



DR. DIANNA R. WENTZELL, COMMISSIONER

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Preliminary science scores up in grades 5 and 10

Overall CMT and CAPT Science results continue to be stable

(Hartford, CT) – The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) today released preliminary results of the 2015-16 Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) Science for grades 5 and 8 and the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) Science for grade 10.

Compared with last year, students in grades 5 and 10 showed increases on the science exams, while students in grade 8 dipped slightly. Statewide, 59.6 percent of fifth-graders, 60.2 percent of eighth-graders, and 47.3 percent of high school sophomores performed at the Goal level or higher. These scores represent increases of 4.1 percentage points in fifth grade and 2.0 points in tenth grade, and a slight decrease in eighth grade of about 0.9 points.

The science scores were released just weeks after the release of the second year of Smarter Balanced results, which showed significant improvement in English language arts and math across the state.

“If we want to continue being a state that is a global competitor in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, we need to continue to support high-quality STEM education and make it available to all students. These results show we are moving in the right direction and that we need to do more to ensure all students are prepared to take on the jobs of the future,” said Education Commissioner Dianna R. Wentzell.

Connecticut CMT and CAPT Science – Percent at Goal or Advanced		
	SY 2014-15	SY 2015-16
Grade 5	55.5%	59.6%
Grade 8	61.1%	60.2%
Grade 10	45.3%	47.3%

The results show that Connecticut must do more to improve the performance of English learners, students with disabilities, and students from low-income families. The results show that achievement gaps persist and that there is much work to be done to ensure black and Hispanic students receive the same high-quality science education that prepares them for success in that field.

Connecticut CMT and CAPT Science – Percent at Goal or Advanced, SY 2015-16			
	Percent of Students Performing at Goal Level or Higher		
Student Group	Grade 5	Grade 8	Grade 10
Asian	75.7%	79.1%	65.9%
Black or African American	28.5%	28.6%	16.5%
Hispanic/Latino of any race	34.5%	33.6%	19.9%
White	75.3%	75.2%	61.4%
English Learners	9.6%	4.2%	2.0%
Students with Disabilities	19.8%	19.3%	12.6%
Female	59.6%	60.6%	46.9%
Male	59.6%	59.8%	47.7%
Eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Meals	34.4%	34.7%	21.0%
High Needs	33.8%	33.8%	20.5%

“As we evaluate the 2015-16 science data, we will look for schools that are improving their science performance and try to find successful strategies that can be shared with other schools,” Commissioner Wentzell said. “We are deeply committed to the work of ensuring all students have the skills, knowledge, and critical thinking ability to thrive in school and achieve success in college and life.”

After extensive feedback from a wide array of stakeholders, Connecticut adopted the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) in November 2015. The NGSS is a new set of more rigorous and real world-based science standards for teaching and learning. Like Connecticut’s Core Standards in English language arts and mathematics, NGSS places greater emphasis on critical thinking and less on rote memorization of facts or terminology. In an NGSS classroom, students investigate natural phenomena and real-world problems in much the same way that scientists and engineers do. Mathematics and language skills are applied as students collaboratively reason with evidence and explain their thinking to others.

The CMT and CAPT science assessments are not well aligned to the NGSS. Therefore, the State Department of Education is working with educators, science education partners, and test development experts to develop a new assessment that is aligned to the NGSS. The CSDE expects that this

assessment will be ready for initial implementation in the 2018-19 school year. In the meantime, the CSDE is actively supporting educators through diverse professional learning opportunities to develop and implement curriculum, instructional materials, and teaching strategies that will enable educators to thoughtfully implement these new science standards. The CSDE has partnered with the Connecticut Science Center to deliver innovative professional development for teachers related to the implementation of the new science standards in the classroom.

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