



# NEWS

CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

DR. DIANNA R. WENTZELL, COMMISSIONER

For Immediate Release

July 14, 2017

Contact: CSDE Communications Office 860-713-6525

## State Test Scores Up Slightly in Mathematics

*English Language Arts results decrease slightly, but over 30 percent of districts show improvement  
Half of Alliance Districts outpace state math improvement*

(HARTFORD, CT)—The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) today announced the preliminary results of the 2017 administration of the Smarter Balanced assessment. Overall, across all grades combined, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding the mathematics achievement standard statewide increased by 1.6 points to 45.6 percent. In English Language Arts (ELA), scores dipped slightly by 1.4 points to 54.2 percent. Importantly, the percentage of students meeting the standard in both math and ELA scores has increased over the 2014-2015 baseline year.

“These results are a testament to the commitment of our students for rising to meet the challenge of higher standards and to our educators for instilling critical thinking skills and a love of learning in our students,” Education Commissioner Dianna R. Wentzell said. “We are particularly pleased that preliminary results are available to districts earlier than they ever have been, allowing teachers and district staff ample time to examine successful practices and plan for the next school year.”

	ELA			Math		
	Percent Level 3 or Above			Percent Level 3 or Above		
Grade	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Grade 3	50.8%	53.9%	51.8%	47.7%	52.8%	53.1%
Grade 4	52.9%	55.5%	54.1%	44.0%	47.9%	50.0%
Grade 5	55.9%	58.7%	56.3%	36.7%	40.8%	42.9%
Grade 6	52.2%	55.0%	54.0%	37.2%	40.6%	43.6%
Grade 7	52.1%	55.2%	54.9%	38.6%	41.8%	42.7%
Grade 8	50.5%	55.5%	53.7%	36.6%	40.3%	41.8%
<b>All Grades</b>	<b>52.4%</b>	<b>55.6%</b>	<b>54.2%</b>	<b>40.1%</b>	<b>44.0%</b>	<b>45.6%</b>

Note: The 2014-15 results are based solely on the computer-adaptive test (CAT) portion of the ELA test. This enables a valid comparison of the CAT-only results from 2014-15 to 2015-16 and 2016-17.

During the 2015-2016 school year, the CSDE sought extensive input from educators, advocates, parents, and the business community through the Commissioner’s Council on Mathematics and released a report in October 2016, outlining recommendations for educators, policy leaders, and community members to strengthen math instruction. These recommendations call for developing a clear and consistent understanding of the mathematics standards, providing support and training to

implement the standards with fidelity, implementing interventions to support the needs of diverse learners, and engaging all stakeholders in the process of putting the mathematics standards into practice.

“Every student deserves the opportunity to receive a math education that is rich and rigorous, and equips them with the skills needed to graduate from high school prepared for both college and career,” said Commissioner Wentzell. “The Department of Education remains committed to supporting all districts to implement the Math Council recommendations.”

There are clear bright spots in the preliminary results. In mathematics, half of the state’s highest needs school districts (the Alliance Districts) outpaced the statewide improvement, as did students who are black, Hispanic, or low-income. While scores dipped slightly overall in ELA, over 50 percent of students continue to meet or exceed the standard in all grades. Over 30 percent of districts saw improvement in ELA.

Three years ago, Connecticut transitioned to new Connecticut Core-aligned exams that presented a higher bar for students – with more challenging questions intended to question critical thinking ability and real-world skills. The change was part of a broader transition that involved aligning curriculum, standards, and exams to higher-level thinking required for college and career readiness.

Today’s release focuses on showing student performance and year-to-year results of the Smarter Balanced assessment. The preliminary results include scores from over 98 percent of all students tested.

Final aggregate results for all districts, schools, grades, and student groups, that are suppressed appropriately to protect student confidentiality, are expected to be available through EdSight in late August. Those results will also include student growth results based on [Connecticut’s Smarter Balanced Growth Model](#). Growth is a better measure of curriculum and instructional effectiveness because it evaluates the actual growth achieved by the same student from one year to the next. For example, a growth analysis will look at how a specific matched cohort of third-graders grew in one year’s time, comparing that cohort’s performance in third grade to its performance by the end of fourth grade.

[2016-17 Smarter Balanced preliminary results](#)

###

CONTACT: Communications Office  
Connecticut State Department of Education  
Phone: 860-713-6525  
Email: [sonya.efianayi@ct.gov](mailto:sonya.efianayi@ct.gov)