

PERFORMANCE MATTERS

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Industry-Recognized Credential (IRC) Data Collection Begins

In September 2025, the Office of Strategic Planning and Partnerships of the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), in collaboration with the Office of Workforce Strategy (OWS) and a broad coalition of partners, [announced the release of the state's first comprehensive list of more than 300 validated Industry Recognized Credentials](#). The [CSDE Credential Registry](#) will be a resource for districts to use to ensure classroom learning connects with real-world opportunities.

The CSDE hosted a series of informational webinars in October and November to provide an overview of IRCs, explain the application process that allows districts to request IRCs be added to the CSDE Credential Registry, and highlight how data on credentials earned by Connecticut high school students will be collected and reported.

Districts are reporting IRC data for the first time this year using the [Student Achievement Module \(SAM\) within the Teacher-Course-Student \(TCS\) application](#). CSDE introduced SAM in 2021-22 to collect Seal of Biliteracy data. For 2025-26, SAM opened on May 19, 2026. All 2025-26 data must be submitted by August 19, 2026. The Performance Office anticipates reporting IRC data on EdSight for the first time in Winter 2027. In a future year, the CSDE will explore the feasibility of incorporating these data within an indicator in the Next Generation Accountability System.

Career and Technical Education (CTE) Cluster Modernization to be Implemented in 2026-27

On March 20, 2026, the [CSDE notified Superintendents](#) that Connecticut has adopted [Advance CTE's modernized career clusters framework](#). The updated framework will strengthen the alignment between education and workforce.

Adoption of the new framework means that Connecticut will move from having 16 recognized CTE Career Clusters to 14 Career Clusters. Beginning in the 2026–27 school year, the 14 updated Career Clusters will be in effect for all relevant reporting.

The Academic and Performance Offices hosted the [Transition to Career Clusters and Course Code Mapping webinar](#) on April 7, 2026. The session included a review of the new career cluster framework as well as an explanation of the data collection, reporting, and accountability implications.

The CSDE published a [spreadsheet](#) that shows how specific courses are mapped to career clusters through 2025-26 and the new mappings that take effect in 2026-27. [Career and Technical Education \(CTE\) Cluster Modernization: Transition Impact on Next Generation Accountability](#) is an additional resource posted on the [TCS Help Site](#). It outlines issues to consider when planning for and implementing changes.

Performance Office Issues Resources to Support Using and Sharing Assessment Results

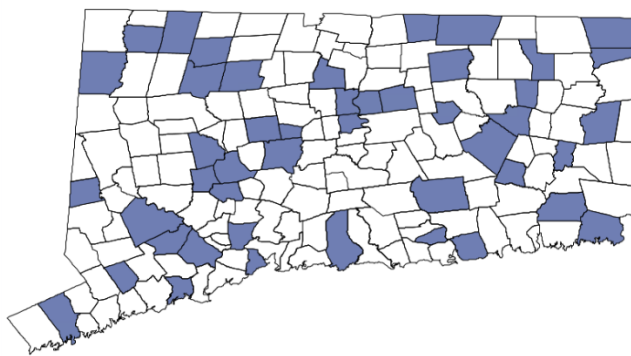
In mid-May, the CSDE announced that preliminary state summative assessment results for Smarter Balanced, Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), and all Connecticut Alternate Assessments (CTAA) are available on a rolling basis through Cambium Assessment Incorporated’s [Centralized Reporting System](#). Results are available for any tests that have been *taken and scored*. CTAA and NGSS results are available almost immediately after a student takes the test, whereas Smarter Balanced results may take up to 10 business days to become available. As in past years, preliminary results for **all** students are expected to be available in the [Centralized Reporting System](#) by mid-June.

The Performance Office has created the [Using Results from State Summative Assessments \(Smarter Balanced, NGSS, and CTAA\) During Release Period](#) resource that articulates exactly when and how results can be released/used. Additionally, in

response to several local requests regarding educator/student communication, the Performance Office, in collaboration with Connecticut educators, created the [Supporting Student Reflections of Learning](#) resource to support educator/student communication that incorporates these preliminary results.

Student Centered Assessment for Learning (SCALE) – A Professional Learning Program

[SCALE](#) is a statewide professional learning, coaching, and technical assistance program to strengthen the capacity of teachers and leaders to design, implement, and sustain balanced (i.e. sensible) assessment systems that accelerate student learning. CSDE is partnering with the [Center for Assessment](#) and the RESCs to develop and implement SCALE. This optional, multi-year program builds on the [assessment audit](#) conducted last year. SCALE aligns with CSDE’s broader vision for teaching, learning, and assessment coherence. The CSDE introduced the program through a [2-part webinar series](#) in March. Districts expressed interest in having staff members become trained as SCALE Coaches during the 2026-27 school year by submitting applications to participate in the program. Selected districts have been notified. The first SCALE cohort will include 135 educators from 53 districts. A two-day Fall Institute is scheduled to kick-off the 2026-27 year on September 14 and 15.



Governor Lamont and Commissioner Russell-Tucker Announce the 2026 Connecticut Blue Ribbon Schools

On May 21, 2026, Governor Ned Lamont and Connecticut Education Commissioner Charlene M. Russell-Tucker announced that six schools have been selected as 2026 Connecticut Blue Ribbon Schools in recognition of demonstrating high levels of academic excellence, creating inclusive and supportive learning environments, and advancing strong outcomes for all students. The schools are:

- [Great Oak Elementary School](#) in Oxford;
- [Nathan Hale School](#) in Meriden;
- [New Lebanon School](#) in Greenwich;
- [Ridgefield High School](#) in Ridgefield;
- [Webster Hill School](#) in West Hartford; and
- [Western CT Academy of International Studies Elementary Magnet School](#) in Danbury.

The Connecticut State Department of Education identified schools for the award using 2024-25 results from the Next Generation Accountability System. All selected schools were designated as Schools of Distinction. The CSDE will host an awards recognition for the six schools on June 9, 2026, in West Hartford.

Read the full press release here: [Governor Lamont and Commissioner Russell-Tucker Announce the 2026 Connecticut Blue Ribbon Schools](#).



Firm Graduation Date and Student Attendance Reporting in PSIS

In March, the Performance Office reminded Public School Information System (PSIS) coordinators that the snapshot date for the June 2026 PSIS collection is the district's last day of school. The Timely (Phase I) due date for this collection is July 1, 2026. Included in the message was an explanation that if a district's firm graduation date pursuant to [Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-16l](#) occurs before the revised last day of school, then:

- report the exit date for those high school graduates as the last day of school;
- ensure that those graduates are included in the June PSIS collection; and
- report the graduates' actual membership and attendance days up to the firm graduation date in the June PSIS Collection.

Reporting in this way ensures that Grade 12 attendance is captured only for days when students are expected to be in attendance and school and district chronic absenteeism calculations are accurate.

Are Your District's Contacts with CSDE Up to Date?

The CSDE uses the [Find Contacts](#) report in EdSight to disseminate important communications to relevant staff in districts. The contacts listed in this report come from three primary source applications: Contacts Manager, the Educator Data System (EDS), and Directory Manager (DM). To ensure that your district and school staff receive critical information promptly, please make sure these contacts are up to date. Not sure which of your staff works on EDS or Contacts Manager? Simply select the EDS LEA Writer and/or the Contacts Manager Writer in the Find Contacts report. The [Report Notes](#) list the specific contacts maintained in each source application.

Thank You for Making NAEP 2026 Possible

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is the only assessment that measures what U.S. students know and can do in various subjects across the nation. Connecticut's participation reflects the continued commitment of its educators, administrators, and students to providing accurate and meaningful insights into academic progress. Local school teams played a critical role in coordinating logistics, preparing students, and supporting a smooth assessment administration.

State-level mathematics and reading results will be released in early 2027. National results for U.S. History and Civics are anticipated in summer 2027. Thank you to all the staff and students who made the administration a success.

The NAEP 2027 administration will include only a pilot assessment in science at grade 8. The administration window begins January 25, 2027, and ends on March 19, 2027. Every school with Grade 8 students has some probability of selection for NAEP 2027. Selected schools will be notified in June and specific assessment dates will be provided in the fall.

Connecticut
2026 NAEP
Administration

GRADES
4, 8, & 12

GRADE
8

SUBJECTS
Math & Reading

SUBJECTS
Civics & U.S. History

★ **101** Districts
★ **186** Schools
★ **7500+** Students Assessed!

THANK YOU!