



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



TO: Common Core District Leads
FROM: Dr. Dianna Roberge-Wentzell, Chief Academic Officer, *DRW*
RE: May Newsletter: Common Core State Standards Implementation
DATE: May 23, 2014

ACADEMIC NEWSLETTER

This is the most recent 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 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.

Sample Units and Lessons

Please continue to visit our website http://ctcorestandards.org/?page_id=475 in order to access our growing library of units and lesson aligned to the Common Core State 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 at our website.** For questions or to submit units or lessons please contact Jennifer.Webb@ct.gov.

Resources for Parents

Get to the Core offers a toolkit for supporting parents' understanding of Common Core State Standards. These resources are available in English and Spanish. <http://get2core.org/more-resources-and-information>. Please check out the parent section of our website for more resources, many available in multiple languages. Please let us know what resources you find the most valuable in supporting your community to understand the standards and what other resources you would like to see at this page. http://ctcorestandards.org/?page_id=32.

Summer Learning for Students

The Academic Office will be providing resources for parents to support students during the summer. These resources will be web based and available free of charge to parents and teachers. Please watch for a special communication from our office on summer learning opportunities. Additionally, the Governor's Summer Reading Program materials may be found at our website: <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2683&q=320322>

Summer Learning for Teachers – TeachFest Summer Academy –Tuesday July 29

TeachFest Connecticut: Summer Academy will be a day-long, hands-on workshop for K-12 teachers focused on drafting practical resources to help put the Connecticut Core Standards into practice. Participants will collaborate with colleagues, the Connecticut Dream Team teachers and LearnZillion coaches to create their initial draft, and then revise and finalize their resource via an online PLC in the two weeks immediately following TeachFest Connecticut: Summer Academy. The SDE will then share the finalized work widely across the state. Attendees who complete a final, shared product will receive a

\$200 stipend. This opportunity is open to all K-12 teachers and coaches. Principals and Superintendents are also welcome to join for an administrator-focused track. Sign up to learn more: <http://bit.ly/1i7qs0c>

Professional Learning for Educators

You will find CT State Department of Education sponsored professional development opportunities listed at our website: http://ctcorestandards.org/?page_id=1955 . Our current focus is helping educators build capacity in the new standards and successfully implement their local curriculum aligned to the standards. Another top priority is to help educators get to know and prepare for the Smarter Balanced Assessment System.

Alternative Assessments aligned to Common Core State Standards

Connecticut has been working for the past four years with the National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC) to develop an alternate assessment aligned to current Core Standards. This new alternate assessment designed for our students with the most significant cognitive disabilities will replace the CMT/CAPT Skills Checklist in English language arts and math. [Beginning in the spring of 2015 eligible Connecticut students with significant cognitive disabilities will be administered the Connecticut Alternate Assessment \(CTAA\) in grades 3-8 and 11.](#) In addition to the CTAA, students with significant cognitive disabilities in grades 5, 8 and 10 will continue to be assessed with CMT Skills Checklist Science or the CAPT Skills Checklist Science.

One critical component in the test development process is to study proposed test items and how the test functions through a pilot test. Connecticut has completed the NCSC PILOT 1. We are very pleased that 14 districts across the state participated in this pilot. This group also included a regional district and several state approved private special education programs. Prior to testing, each participating teacher participated in 8 online training modules with associated assessments. Following training and testing teachers submitted feedback. We are very grateful for the time and effort of these devoted teachers. Additional information about this assessment will continue to be posted on the student assessment webpage. <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2748&Q=335214> Questions regarding CTAA or NSCS may be directed to Janet.Stuck@ct.gov or Joseph.Amenta@ct.gov .

Recent Communication from the Bureau of Special Education related to IEPs and Assessments

There are several attachments to this communication related to IEPs and Assessments. These items were sent recently to the Special Education Directors in your districts. They are attached here as well to support planning for all students.

NAEP Update

In 2013, more than 100 Connecticut high schools participated in the second administration of the Grade 12 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Results released on May 7, 2014, show that Connecticut's seniors in 2013 outperformed all participating states in Reading and scored among the top performing states in Mathematics.

Commissioner Pryor presented results to the Connecticut State Board of Education at their May meeting. A copy of the presentation is available [HERE](#). For additional information about Connecticut's performance please visit www.nationsreportcard.gov NAEP 2015 planning is underway. In the coming weeks, Superintendents with one or more schools in the NAEP 2015 sample will be notified. All principals of selected schools also will be notified in June and assessment dates will be provided at that time. Questions about NAEP can be directed to renee.savoie@ct.gov or by calling 860-713-6858.