



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



TO: CT Core Standards Districts Leads

FROM: Mary Anne Butler, Chief Academic Officer

DATE: October 30, 2015

RE: October Academic Office Newsletter

This is the October 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.

Assessment News

SAT replaces SBAC for Grade 11 students

On October 7, 2015, the Connecticut State Board of Education (CSBE) approved the adoption of the SAT as the college readiness assessment for Grade 11 student effective in Spring 2016 in lieu of the Smarter Balanced assessments to measure essential and grade-appropriate skills. The administration of the SAT will eliminate duplicative testing, and ensure availability of the test to Grade 11 students. Additionally, the SAT will reduce testing times as compared to other mastery examinations required for Grade 11 students and provide for a quicker timeline for results. The cost of the administration of the SAT will be paid for by the state.

The CSDE has already identified critical areas that must be addressed in relation to the new assessment, such as the adoption of an acceptable accommodations policy, and communications have begun with the College Board to resolve these challenges immediately.

A letter from the Commissioner of Education to the superintendents will be sent out shortly with more details.

If you have any questions about the Connecticut administration of the SAT, please contact Michelle Rosado at michelle.rosado@ct.gov.

Update on CMT/CAPT Science Individual Student Reports and Scores

On August 19, 2015, preliminary secure district 2015 CMT/CAPT Science results for Grades 5, 8 and 10 were released to Connecticut districts via www.ctreports.com, and on August 28, 2015, preliminary statewide CMT/CAPT Science results were released via the public reporting section of www.ctreports.com. Since then, the test data files have undergone a careful review, and some minor updates for a limited number of students have been implemented. The CMT/CAPT Science individual student reports are now being printed and shipped by Measurement Incorporated. They will arrive in districts later this week, or for some districts next week.

These updates will be reflected on the updated secure and public sites of www.ctreports.com by October 30, 2015.

Academic Standards

Connecticut English Language Proficiency Standards

On October 7, 2015, the Connecticut English Language Proficiency (CELP) standards were adopted by the CSBE. The next stage of this adoption is the development and carrying out of high-quality professional development on the standards and how to use them in general education and ESL classrooms. Professional development opportunities will be available throughout the state and online, and specific offerings will be developed for ESL teachers, general educators, and administrators. The training will address how to best use the linguistic supports for ELs within specific content areas and for students demonstrating different levels of language acquisition. For access to the CELP standards and a significant number of new resources visit www.ct.gov/sde/Englishlearners.

Next Generation Science District Advisory Council Invitation to Apply

As the CSBE moves closer to a decision about adoption of the [Next Generation Science Standards](#) (NGSS), the Academic Office continues work to build statewide awareness and support of the NGSS among K-16 science educators, district and state policymakers and families. The NGSS District Advisory Council (“DAC”) was initiated in June 2014 as a way to ensure that Connecticut school district leaders have opportunities to contribute their recommendations regarding the NGSS adoption and implementation.

The DAC members advise the CSDE on key issues facing districts as:

- curriculum transition
- course sequencing
- professional learning
- teacher certification
- assessment policies

All districts are invited to nominate a district leader to serve on the DAC, which meets three to four times a year from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. in strategic locations across the state. Please contact Science Consultant, Liz Buttner at elizabeth.buttner@ct.gov for information about how your district can be represented on the NGSS DAC.

Curriculum Materials on Labor History – Anticipated Release in the Spring of 2016

A group of classroom teachers, university instructors of labor history, and labor organizers is working to create curriculum materials on labor history and free-market capitalism that will be made available to K-12 classroom teachers. During the last session, the State legislature voted that the CSDE spearhead the development of these curricular materials for Connecticut educators with an anticipated timeline of release in the spring of 2016.

Curricular materials will:

- Include “mini units” on labor history that may be inserted into all units of United States history
- Align with the Connecticut social studies frameworks and include Connecticut examples
- Focus on Grade 5, Grade 8 and high school U.S. history courses
- Include an essay on labor unions and free-market capitalism for the companion document that will accompany the social studies frameworks.

Information about a spring webinar and additional professional development will be forthcoming.

Support Materials for the Implementation of K-12 Computer Programming

There have been a variety of questions regarding the new requirement to include computer programming in the public school curriculum. The CSDE is committed to providing guidance to districts in regards to this Public Act. The information that will be forthcoming will not be prescriptive in nature, rather will serve to guide districts in making decisions at the local level. Guidance will be provided about what computer programming may look like at the elementary, middle and high school level. As a local control state, the CSDE will provide guidance, but final curriculum decisions are left up to the local education agency.

Professional Learning

SRBI Symposium

Schedules and Structures: Practical Considerations for SRBI Implementation

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) is partnering with State Education Resource Center (SERC) to offer this third Scientific Research-Based Interventions (SRBI) Symposium designed to assist schools in strengthening the components of SRBI that are essential for effective implementation.

The Symposium will be held on Tuesday, November 24, 2015, from 9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. at the Crowne Plaza, in Cromwell, Conn.

Robert Travaglini, Receiver for Winchester Public Schools, will be the keynote speaker, sharing his experiences in supporting schools with their implementation of multi-tiered systems of support. Practical examples and common pitfalls to avoid regarding scheduling and the provision of intervention will be highlights of his presentation.

Breakout session topics will include effective teaching strategies to maximize instructional time, executive functioning skills and its effect on student performance, Universal Design for Learning in planning and implementing interventions, writing strategies across the tiers, and SRBI and math.

FREE Registration: <http://srbisymposium3.eventbrite.com>

Smarter Balanced Professional Development Opportunities

The CSDE continues to offer Smarter Balanced professional development opportunities. Currently the two opportunities available are: (1) The What, the How and the Why of the Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments and (2) Using the Smarter Balanced Digital Library to Support Teaching and Learning. Visit the [Connecticut Core Standards](#) for registration details.

Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments

The Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments for mathematics and English language arts (ELA)/literacy will be available to students in Grades 3 – 8 from October 9, 2015, through June 10, 2016. The interim assessments are one of the three components of the Smarter Balanced Assessment System—along with the end-of-year summative assessments in ELA/literacy and mathematics and a Digital Library of

formative assessment tools and practices that supports classroom instruction. For more information on the Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments, visit the [CSDE Web site](#).

Best Practices in Sustainability Education: “Collective Impact: Green School Change”

Tuesday, November 3, 2015, Eastern Connecticut State University, Willimantic, Conn.

Goal: Educators, Health and Wellness Professionals, and School Facility Staff, all working together to improve our schools.

This workshop will bring educators together to address greening our schools. Sessions will include assessing your school’s progress, using environmental education resources and networking to bring about change. Make connections with state agencies and other providers by exploring a variety of topics from school gardens, waste and recycling, energy resources, to school nutrition and wellness plans. The keynote speaker will be Jessica Hing, EPA Region One Clean and Healthy Schools Coordinator, sponsored by the [CT Green LEAF Schools](#) program. [Register »](#)

Innovation Opportunity for Teachers and Students

Reach Higher Career Application Challenge

The U.S. Department of Education (USDE) Reach Higher Career App Challenge calls upon mobile app developers, educators, and students to submit mobile solutions to improve access to information about career and technical education (CTE), help secondary students navigate education and career pathways, and increase the capacity of career counselors to assist students in making decisions about their education and career options. Total prize pool is \$225,000 that consists of five finalists that will receive \$25,000 each with a grand prize winner receiving \$100,000. We encourage Connecticut CTE students and educators to take on this challenge to develop career apps using the criteria that can be found at <http://www.reachhigherchallenge.com>.