

FEEDBACK FOR CONNECTICUT MASTERY EXAMINATION COMMITTEE REGARDING THE MASTERY EXAMINATION TESTING EXPERIENCE IN 2014-2015

PLEASE SEND RESPONSES TO kniehoff@casciac.org BY NOVEMBER 15

Our school serves students in grades:

Enrollment:

Demographic information (urban, suburban, rural, regional, CTHSS, charter, magnet, etc.):

Responders were urban, suburban (majority), rural, CTHSS, RESC program, regional, interdistrict charter Pre-K, elementary, intermediate, middle, high schools

Small Pre-K through 900 middle school, 830 high school; majority range from 300-600 students

1. How much time did your school devote to the administration of the Connecticut Mastery Examination? Feel free to describe testing schedule:

Majority of responses were 2-4 weeks; one school reported 8-10 weeks in year one. Individual daily testing schedules were based on access to technology and testing space, and tests required of students

2. Did your school engage in specific test preparation and/or incentive activities for students? If so, please list:

About half of responders said "No"- to incentives in particular. The "Yes" responses to incentives included a "ticket" for effort that went into a daily drawing; earning breaks, walks and other activities. "Yes" responses about test prep included activities included practice test time using SBAC website and digital tools; support groups for 30 minutes daily three weeks prior to testing; grade 6,7 Science teachers visiting grade 8 classrooms; town meetings with students; embedded tasks with packets for students to complete 3 periods per week. Multiple responses were "no" to heavy preparation time as the support was for quality instruction; incentives should not be required.

3. Did your school engage in specific test preparation activities for staff? If so, please list:

Majority responded "Yes". Activities included several one-hour PD sessions; study of Common Core and SBAC practice materials; PD around aligning curriculum and instruction to CCSS and SBA; developing local assessments around item specifications; testing protocols reviewed; attending one proctoring information session. Many focused on the administration of the test, not necessarily exploring the test itself.

4. In your opinion, were the test accommodations for ELL students and special education students appropriate? If not, please tell us why:

Majority of responses were "yes" with a few "yes and no", one "I don't know" and a few "no". Some "no" responses mentioned students crying at difficulty of test; "checklist" students not accommodated; difficulty going from text passage to question windows; EL students new to the country still had to take math; computer skills presented a problem; text to speech became confusing; too many layers to questions.

5. Did your district provide sufficient education for parents regarding the mastery examination(s) and interpretation of resulting scores? If so, please share best practices; if not, please tell us why:

Majority of responses were “no” or “need to do more”. Information was shared via letters home, BOE meetings, parent meetings, forums (interesting that these had little attendance), a parent “CMT night”, practice test to PTO- they were stunned; scores sent home but little interpretation provided; trained counselors on how to interpret scores with parents.

6. Are the results of the mastery examination in alignment with your school’s beliefs about your students’ current progress? Please explain:

A combination of “yes” and “no” responses.

“Yes” included both strong “yes”, especially in math and ELA areas; “due to our internal assessments”; “in a limited way”; “not totally”.

“No” responses included strong “no”; “not totally”; “need to do better”

Multiple responders mentioned students not performing at the level anticipated. Multiple mentioned this as a “snapshot”; that their students need to be measured in smaller increments as well; this is another data point to pay attention to; we believe in curriculum embedded assessments tied to authentic learning outcomes; tests provide holistic feedback regarding overall school trends.

7. Do you anticipate that the results of the mastery examination will have a significant impact on instructional practices in your school? Please explain:

Responses were both “yes” and “no”. Comments referenced need for more years to establish trends; yes in terms of early individual student supports; using data to address use of scientific process; yes to increase instructional supports in math; no as results come back too late; limited as impact will be from multiple student data points; we look at trends; yes due to math scores all teachers have SLOs now in math; our instructional practices are designed to increase student achievement on the curriculum goals not CAPT science test; not for three years.