



STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



**TO:** Common Core District Leads  
**FROM:** Dr. Dianna Roberge-Wentzell, Chief Academic Officer  
**RE:** September Newsletter: Common Core State Standards Implementation  
**DATE:** September 6, 2013

**MONTHLY NEWSLETTER**

This is the sixth 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:

- **Commissioner's Back to School Meeting**
- **Smarter Balanced Assessment Literacy—Professional Development Opportunity**
- **September is Common Core Q&A Month—Tool for All Educators**
- **EQuIP Learning Modules—Tool for District and School Leaders**
- **Building Common Core Knowledge—Tool for Teachers**
- **CSDE Common Core Aligned Practice Assessment—Update**
- **District Assessment Survey**
- **Spotlight on District Exemplars**

**Commissioner's Back to School Meeting**

Commissioner Pryor hosted a "Back-to-School" meeting for superintendents on August 14, 2013 to discuss this past year's legislative session, implementation progress made to date, and enhanced support by the CSDE during the 2013-2014 school year. An array of guest speakers, including Governor Dannel P. Malloy, provided remarks of praise for the work educators do each day and encouraged us all to stay the course as we make transitions to new educator evaluation and support systems, the Common Core State Standards, and Smarter Balanced assessments. District superintendents provided insight into their work and offered assistance to all in the areas of Common Core, educator effectiveness, as well as Commissioner's and Alliance District partnerships.

Superintendents received a jump drive with materials from each office of the CSDE; the Academic Office released the new Connecticut Common Core Communications Toolkit and accompanying PowerPoint presentation for internal and external audiences (attached to this email). The Communications Toolkit is designed to assist superintendents, principals, teachers, and other school district officials in communicating with parents and the community at large about the Common Core, why Connecticut adopted them, and how they will be implemented at the local level. Additionally, we are providing (also attached to this email) Common Core talking points for principals and teachers. These tools are intended to be edited at the local level to support communications the way you need and want.

**Smarter Balanced Assessment Literacy—Professional Development Opportunity**

Save the date! The CSDE will be hosting assessment literacy workshops on November 13 and 14 and November 18 and 19. Our team of experts, who is also supporting the creation of the Smarter Balanced assessment, will facilitate two-day workshops designed to help Common Core District Teams in their understanding of the Smarter Balanced claims for English language arts and mathematics. Priority will be given to districts who participated in the CSDE Common Core aligned Practice Assessment.

### **September is Common Core Q&A Month—Tool for All Educators**

Throughout September, Teaching Channel is bringing together top experts on the Common Core to answer questions. Among those answering questions will be Common Core experts from Student Achievement Partners (the entire month of September) and Smarter Balanced (September 15-21).

*Have a question? Here's what you do:*

1. [Register](#) on Teaching Channel (or sign in)
2. Post your question in the [Q&A](#) area and be sure you **tag your question “common core”**
3. When your questions are answered, you will get an email alert
4. Help another teacher: we know many of you have been trying out CC lessons, so jump in and [answer a few questions](#)
5. Tell your friends!

### **EQuIP Learning Modules—Tool for District and School Leaders**

The Educators Evaluating the Quality of Instructional Products (EQuIP) initiative has released its first [e-Learning Module](#). The module is designed to develop the learner's knowledge and understanding of the EQuIP Quality Review Process, which is designed to increase the ability of educators – and educational leaders – to identify and create quality instructional materials aligned to the Common Core State Standards. Specifically, learners will explore what effective observations and criterion-based feedback look like and experience the process of reviewing instructional materials using the EQuIP Quality Review criteria, rating scales, and rating descriptors.

### **Building Common Core Knowledge—Tool for Teachers**

[ASCD's EduCore™ tool](#) is a free online resource portal that houses materials intended to build teachers' knowledge around the Common Core standards. Teachers can watch webinars presented by experts in the field on best practices along with supplemental resources that can be used immediately in the field for their own professional development or in professional learning communities. And for secondary teachers, there are instructional resources from the Literacy Design Collaborative and Mathematics Design Collaborative that allow teachers to transform their classrooms by developing student tasks that will challenge and engage their students.

### **CSDE Common Core Aligned Practice Assessment—Update**

The CSDE is finalizing scoring on the Common Core aligned Practice Assessments. Results for districts that participated will be available September 18, 2013. Separate communications are forthcoming.

### **District Assessment Survey**

The CSDE is conducting an informal survey of the various local formative, interim/benchmark, and summative assessments being used. If you are currently using a commercial product or district-created assessment and are willing to share it with us, please contact Emily Byrne via email at [emily.byrne@ct.gov](mailto:emily.byrne@ct.gov).

### **Spotlight on District Exemplars**

The CSDE is vetting exemplar classroom units and lessons aligned to the Common Core to eventually be shared with districts and we invite you to submit a unit or lesson for alignment vetting. Selected exemplars will be posted on a new website currently under construction. If you are willing to share your exemplars with us, please contact Ellen Cohn via email at [ellen.cohn@ct.gov](mailto:ellen.cohn@ct.gov)