



STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



TO: Common Core District Leads

FROM: Dr. Dianna Roberge-Wentzell, Chief Academic Officer *DRW*

DATE: August 21, 2014

SUBJECT: Academic Office August Newsletter

**ACADEMIC NEWSLETTER**

This is the August 2014 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 (CCSS), as well as other key standards, curriculum, instruction and assessment topics. We hope that you will forward all useful items on to colleagues and that you will provide us with feedback to improve this communication.

**Webinar Series for Principals**

The Academic Office will be hosting a webinar series for principals to support Common Core implementation in schools. Beginning next week, the webinars will be live the last Wednesday of each month. A full schedule is included in the attached letter to principals regarding our resources. Additionally, the letter describes more resources the CSDE has created for principals, including a guide to classroom "look fors" that may be used to support walk through or other non-evaluative observation practices.

**Smarter Balanced Digital Library Preview**

As you plan for the return of students to the classroom, we would like to introduce the Smarter Balanced Digital Library as a valuable instructional tool. The Digital Library is an online collection of instructional and professional learning resources. It features more than 1,500 resources aligned to the CCSS and vetted by educators using quality criteria. Resources include lesson plans, unit plans, rubrics, instructional strategies and professional learning materials. It also includes collaborative features that allow educators to rate resources and to pose questions and share expertise through online forums. The Digital Library was created by and for educators to support implementation of the CCSS using the formative assessment process. The Digital Library preview period runs through September 30, 2014.

For more information on the Digital Library, please go to [Smarter Balanced Digital Library](#). For access information, please contact your District Test Coordinator.

**Videos to Support Professional Learning for CCSS Implementation**

The videos listed below may be useful in faculty meetings, professional development sessions or at grade level or content team meetings.

Student Achievement Partners' (SAP) Professional Development Modules—designed to support district and school leadership in their transition to the Common Core (school and district leaders). To download these modules, please go to [Achieve the Core Student Achievement](#)

Professional Development on ELA/Literacy and Mathematics—The Council of the Great City Schools released a 45-minute professional development video for central office **and school-based** staff and teachers on the shifts in the Common Core in English language arts and literacy (teachers/school and district leaders). To play the video, please go to [Common Core Works](#).

### **Supporting Curriculum Design Work: Sample Units and Lessons**

In order to access our growing library of units and lessons aligned to the CCSS, please continue to visit our Web site at [Connecticut Core Standards](#). Each lesson or unit is accompanied by expert guidance from Connecticut educators trained in the use of tools to assess alignment. The units feature guidance regarding areas that Connecticut educators may want to adapt for their local context, as well as a quality rating system. **We are in the process of vetting units that have been submitted from Connecticut educators. As your district educators develop curriculum this summer, please provide feedback on the usefulness of these samples and consider submitting your work to be featured on our Web site.** For questions, or to submit units or lessons, please contact [Jennifer.Webb@ct.gov](mailto:Jennifer.Webb@ct.gov).

### **Resources for Communicating about the CCSS in Spanish**

CCSS Available in Spanish—The San Diego County Office of Education, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the California Department of Education, have completed a draft translation of the CCSS for English Language Arts and Literacy and Mathematics into Spanish (world language and SEES teachers/family and community). For more information, go to [commoncore-espanol](#).

### **Assessing Implementation at the District and School Level**

This resource provides a measurement tool for assessing your district or schools level of implementation of the CCSS. This can be a helpful tool in planning next steps for your implementation work. For more information, please go to [ccsso.org](http://ccsso.org). This and many other resources can be found on the leadership section of our Web site at [Connecticut Core Standards](#).

### **Annual update of Academic Newsletter Mailing List**

We hope you find this newsletter helpful in support of your implementation efforts. We would like to reach as many educators as possible with this information. If you are currently receiving this newsletter directly, you will continue to do so in the coming academic year. If you are receiving this newsletter forwarded by a colleague, please e-mail [Elizabeth.Rivera@ct.gov](mailto:Elizabeth.Rivera@ct.gov) and you will be added to our mailing list.