



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



**TO:** Common Core District Leads  
**FROM:** Dr. Dianna Roberge-Wentzell, Chief Academic Officer  
**RE:** May Newsletter: Common Core State Standards Implementation  
**DATE:** June 7, 2013

### MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

This is the third 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 and that you will be able to forward onto educators.

Featured in this newsletter:

- **Planning Common Core Implementation in Your School—Tool for School Leaders**
- **Student Achievement Partners Releases New Tools—Tool for School and District Leaders**
- **Technology Readiness Calculator—Tool for School and District Leaders**
- **Videos about the Common Core for Teacher Professional Development**
- **Smarter Balanced Practice Tests**
- **Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS)**
- **REVISED: The Common Core of Teaching (CCT) Instrument—REVISED DRAFT**

#### **Planning Common Core Implementation in Your School—Tool for School Leaders**

This [checklist](#) is a good starter list to use as an informational guide on some of the most critical steps to complete in preparation for implementing the Common Core. It will help school leaders identify areas of strengths and needs by checking tasks completed and making notes about implementation and improvement plans.

#### **Student Achievement Partners Releases New Tools—Tool for School and District Leaders**

Student Achievement Partners recently launched an upgraded [website](#). We know that many districts are already using this excellent source for all things Common Core but wanted to highlight two new resources that may help district and school leaders in the implementation of Common Core.

- [Essential actions and CCSS-aligned tools for school and district leaders](#), which exist within a system of implementation and shouldn't be considered as a sequential checklist
- [New Professional Development modules](#) that are ready-to-use and include PowerPoints, videos, facilitator's instructions, and hands-on activities—ideal for PD workshops, professional learning communities, and self-study.

#### **Technology Readiness Calculator—Tool for School and District Leaders**

A [Technology Readiness Calculator](#) is available to help schools and districts estimate the number of days and associated network bandwidth required to complete Smarter Balanced assessments. This tool allows schools and districts to enter the number of students, number of computers, and number of hours per day that computers are available for testing. It is important to evaluate which computers within your schools and district meet the [Smarter Balanced System Requirements Specifications](#) in order for you to administer the assessment system in the 2014-15 school year. An easy way to do this is by checking your district profile on the [Technology Readiness Tool](#) to ensure that the most current and accurate data is captured. A memo was sent this week to superintendents, asking that you please do so before the next snapshot, which will be taken on June 14, 2013. Please refer to the memo for guidance.

### **Videos about the Common Core for Teacher Professional Development**

These two videos from the *Teaching Channel* may be informative for [math teachers in grades 11-12](#) or [English language arts teachers in grades 6-8](#). Standards Covered: The math standard covered is Math.HSS.ID.A.1, Math .HSS.ID.A.2, and Math.HSS.ID.A.3. The ELA standards covered are ELA.RL.7.2 and ELA.RL.7.5.

These three videos from America Achieves may be informative for [math teachers in grades 5 or 6](#), [English language arts teachers in grade 5](#), or [math teachers in grade 9](#).

### **Smarter Balanced Practice Tests**

Similar to the CSDE Common Core aligned Practice Assessment, the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (Smarter Balanced) has last week released sets of example test questions for grades 3–8 and 11 in both English language arts/literacy and mathematics. The [Smarter Balanced Practice Tests](#) provide a preview of the types of questions that will be featured in the summative assessment beginning in 2014-15, including selected-response items, constructed-response items, technology-enhanced items, and performance tasks—extended activities that challenge students to apply their knowledge and skills to respond to real-world problems. The Practice Tests do not include all the features of the operational assessments; for example, although Smarter Balanced assessments will be computer adaptive, the Practice Tests follow a fixed-form model. Also, unlike the CSDE Common Core aligned Practice Assessment, students and teachers will not receive reports or scores from the Smarter Balanced Practice Tests. We encourage districts to take advantage of this tool as it will help students and parents become more familiar with assessment items found on the 2015 Smarter Balanced assessment.

### **Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS)**

As we make the transition to Smarter Balanced assessments for English language arts/literacy and mathematics in 2015, it is important to remember that the CSDE will continue administering the Connecticut Mastery Test (in grades 5 and 8) as well as the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (in grade 10) for Science. The Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) were recently released and the CSDE is working on an adoption implications study to present to the State Board of Education. In the meantime, there are many things districts, schools, and teachers can do to integrate Common Core and science. For example, this is a video from the *Teaching Channel* may be helpful for [teachers that are supporting the building of science vocabulary](#).

### **The Common Core of Teaching (CCT) Instrument—REVISED DRAFT**

As you already know, the Common Core of Teaching (CCT) instrument will be used to evaluate teacher performance and practices as required in the Connecticut Guidelines for Educator Evaluation and the System for Educator Evaluation and Development (SEED). The State Board of Education adopted the CCT rubric in February of 2010 and the CSDE has revised the CCT rubric, which was developed with input from a team of regional educational service center instructional experts, practitioners and a team of CSDE assessment experts. The *draft* rubric revisions (attached) focus upon Domains 2 through Domains 6 of the original CCT competencies. Domain 1, Content and Essential Skills, which includes demonstration of state and national content standards including Common Core State Standards (CCSS) is intended for demonstration at the pre-service level, as a pre-requisite to certification, but is also reflected and embedded in this rubric in the planning, instruction and assessment domains. Because teaching is a complex, integrated activity, to develop this rubric, the domain indicators from the original CCT have been consolidated or reorganized for purposes of describing essential and critical aspects of a teacher's performance. Further guidance on the observation protocol each teacher is provided in the Connecticut Guidelines for Educator Evaluation or in the SEED state model [www.connecticutseed.org](http://www.connecticutseed.org).