



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

November 17, 2025

The Honorable Charlene Russell-Tucker
Commissioner of Education
Connecticut State Department of Education
450 Columbus Boulevard
Hartford, CT 06103

Dear Commissioner Russell-Tucker:

Thank you for your participation in the U.S. Department of Education's (Department's) assessment peer review process under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). I appreciate the efforts of the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) to prepare for the peer review which occurred in August 2025.

State assessment systems provide essential information that States, districts, schools, educators, and parents can use to identify the academic needs of students; strategically target resources and supports to meet students' unique needs; evaluate school and program effectiveness; and bolster academic achievement. A high-quality assessment system also provides critical information to parents about their children's advancement against and achievement of grade-level standards. The Department's peer review of State assessment systems is designed to provide feedback to States to support the development and administration of high-quality assessments.

External peer reviewers and Department staff carefully evaluated Connecticut's submission, and the Department found, based on evidence received, that the following components of Connecticut's assessment system have met all statutory and regulatory requirements of the ESEA:

- General English language proficiency assessment (ELP) (LAS Links): **Meets all requirements of the ESEA.**

Congratulations on this significant accomplishment. Assessments that produce valid and reliable results are fundamental to a State's accountability system. Please be aware that approval of CSDE's assessments is not a determination that the system complies with Federal civil rights requirements, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964, Title IX of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and requirements under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The full peer review notes are enclosed. We encourage you to read the full peer review notes for additional suggestions and recommendations for improving your assessment system.

Regarding the other assessment components that were reviewed, the Department found, based on evidence received, that the following component of Connecticut's assessment system meet some but not all of the statutory and regulatory requirements of the ESEA. Based on the recommendations from this peer review and our own internal analysis of the State's submission, I have determined the following:

- Alternate ELP assessment (Connecticut Alternate Assessment of English Language Proficiency (CAAELP or Alternate ELPA21): **Substantially meets requirements of the ESEA.**

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The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

Substantially meets requirements of the ESEA means that these components of the State's assessment system meet most of the requirements of the statute and regulations, but some additional information is required. The list of items required for CSDE to meet all statutory and regulatory requirements of the ESEA is enclosed with this letter. The Department expects that CSDE will likely be able to provide this additional information within one year.

The full peer review notes from the review are enclosed. These recommendations to the Department formed the basis of our determination. Please note that the peers' recommendations may differ from the Department's feedback; we encourage you to read the full peer notes for additional suggestions and recommendations for improving your assessment system beyond what is noted in the Department's feedback. Department staff will reach out to your assessment director in the next few days to discuss the peer notes and the Department's determination and to answer any questions you have. Resubmission of the State's documentation for peer review should occur once the State has all remaining evidence for a particular assessment component.

I also want to take this opportunity to review the peer review status of the other ESEA-required assessments administered by the State, based upon our current records¹:

- General assessments in reading/language arts (R/LA) and mathematics in grades 3-8 (Smarter Balanced): Meets requirements of the ESEA.
- General assessments in R/LA and mathematics in high school (SAT): Substantially meets requirements of the ESEA.
- General assessments in science in grades 5, 8, and 11 (Cambium Science Assessments): Meets requirements of the ESEA.
- Alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards (AA-AAAS) in R/LA and mathematics in grades 3-8 and high school (CTAA): Substantially meets requirements of the ESEA.
- AA-AAAS in science in grades 5, 8, and 11 (CTAS): Substantially meets requirements of the ESEA.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to improving educational outcomes for all students. I appreciate the work you are doing to improve your schools and provide a high-quality education for your students. If you have any questions, please contact my staff at: ESEA.Assessment@ed.gov.

Sincerely,



Hayley B. Sanon
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary
and Acting Assistant Secretary
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education

Enclosures

cc: Ajit Gopalakrishnan, Chief Performance Officer

¹ See: <https://www.ed.gov/sites/ed/files/2024/02/ct-9.pdf>.

Critical Elements Where Additional Evidence is Needed for Connecticut’s Assessment System to Meet ESEA Requirements

Critical Element	Evidence Needed
2.4 – Monitoring Test Administration	For the CAAELP (Alt ELP): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence the State adequately monitors the administration of its State assessments to ensure that standardized test administration procedures are implemented with fidelity across districts and schools (e.g., submission of procedures and protocols for in-person sample monitoring of test administration in schools as well as systems for monitoring computer-based test administration).
2.5 – Test Security	For the CAAELP (Alt ELP): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentation demonstrating detection, investigation, and follow-up with districts regarding reports of alleged or factual testing irregularities (e.g., documentation providing summary counts and agency actions taken reported testing irregularities and test security incidents from a recent test administration).
3.3 – Validity Based on Internal Structure	For the CAAELP (Alt ELP): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence demonstrating the scoring and reporting structures of the assessments are consistent with the sub-domain structures of the State’s ELP standards (e.g., submission of a plan and timeline for addressing high domain score correlations).
3.4 – Validity Based on Relationships with Other Variables	For the CAAELP (Alt ELP): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentation demonstrating adequate validity evidence that the State’s assessment scores are related as expected with other variables (e.g., submission of the planned validity study when completed).
4.1 – Reliability	For the CAAELP (Alt ELP): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentation of adequate reliability for the State’s assessments for each student group consistent with nationally recognized professional and technical testing standards (e.g., for each subgroup, evidence of test reliability, conditional standard error of measurement or CSEM, and classification accuracy and consistency).
4.4 – Scoring	For the CAAELP (Alt ELP): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of the implementation of standardized scoring procedures and protocols that are designed to produce reliable results, facilitate valid score interpretations, and report assessment results in terms of the State’s academic achievement standards (e.g., State monitoring of LEA implementation of requirements for the use of second scorers and recalibration training).
5.4 – Monitoring Test Administration for Special Populations	For the CAAELP (Alt ELP): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence that the State monitors assessment administration to ensure accommodations identified by a student’s IEP and language development plan are provided during assessment administration (e.g., evidence that it has implemented monitoring to ensure students are provided the accommodations identified in their IEP or learning plan, including submission of onsite monitoring protocols, completed monitoring protocols, summary reports of monitoring results, and follow up steps taken with districts to remediate identified issues).

Critical Element	Evidence Needed
6.1 – State Adoption of Academic Achievement Standards for All Students	For the CAAELP (Alt ELP): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evidence that the State adopted ELP achievement standards that address the different proficiency levels of ELs.