Alternate Assessment and the CMT Science Skills Checklist or CAPT Science Skills Checklist. Both the CSDE and each LEA are legally responsible to administer these assessments to all students.

- **Assessment Resources for Parents:**

New Standards, New Test, New Results – A Guide to Assessment for Parents in 7 Languages. See the attachment accompanying this newsletter.

### **ACADEMIC STANDARDS**

- **Introducing the New Social Studies Frameworks**

There are several upcoming events designed to assist social studies teachers and curriculum leaders as they begin to introduce the new social studies frameworks at the local level. On Wednesday, May 27 there will be a full day session for social studies leaders from local districts on how to help districts to introduce the social studies frameworks and inquiry. Featured speaker at this session will be Dan Rothstein, co-author of *Make Just One Change: Teach Students to Ask Their Own Questions*. This is a critical stage of inquiry in the social studies.

There will be two summer workshops for social studies leaders and teachers, one from June 29-July 2 and the other from August 17-20. During these workshops participants will discuss and analyze in detail the new social studies frameworks and inquiry-based instruction.

All sessions will be held at Central Connecticut State University. Registration details forthcoming. In addition, workshops to introduce the frameworks will take place this spring in various districts across the state.

Click [here](#) to access the Frameworks or contact Stephen Armstrong, Education Consultant, at [Stephen.Armstrong@ct.gov](mailto:Stephen.Armstrong@ct.gov).

- **Next Generation Science Standards Update**

Following several informational meetings over the past year with the Standards and Assessments Committee of the State Board of Education (SBE), an introduction to Next Generation Science was presented to the full SBE on February 4, 2015. The Board will engage in further discussion and exploration of the standards, and has prioritized continued outreach to stakeholders regarding the implications, benefits and challenges of NGSS adoption.

Between now and the end of the school year, local school board members will have opportunities to learn about NGSS through an interactive webinar hosted by CAFE as well as in-person presentations by district science supervisors. We have worked diligently for two years within the science education community, and now will expand our efforts to build NGSS awareness and support among local school boards, superintendents, families, business and industry.

## **COMMON CORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES**

See the attachment accompanying this newsletter.

## **PROFESSIONAL LEARNING**

- **Webinar Series for Principals:** The Academic Office will continue to host a webinar series for principals to support Common Core implementation in schools. The webinars are live the last Wednesday of each month.
  - The next webinar is Wednesday, March 25, 2015 at 1:00 PM. The topic is **Supporting ALL Learners** (Rigor in Classroom Instruction and SRBI)
  - To register, go to: [http://ctcorestandards.org/?page\\_id=5238](http://ctcorestandards.org/?page_id=5238)
  - If you miss the live webinar, you can access the webinars at our Web site: <http://ctcorestandards.org/>

## **STUDENT LEARNING**

- **Unpaid Experiential Learning Program**

The CSDE, in cooperation with the Department of Labor, has announced a Pilot Program for the 2015-2016 school year for the Unpaid ELP. The program allows students (age 16 and over) the opportunity to work in a non-hazardous unpaid internship for up to 120 hours per year. Working with partners in business and industry, schools will be able to provide students with multiple pathways for learning outside the traditional academic setting. Participation in the Unpaid ELP will encourage students to pursue their interests while gaining high-quality skill and career development in a "real-world" setting. Students placed in a well-structured Unpaid ELP

will not only acquire transferrable skills but build a solid foundation for future success in college and career. The Pilot Program will begin with an Informational Session on April 9, 2015, at the Crowne Plaza, Cromwell for districts/high schools who are interested in applying for one of 25 openings for the 2015-2016 school year.

### **DIGITAL LEARNING**

See the attachment accompanying this newsletter.

### **NEW MATERIALS AT CT STANDARDS WEBSITE**

Our Academic Office website is dedicated to materials, resources, and professional learning opportunities in support of standards implementation in your district. This Web site is refreshed three times each week and there is always **NEW** material. Please consider submitting a unit that your teachers have created. Our team will provide feedback to you and possibly feature the work of your teachers on our site! We are happy that our resource list includes work developed by our teachers. Questions about the Web site should be directed to [Jennifer.Webb@ct.gov](mailto:Jennifer.Webb@ct.gov) the Web site is found at: <http://ctcorestandards.org/>

