Interim Assessments:
Smarter Balanced and Next Generation Science Standards

Contents

Test Format

Connecticut Interim Assessments homepage

What Interim Assessment Blocks (IABs) are offered?

Mathematics Interim Assessment Blocks

Math IABs assess specific concepts. These concepts are directly related to the domains at each grade level. The Connecticut Core Standards (CCS) for Mathematics require that mathematical content and mathematical practices are connected. Students are expected to make connections between content and practice, model a mathematical situation, and explain their reasoning when solving problems. In addition, two of the major design principles of the standards are focus and coherence. Coherence implies that the standards are more than a mere checklist of disconnected topics, while attending to focus will allow the student the time necessary to learn and master grade- level content in order to be able to build upon it the following year.

Each grade has just one math performance task (PT). Remember, this IAB PT block is the same PT as the one in that grade provided in the Interim Comprehensive Assessments (ICAs).

Teachers can use the Smarter Balanced Mathematics Interim Assessment Blocks Blueprint or the Mathematics Focused Interim Assessment Blocks Blueprint to examine the general concentration of each block along with the math skills comprised within each block. Blueprints are organized by grade level and provide details about the claims, assessment targets, and Depth of Knowledge addressed by the items in the block, along with the number of items allocated to each of those categories. Blueprints allow for optimal planning and the purposeful integration of interims aligned to the goals of classroom instruction.

Generally, each IAB can generally be completed in one class period. Administration of the IAB Math Performance Tasks will take approximately one hour.

English Language Arts (ELA) Interim Assessment Blocks

Aligned to the CCS for English Language Arts, the ELA IABs measure readiness in reading, writing, listening, and research. The CCS reinforce the importance of students being able to learn to read, write, speak, listen, and use language effectively in a variety of content areas, as well as to think critically. In ELA, interims are designed to measure reading comprehension of literary and informational text, writing, listening, and research. With minor exceptions in Grade 8, the same categorical blocks are available in Grades 3-8 and high school.

In all grades assessed, writing skills are divided into writing brief texts or brief writes, revision of writing, using appropriate language and vocabulary, and editing skills, the block that focuses on conventions. In the Grade 8 IABs, the Edit/Revise Block is the combination of editing, language, and vocabulary use. Each IAB can be completed in one class period.

Each grade has just one performance task in either opinion/argumentative writing, informational/explanatory writing, or narrative writing. Remember this IAB PT block is the same PT as the one in that grade provided in the ICA.

Administration of the ELA Performance Task will take approximately two hours to complete. Teachers can use the Smarter Balanced ELA Interim Assessment Blocks Blueprint or ELA Focused Interim Assessment Blocks Blueprint to learn more about how ELA concepts and grade-appropriate skills are divided by block, and in turn use those blocks to naturally fit within their curriculum. **For a complete list of all available Smarter Balanced Interim Assessment Blocks, visit the Smarter Balanced Interim Assessment Overview.**

How are Interim Comprehensive Assessments designed and when are they used?

The Interim Comprehensive Assessments include the full array of Smarter Balanced accessibility resources, test the same content, and report scores on the same scale as the summative assessments. They are recommended for use in **rare and specific situations** given the lengthy test time and requisite for administering both the fixed items and the performance task to yield results. For example, they can be administered in Grades 9 and 10 to gauge college and career readiness. They can be administered to students new to the Connecticut Public School System if no other standardized assessment results are available.

Given the comprehensive nature of these assessments, the testing time for an ICA may take as many as 6.5 hours for both content areas. The ICA PT must be taken with the fixed-form ICA test in order to receive a score. Furthermore, scores are not diagnostic like the IABs and therefore provide a broader overview of student performance.

The ICA fixed form contains 36–49 items depending on the content area and grade level. Once the entire ICA (fixed form and PT) is completed by the student, certain constructed-response items in the math performance tasks will need to be hand scored by school staff. Constructed-response items on the ELA fixed form will be automatically scored using the automated scoring engine within the system. For more information about the types of reports available in the Centralized Reporting System, access these short videos. (Note: Scroll down to the bottom of the web page to access the videos.)

It is important to consider the types of data that result from the ICA. The ICA reporting provides the same type of scores as those provided for the summative assessments:

- An overall scale score and a corresponding achievement level are provided in a student's Individual Score Report. This is reported in four achievement levels.

- Each claim score reporting includes three performance levels: Below Standard, At/Near Standard, and Above Standard.

Contact the Connecticut State Department of Education Performance Office at ctstudentassessment@ct.gov or 860-713-6860 for guidance concerning the administration of the ICA.

Refer to this one-page flyer that highlights the use of ICAs as an Early Detection System for students in Grades 9 and 10.

The Connecticut Interim Assessments Overview document provides the current IABs available and the new Focused Interim Assessment Blocks available in mathematics and ELA for the 2023-24 school year.

The Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) Assessment Blocks

The NGSS Interim Assessments are organized by grade band. This organization lets teachers integrate the science concepts outlined in the standards. The NGSS Interim Assessments are aligned to three core dimensions of scientific understanding across Earth/Space, Life, and Physical Science. The core dimensions include:

Disciplinary Core Ideas: These are the fundamental ideas that are necessary for understanding a given science discipline. The core ideas all have broad importance within or across science or engineering disciplines, provide a key tool for understanding or investigating complex ideas and solving problems, relate to societal or personal concerns, and can be taught over multiple grade levels at progressive levels of depth and complexity.

Science and Engineering Practices (SEPs): The practices are what students do to make sense of phenomena. They are both a set of skills and a set of knowledge to be internalized. The SEPs reflect the major practices that scientists and engineers use to investigate the world and design and build systems.

Cross-Cutting Concepts: These are concepts that hold true across the natural and engineered world. Students can use them to make connections across seemingly disparate disciplines or situations, connect new learning to prior experiences, and more deeply engage with material across the other dimensions.

The NGSS Interim Assessments represent Earth/Space, Life, and Physical Science and assess a student's ability to make sense of real-world phenomena. Each interim assessment item is aligned to a single NGSS performance expectation from various content areas (i.e., Forces and Motion, Ecosystems, Earth Systems). Items include a phenomena-based scenario that may include written text, data in tables or graphs, diagrams, drawings, maps, animations, and/or simulations and item interactions that each assess at least two of the science dimensions. There are a variety of item interaction types including:

- **Multiple Choice**: A student selects from traditional multiple-choice options using radio buttons.

- **Multiple Select:** A student can select checkboxes with flexibility on minimum and maximum number of selections.

- **Table Match:** A student creates a one-to-one relationship between two elements. Can be represented graphically or as a table.

- **Inline Choice Interaction:** A student selects responses from drop-down menus throughout the text.

- **Equation Editor:** A student uses flexible entry of one or more mathematical expressions.

- **Graphic Response:** This is a flexible platform to create a wide variety of items from drag-and-drop, to drawing on a coordinate plane, to hot spots.
- **Simulation:** A student conducts an experiment by manipulating inputs until they think they have arrived at the right output.
- **Table Input:** This solicits a student to complete tabular data.
- **Hot Text:** A student clicks on a highlighted word or sentence to respond.
- **External Copy:** A student clicks on a highlighted word or sentence to respond. The word or sentence is then copied into the response box.

Teachers can refer to the Next Generation Science Standards Interim Assessments Quick Guide, for a list of assessments organized by grade band and further information about administering the NGSS Interims. The listing of focal areas can be used during planning and the purposeful integration of interims into science instruction.

Item specifications presented by grade band in the following documents present guidelines for the development of assessment items used to measure the breadth and complexities of the NGSS.

Next Generation Science Standard (NGSS) Cluster/Item Specifications

What types of items are on the Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments?

Below is a list of the available item types that might appear on a Smarter Balanced ELA or Mathematics Interim Assessment. All Smarter Balanced items included in the interim assessment blocks were developed as part of an overall item pool used to supply both the math and ELA interim and summative assessments. Each item across all content areas must pass a rigorous set of quality criteria and be piloted prior to placement on either assessment.

There are short item tutorials available to explain how to respond to each type of item. Tutorials are also available for students during the interim and summative assessments. Teachers can review these item types with students in advance of testing to build confidence and ensure understanding of the test format and item interactions.

- Equation Response: displays a basic numeric keypad or a full array of mathematical operators, symbols, and functions that must be used to demonstrate an answer.
- Evidence-Based Selected Response: refers to a multi-part question related to the accompanying reading passage. All parts must be answered before proceeding to the next question.
- Writing Extended-Response Item: provides a box for the student to freely type a written response. An editing tool bar may be provided with options to format an essay.
- Grid Item: is interactive and allows the student to use a number of mechanisms to demonstrate an answer. Mechanisms include dragging and dropping objects to different sections of the answer space, highlighting or selecting different sections of a given graphic in the answer space, plotting points and creating lines and shapes with action buttons provided at the top of the answer space, or a combination of these mechanisms.
- Hot Text: gives the student the ability to highlight or move text. Words or groups of words can be selected, dragged, and rearranged. The student may also have the ability to highlight specific words or phrases.
- Matching Item: allows the student to click within a table to classify concepts, statements, values, etc., according to the categories available.
- Multi-Select Item: lists a selection of possible answers. The student may select multiple answer choices.
- Multiple-Choice Item: lists a selection of possible answers. The student must select only one to indicate an answer choice.
- Constructed-Response Item: provides a box for the student to freely type an answer in.
- Table Item: displays a table with missing information. Students may complete the table by entering an answer in the text box(es) displayed.

Students can gain familiarity with various item types by participating in a training test, which combines sample items that allow students to practice using the tools and features available within the online system.

Test Administration

Connecticut Interim Assessments homepage

Administering interim assessments has never been easier or more flexible. Teachers can administer interims in "formal" test settings, "informally" as a check-in during a lesson, or as a "pre-or-post" assessment following an instructional unit.

How do I administer an interim assessment?

Interim assessments can be administered using the Test Administration Interface, located on the main page of the Connecticut Comprehensive Assessment Program Portal. Choose the Smarter Balanced or NGSS card and click on the Test Administration card. To enter this interface, you will need your TIDE username and password. Then, choose the test or tests you want to administer and select start session. The Test Administration Interface gives teachers the flexibility of administering interims immediately or scheduling sessions in advance. See figures below.

Figure 1: Test Administration Interface
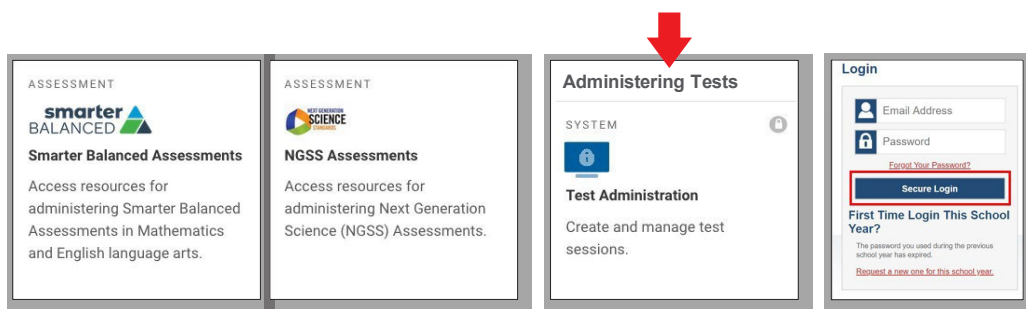
Once you are signed in, choose an option from the top menu bar: Active Sessions or Upcoming Sessions. (See Figure 4 on page 9.) Teachers should choose Active Sessions tab if they are administering an interim in real time and Upcoming Sessions to schedule a test session in advance. Select the test grade and subject to be administered. (See Figures 5 and 6 on page 10.) Once these steps are completed, the system will generate a Session ID that should be provided to student testers. On the student's device, testers will access the Student Interface and enter this ID, along with their full first name (as indicated in PSIS) and their 10-digit SASID to access the assigned test.

For a detailed, step-by-step explanation of how to administer a session, click on the Next Generation Science Standards Interim Assessment Quick Guide or How to Activate a Test Session for Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments. Additionally, the Smarter Balanced Interim Assessment Test Administration Manual includes screenshots and step-by-step instructions on how to administer the Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments online, item scoring, and available reports.

Plan Ahead for Best Outcomes

- Know the purpose for administering the interim assessment.
- Choose which interim will provide the best information or determine what new information you need about your students' skills.
- Collaborate with your technology coordinator in advance to ensure that the student devices meet basic testing requirements.
- Administer a Practice Test using the student log-in and SASID information so that students become familiar with the online test platform if they haven't taken an interim before. When students are familiar with the test platform and know how to interact with the various item types and embedded tools, they will feel more confident.
- Remember that interim assessments are classified as non-secure/non-public. They contain copyrighted information and cannot be posted publicly, reproduced for commercial purposes, or sold.

- Interim assessments provide valuable information for all students, including students with disabilities and children who are learning English as a second language. Prior to testing, consider the specific access needs for each individual learner. There are a variety of universal tools and supports built into the test delivery system that remove access barriers and help students show what they know and can do.

- Collaborate with appropriate staff (teachers of English learners/multilingual learners, special education) to ensure that designated supports and accommodations are set in TIDE prior to testing. Designated supports for students in the general education population can be manually set in TIDE or submitted via batch upload. Designated supports and accommodations documented in a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan in CT-SEDS will sync with TIDE. For more information, refer to the Documenting Designated Supports and Accommodations in TIDE brochure.

- Accessibility considerations are presented in a user-friendly chart to identify a continuum of access needs across subject area. Features included on the Accessibility Chart include:
  - Designated supports (i.e., streamline, text-to-speech of items, color contrast) — available to any student with an identified need based on educator team decision (use of supports should be consistent to those provided during instruction)
  - Embedded and Non-Embedded Designated Supports for English Learners/Multilingual Learners to plan or identify a need
  - Accommodations — available to eligible students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan in the Connecticut Special Education Data System (CT-SEDS).
  - Non-embedded designated supports or accommodations are external materials needed to access interim assessments (i.e., scratch paper). Refer to the CSDE Assessment Guidelines for details.

What does the Test Administrator (TA) do?

- The TA administers interim assessments consistent with policies published by the Connecticut State Department of Education. Refer to the Smarter Balanced Interim Assessment Test Administration Manual testing instructions.

- The TA should actively proctor test sessions and monitor test activity such that interim tests are open only for the minimum amount of time necessary for students to complete their responses.

- The time necessary to complete an interim assessment will depend on the students taking the test (and the specific assessment), so times may vary. The same pause rules are in effect so tests will be paused when applicable.

- The TA actively monitors the test to ensure students successfully complete the test.

- The TA reports irregularities or security breaches (e.g., interim items posted on social media, students sharing items or taking pictures of items, emailed, etc.) immediately to their District Administrator in TIDE.

For more information, visit the Next Generation Science Standards Interim Assessment Quick Guide and the Smarter Balanced Interim Test Administration Manual.

How to set up a Test Session

To set up an interim assessment, teachers will log on to the Connecticut Comprehensive Assessment Program Portal. Select the Smarter Balanced card (as shown in Figure 2, below).

Figure 2: Log in to the Connecticut Comprehensive Assessment Program Portal

Then, choose the Test Administration Card (as shown in Figure 3) and log in using your TIDE username and password.

Figure 3: Navigate to the Test Administration Interface

Once logged into the TA interface:

Figure 4: Activate or Schedule a Test Session

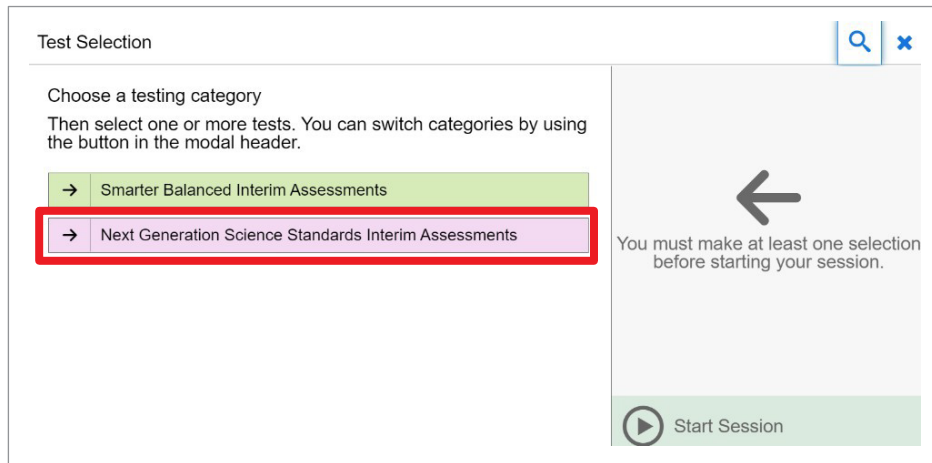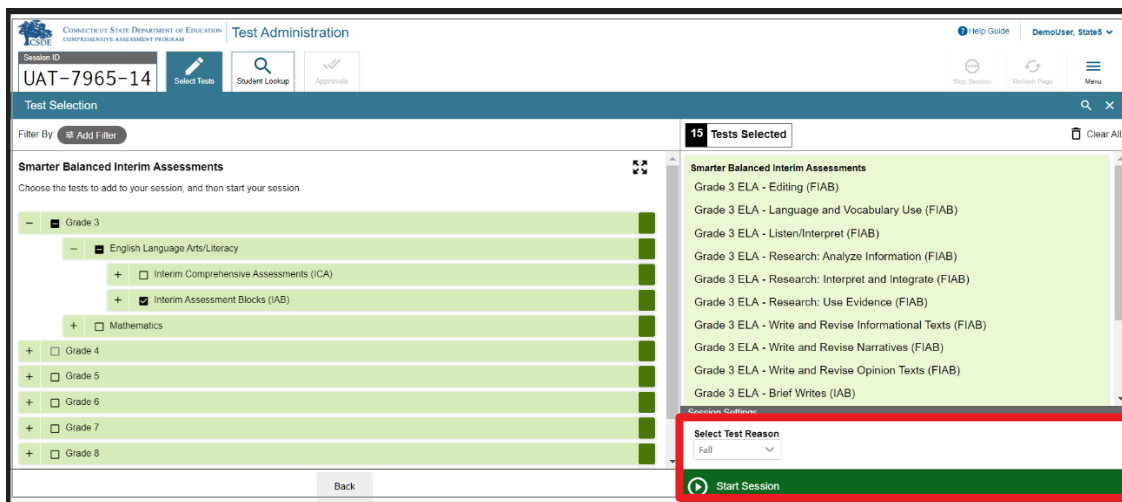**Figure 5: Test Selection Window**

Figure 6: Test Selection Start Session

- Select Active Sessions for immediate interim use or Upcoming Sessions to schedule an interim assessment for future use. (See Figure 4: Activate or Schedule a Test Session.)

- Select the test grade and subject to be administered. For illustrative purposes, we chose Grade 8 Science. (See Figures 5 and 6, above.)

- Once you select an interim assessment, you will receive a warning message indicating that these are interim and not summative (end-of-year) assessments. Click OK to continue.
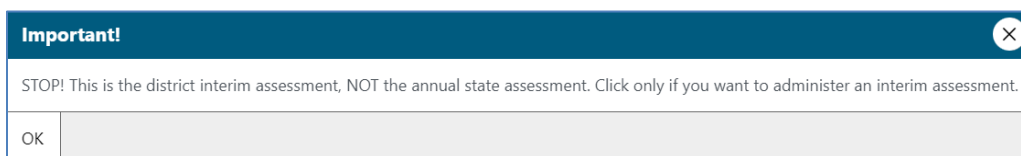
- At this point, the TA must select a test reason as show in the red box in Figure 6.

- Start the test session.

- Select the eye icon next to the student's name to verify student test settings (i.e., designated supports, accommodations) for eligible students.

- Approve students to start testing.

- Actively monitor testing.

- After all students complete the test, stop the test session and log out.

What does the student do?

Prior to testing, work with your Technology Coordinator to install the most recent Secure Browser on each student device used for secure student testing. Details about this process and information related to the operating systems are available on the Technology Resources card on the portal.

Students taking interim assessments in person will activate the secure browser downloaded to their desktop at the time of testing (as shown in Figure 7, below).

**Figure 7: Locate the Secure Browser on the Student's Device**

After following these steps, the Student Sign In page will appear. Students will be prompted to enter their first name (as it appears in PSIS) and their ten-digit state SASID (Student ID). Students should not use nicknames.

In the Session ID field, students enter the Session ID provided by their test administrator. This ID is automatically created by the Test Administration Interface when a test session is activated.

Students select "Sign In." The Is This You? page appears. If all the information on the page is correct, select "Yes" to proceed. The Your Tests page appears (see Figure 8, below).

From the Your Tests page, the student selects the interim assessment they will be taking.

Figure 8: Your Tests Page
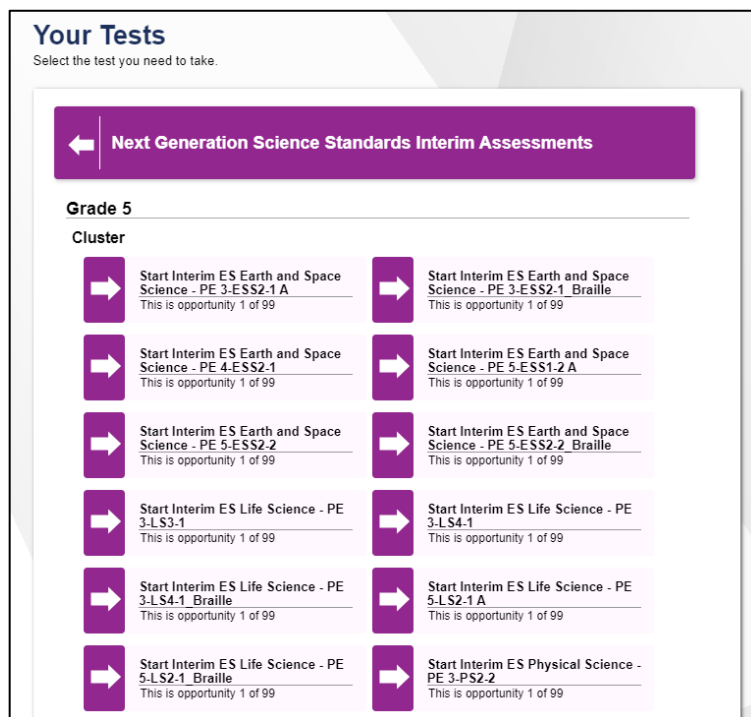
The student's request is sent to the test administrator, and the student is taken to the Waiting for Approval page. The test administrator must approve the student for testing before he or she can proceed. Once the test administrator approves, the Instructions and Help page appears.

Once the teacher approves the student's test session, the student can begin testing. Remind students to check their answers before submitting their test.

Additional Considerations

- Prior to testing, teachers should make sure students have access to scrap paper.

- For students in Grades 6-8 and 11, certain math IABs permit the use of an embedded DESMOS calculator. While the use of DESMOS is encouraged, students may use a non-embedded calculator if one is available at home. If a hand calculator is used, ensure that the device is functional, has working batteries, and that the student is familiar and comfortable with how to use it. Students may not use calculators available on their phones, iPads, or other electronic devices.

    - The use of the following calculators are permitted for certain math items: Grade 5 — basic calculator; Grades 8 and 11 — scientific or graphing calculator.

    - Non-embedded calculators can also be used on the NGSS Interim Assessments if needed (grade restrictions do not apply).

- Periodic Tables are available in Grades 8 and 11 as embedded tools on the NGSS Assessments if applicable. A Spanish version is available to students who have Spanish presentation set in TIDE.

    - Non-embedded versions are available in English or Spanish and can be downloaded, printed, and distributed as needed.

Resources

Smarter Balanced: Interim Assessment Test Administration Manual

Next Generation Science Standards Interim Assessments Quick Guide

The Relationship between Student Participation on the Smarter Balanced Interim Assessment Blocks and Student Growth on the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment

Smarter Balanced Interim Assessment Overview

Scoring and Reporting

Connecticut Interim Assessments homepage

What are performance levels?

Performance levels are only reported on Smarter Balanced ELA and Mathematics Interim Assessments.

- For both ELA and math assessment claims, students are assigned to one of three performance categories: Below Standard, Approaching Standard, or Above Standard.

- In ELA/literacy, performance categories are reported for three assessment claims (Reading; Listening; and Writing and Research/Inquiry).

- In mathematics, performance categories are reported for three assessment claims (Concepts and Procedures; Communicating Reasoning; and Problem Solving and Modeling and Data Analysis).

For all NGSS Interim Assessments, scores are provided as raw scores and percent correct. Teachers are also able to access the scoring assertions for each item cluster to see how the item cluster was scored. Because no hand scoring is required for the NGSS Interim Assessments, results of the assessments will be available in real time in the Centralized Reporting System as soon as the student submits the test. Teachers can view the scores for the students who were included in a test session that they proctored or for students that they are associated with by a roster. No scale scores or achievement levels will be made available for these assessments. For more information on NGSS scoring, read the Next Generation Science Standards Interim Assessments Quick Guide.

A student's performance category for an assessment claim is derived from the student's performance on the items linked to that claim. These performance categories contain information about a student's strengths and weaknesses that may be useful to parents and teachers.

The three Performance Categories are explained below:

Below Standard: The target performance is below the proficiency standard. The group of students performed below the proficiency standard on this target.

Approaching Standard: The target performance is near the proficiency standard. The group of students performed near the proficiency standard on this target.

Above Standard: The target performance is above the proficiency standard. The group of students performed above the proficiency standard on this target.

Figure 10: Performance Category by Scale Score Example
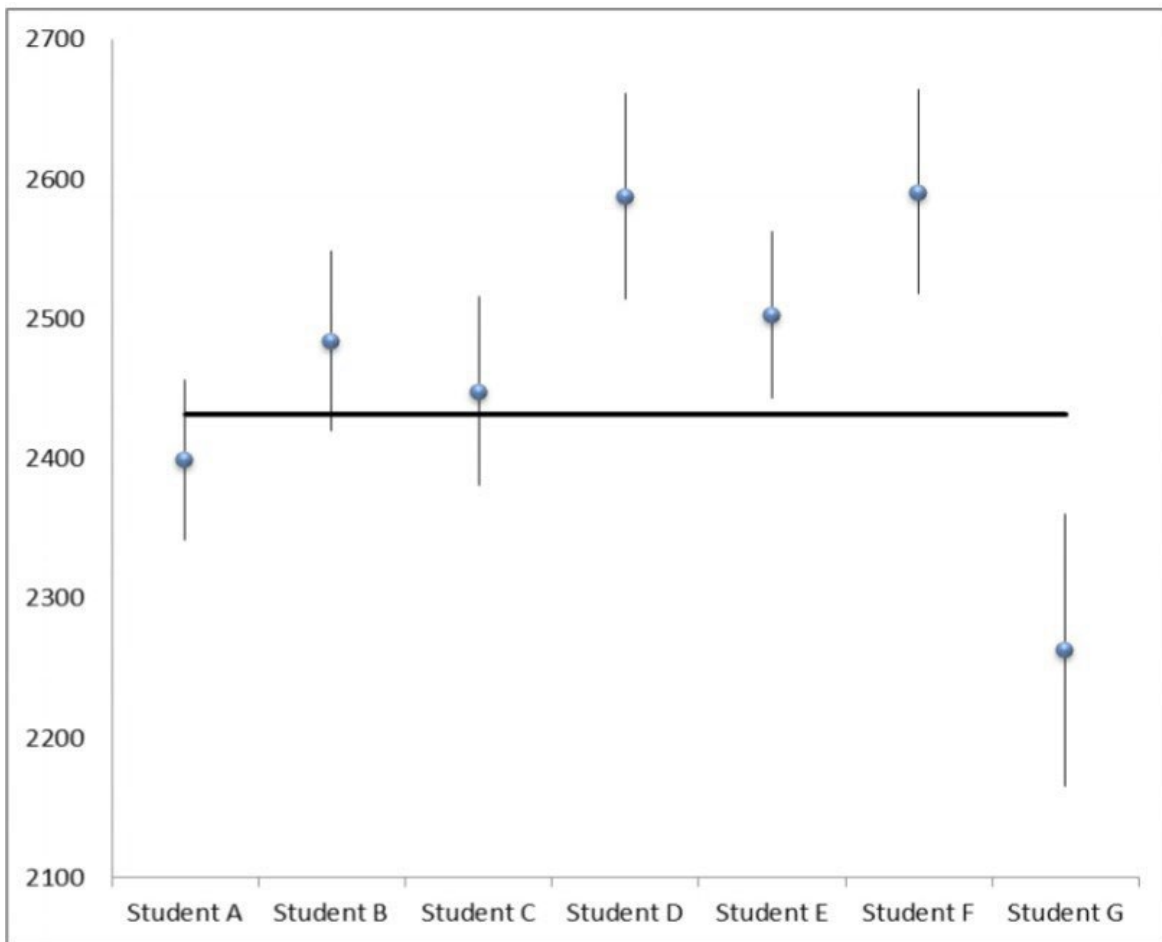
The figure above shows the scale scores for seven different students. The scale scores are represented by the blue dots. The vertical lines above and below the blue dots represent the confidence interval for the IAB scale score for each student. Because the Standard Error of Measurement represents the extent of uncertainty in a student's scale score, this confidence interval is established as 1.5 times the Standard Error of Measurement for each student, both above and below the IAB scale score for that student.

The black **horizontal line** represents the Grade 3 English Language Arts overall threshold score that divides Achievement Level 2 from Level 3. This score is 2432; it is the minimum overall vertical scale score needed on the Grade 3 ELA test for a student to be classified in Achievement Level 3.

- If a student's IAB scale score and confidence interval are entirely **below** the horizontal line, then that student is said to be performing "Below Standard" on the IAB. See Student G.

- If a student's IAB scale score and confidence interval **touch** the horizontal line, then that student is said to be performing "Approaching Standard" on that IAB. See Students A, B, and C.

- If a student's IAB scale score and confidence interval are **entirely above** the horizontal line, then that student is said to be performing "Above Standard" on that IAB. See Students D, E, and F.

For a more detailed explanation of the Smarter Balanced ELA and Mathematics Performance Categories, visit the presentation entitled Determining the Interim Assessment Block (IAB) Performance Categories.

Automated Scoring

Both the ICA and the IABs contain test items that are scored by the test delivery engine. There are also short-text, constructed-response and full-write items on both assessments that are scored by the system. All scores generated by the scoring engine can be changed if a teacher disagrees with the score provided based on the scoring rubrics and anchor papers available in the Centralized Reporting System.

In the math performance tasks, some item-dependent responses will need to be scored by hand. Those items, as well as the training and scoring materials, are available in the Centralized Reporting System. To learn more about automated scoring on the interim assessments read the Frequently Asked Questions: Smarter Balanced Interim Automated Scoring document.

Answer Keys

Smarter Balanced ELA and Mathematics Interim Assessment Scoring Guides for constructed-response items under General Resources on the TIDE Home Screen. Answer keys for the NGSS Interim Assessments are also located in the same folder: General Resources.

Figure 11: Image of TIDE General Resources

All answer keys for Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments are now available in the Interim Assessment Item Portal located in Tools for Teachers. To learn more, review the Creating an Answer Key Document Using the Interim Assessment Item Portal (IAIP).

All item responses are provided for NGSS Interims in the Assessment Viewing Application (AVA) as well as the Centralized Reporting System.

Answer Keys are available for the NGSS practice tests:

Grade 5 NGSS Practice Test Answer Key

Grade 8 NGSS Practice Test Answer Key

Grade 11 NGSS Practice Test Answer Key

Data from the Centralized Reporting System (CRS)

The Centralized Reporting System houses all test scores for the students in your district or classroom. Depending on your user level, you will have access to summative and interim scores by logging into the Connecticut Comprehensive Assessment Portal and choosing the CRS card.

Figure 12: The Centralized Reporting System Card
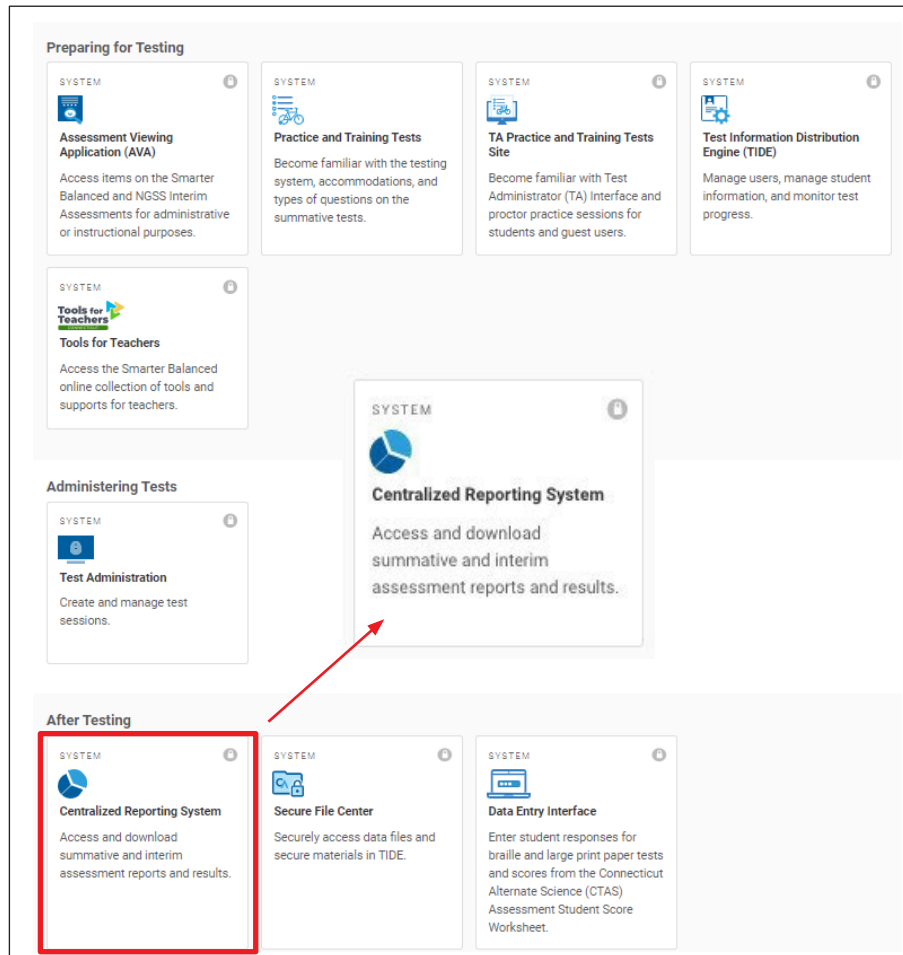
The system allows you to view current and past data by simply changing the reporting time period in the settings.

Figure 13: CRS Change Reporting Time Period
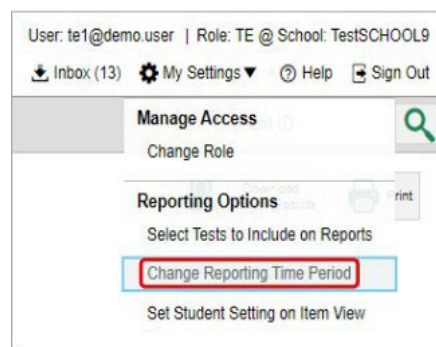
From the dashboard, you will find aggregated data from the assessments highlighted. To search other assessments, simply click on the Test Group Filter on the left side of the screen and choose between NGSS or Smarter Balanced Interim or Summative Assessments; it's that simple! To find instructions on how to change existing Test Reasons, visit the Centralized Reporting System User Guide.

Figure 14: Dashboard Filters
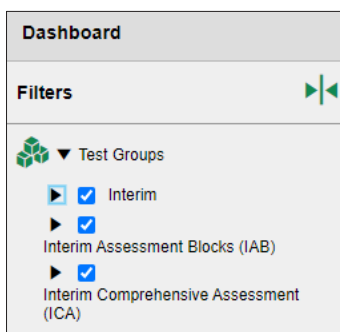
Educators can review scores by overall performance, by class rosters, or by individual students; and Individual Score Reports (ISRs) can be printed for parents. The system also allows the review of each item in an interim assessment, and the review of each child's response to that item.

Data can be downloaded to review or compare, allowing educators to adjust their teaching as necessary. All features of the CRS have been highlighted in a series of brief training videos. When the initial video begins, roll your cursor over the left side of the screen to view the full library of options.

Video: How to Analyze Basic Interim Assessment Reports

Video: How to Use the Advanced Features of the Reporting System to View Your Interim Assessment Data

For information on how to access the CRS and use the variety of tools and features in this system, review the Centralized Reporting System User Guide.

Universal Tools, Designated Supports, and Accommodations

Connecticut Interim Assessments homepage

Figure 15: Accessibility Chart

2024-25 Accessibility Features for Connecticut Smarter Balanced and Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) Assessments

Universal Tools — Available to All Students		Designated Supports — Available to Any Student With a Need Determined by Educator Teams		Accommodations — Available to Students with an IEP or Section 504 Plan	
Embedded	**Non-Embedded**	**Embedded**	**Non-Embedded**	**Embedded**	**Non-Embedded**
Digital Notepad	Scratch Paper/whiteboard with marker	Print Size Online	Magnification	Permissive Mode (compatible third-party accessibility software)	
		Color Contrast	Color Contrast	Refreshable Braille	
		Masking	Color Overlay	Braille Type (UEB/UEB Nemeth)	Braille Booklet (UEB/UEB Nemeth)
		Mouse Pointer			Large Print Booklet
English Glossary ^		Streamline	Read Aloud (English) ELA Items, Math and Science Stimuli and Items ~ + Review Read Aloud Guidelines; NGSS Read Aloud Guidelines	American Sign Language Video (ELA Listening, Math) ^	Human Signer/Visual Support for ELA Items and Math/Science Stimuli and Items # ~ +
Expanded Passages/Stimuli/Items		Text-to-Speech- ELA Items (NOT ELA Reading Passages), Math and Science Stimuli and Items			
Highlighter		Text-to-Speech-Spanish (Math, Science Stimuli and Items) *	Read Aloud in Spanish (Math, Science) * ~ + Review Guidelines for Spanish Read Aloud of Stimuli and Items		Human Signer/Visual Support for ELA Reading Passages (Grades 3-8) # ~ +
Keyboard Commands		Spanish Presentation (Math, Science) (Toggle) *		Braille/Audio Transcription (ELA Listening) +	
Line Reader				Closed Captioning (ELA Listening)	
Mark for Review		Translations Glossary (Math) (Includes Illustration Glossary as an available language support) *	Translation Glossary (Math) (Includes Illustrative Glossary as an available language support) (Note: Requires large-print test booklet and must be requested through CAI Help Desk.) *	Text-to-Speech ELA Reading Passages (Grades 3-8); Complete the Decision Guidelines for Text-to-Speech of the Smarter Balanced ELA Reading Passages	Read Aloud ELA Reading Passages (Grades 3-8) # ~ + Complete the Documented Evidence for a Read Aloud of the Smarter Balanced ELA Reading Passages
Math Tools					
Writing Tools					
Strikethrough					Alternate Response Options
Zoom		Turn off any universal accessibility tool			
Desmos Calculator (Math Segment 1 ONLY, Grades 6-8; Science Grades 5, 8, and 11	Calculator (Science Grades 5, 8, &11)		Smarter Balanced Translated Test Directions (Math, ELA) * ^	Word Prediction	
				Speech-to-Text +	Scribe # ~ +
			Bilingual Dictionary (Science) *		Abacus
			Simplified Test Directions (Test Administration Manual for Math and ELA) ^ +		(Braille/Talking) Specialized Calculator (Math Grades 6-8 Segment 1 ONLY; Science Grades 5, 8, & 11) +
NGSS Periodic Table (Grades 8 & 11) English and Spanish	NGSS Periodic Table (Grades 8 & 11) English and Spanish *		Native Language Reader of Test Directions (Test Administration Manual for Math, ELA, Science) * +		Calculator (Math Grades 6-8 Segment 1 ONLY) #
					Multiplication Table (Grades 3-8)
Breaks			Translated Test Directions in ASL (Test Administration Manual for Math, ELA, Science) +		100s Number Table (Grades 3-8)
					Math Manipulatives (Grades 3-8) # +
Refer to the CSDE Assessment Guidelines for detailed information on universal tools, supports, and accommodations.			Printed Test Directions in English (Test Administration Manual for Math, ELA, Science)		Print on Demand # + (Contact the CSDE)
			Separate Setting		Medical Device (e.g., glucose monitor)
			Amplification +		Customized Medical Accommodations # ~ + (Contact the CSDE)
			Noise Buffer		

Key

^ NOT available for Science

* Suggested for English learners/multilingual learners (ELs/MLs)

+ Individual Test Setting

Special Documented Accommodation

~ Requires Trained Educator

To support online testing, a variety of built-in **universal tools** delivered through the online computer platform are available to ALL students. Some universal tools are available for all interim assessments, while others may be content specific (e.g., tools for Math or Science). Universal tools can be embedded, which means they are provided by the test delivery interface and simply need to be activated by the student when needed; while non-embedded universal tools are those materials provided to the student by the teacher (e.g., scrap paper, hand-held calculator). Embedded universal tools include a digital note pad for notetaking, use of a highlighter, or tools for marking item responses, such as a strikethrough.

More specialized supports, known as **designated supports**, are available to students when a need is determined by an educator team with input from the student and parent/guardian. These might include text-to-speech of test items or the Translated Glossary for mathematics for English learners/multilingual learners. Designated supports should match student need and provide accessibility supports that promote student independence. Be aware that for students with and IEP or Section 504 Plan designated supports need to be documented within CT-SEDS.

An **accommodation** is a change made to teaching or testing procedures to provide a student with access to information and create an equal opportunity to demonstrate knowledge and skills. Available to eligible students as determined by their IEP or a Section 504 Plan, testing accommodations are changes to how students are tested but not what a test measures. The use of accommodations should be consistent with those changes or adjustments made to the delivery of classroom instruction or instructional materials. Figure 15 displays the varieties of tools, supports, and accommodations available to students.

During instruction, students may use Accessible Education Materials and **assistive** technology or other supplementary aids and services. These aids should be considered prior to test administration to ensure the student has the greatest access when taking an interim assessment. It is recommended that assistive technology be tested for functionality with the test delivery interface prior to testing to ensure the best outcomes.

Refer to the Smarter Balanced Braille Options for information on refreshable braille display and embossing items.

Both embedded and non-embedded designated supports for general education students and English learners/multilingual learners (ELs/MLs) eligible for language supports must be manually entered or uploaded in TIDE prior to testing. If your school or district is preparing to conduct a batch upload of student data, remove records for students with a documented IEP or Section 504 Plan. Supports and accommodations for these students will sync to TIDE if they are documented in a finalized and implemented plan in CT-SEDS. Refer to the Documenting Designated Supports and Accommodations in TIDE brochure located on the Connecticut Comprehensive Assessment Program Portal.

Accommodations and Supports for English Learners/Multilingual Learners

Accommodations are also available for those ELs/MLs who are dually identified as a student with a disability and an English learner. These students would require an active IEP or 504 Plan documenting their needs for instruction and assessment, including their language needs. A variety of language supports are available for ELs/MLs when taking the interim assessments. These supports include:

Embedded and Non-Embedded Designated Supports for English Learners/Multilingual Learners

Translation (Glossary) – Embedded Designated Support

Smarter Balanced Mathematics and Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) Assessments: Guidelines for Spanish Read Aloud of Stimuli and Items

Many of the language supports used in instruction for ELs/MLs are incorporated in the designated supports provided on the Smarter Balanced and NGSS Assessments. Any EL/ML designated supports for testing must be entered in TIDE or set by the teacher in the Test Administrator Interface (unless they have a documented IEP/Section 504 Plan in CT-SEDS) prior to interim testing. Informed adults, including EL/ML educators, who are familiar with the student's strengths and areas of concern make decisions about the provision of these designated supports. Like all designated support decisions, the decisions are ideally made by all educators familiar with the student's characteristics, including English language proficiency levels and supports that have benefited the student during instruction and for other assessments. Parent and student input into the decision process, particularly for older students, is also recommended. The Embedded and Non-Embedded Designated Supports for English Learners/Multilingual Learners brochure provides a list of available options for Smarter Balanced and NGSS. For more information on available supports, refer to the Assessment Guidelines and Accessibility Chart.

We've also included easy access to the Technology Guide for those students who need embedded and non-embedded assistive technology tools when taking interim assessments.

Providing Scribe and Read Aloud Accommodations

It is important that any test administrator providing a student with a scribe or a human reader (including a human signer/visual support) fully understand and read the guidelines and protocols carefully before administering an interim assessment. (Note these accommodations must be delivered in an in-person, individual test setting following all appropriate test guidelines and procedures specified by these resources.)

Scribe Special Documented Accommodations Protocol for Smarter Balanced and Next Generation Science Standards Assessments

Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) Assessment: Guidelines for Read Aloud of Stimuli and Items

Smarter Balanced Assessments: Read Aloud Guidelines

Smarter Balanced Mathematics and Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) Assessments: Guidelines for Spanish Read Aloud of Stimuli and Items

To determine eligibility for text-to-speech of the ELA Reading Passages or a read-aloud accommodation, the following screeners should be completed and discussed at the PPT or Section 504 convening meeting.

Decision Guidelines for Text-to-Speech of the Smarter Balanced ELA Reading Passages

Documented Evidence for a Read Aloud of the Smarter Balanced ELA Reading Passages

Contact Deirdre Ducharme (deirdre.ducharme@ct.gov) or Katie Seifert (katherine.seifert@ct.gov) at the Connecticut State Department of Education, Office of Student Assessment with any questions.
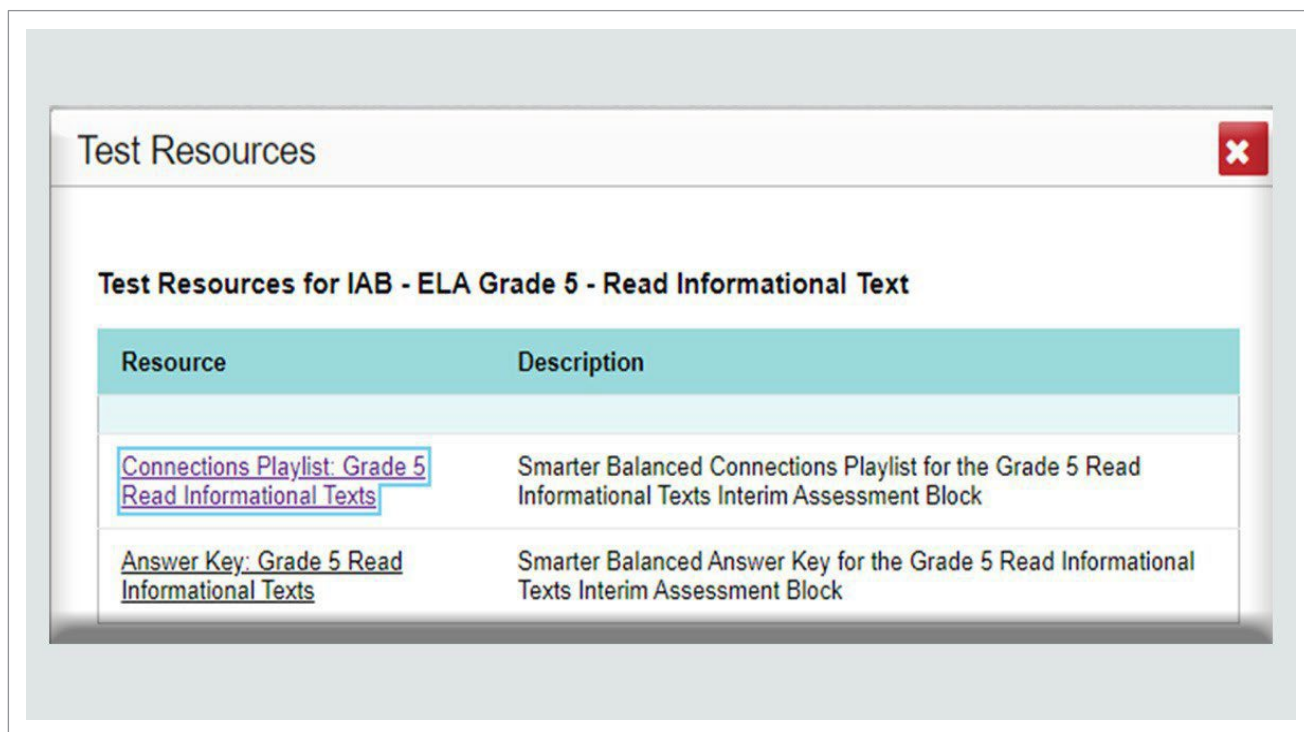
Resources

🖱 Connecticut Interim Assessments homepage

Are resources linked within the CRS?

The Centralized Reporting System produces detailed, item-level reports specifically designed to gauge student performance on the IABs. The CRS also provides links to Smarter Balanced resources for all ELA and math interims specific to each IAB. These resources, called Connections Playlists, are housed in the Tools for Teachers system. Simply sign into the Connecticut Comprehensive Assessment Program Portal using your TIDE username and password.

Figure 16: An Image of the Link to a Grade 5 ELA Connections Playlist Link within the CRS

Navigating Tools for Teachers

Each Playlist contains resources based on Performance Category with links to lessons developed by educators from across the country and includes suggestions for interventions and links to the targets and standards measured. Tools for Teachers provides a Connections Playlist for each ELA and math interim assessment block. Lessons referenced within a Playlist support specific skills addressed within the block.

Figure 17: An Image of the Grade 4 Revision IAB Playlist in Tools for Teachers

In the Suggestions for Intervention section, educators can find a list of the skills that should be revisited by those students who had difficulty with the content. To further explain the expectations within the target(s) measured, turn to the Things to Consider section. Educators will find detailed explanations of the nuances within a target.

A detailed list of Academic Vocabulary for the target assessed is provided. Teachers can use these words regularly with students so they are familiar with these terms during testing. All academic vocabulary comes from the expectations in the Connecticut Core Standards.

Included with each Playlist are formative assessment strategies, performance progressions, and accessibility strategies to support diverse learners.

Tools for Teachers has another valuable resource available — printable sample and interim items. Educators can choose items by grade, content area, claim, target, or standard. Metadata and the answer key for each item print to a separate page, allowing educators to print or, during remote learning, post sample items for student use. Items can even be sorted by type such as multiple choice, short answer, and more.

These same features are available using the Interim Assessment Item Portal. Please note that these are the same items available in the current Smarter Balanced ELA and Mathematics Interim Assessments. While we encourage the use of these items in a variety of classroom activities, release of these items minimizes the validity of the assessments. The interim items can be used during remote learning, but they should not be posted on the internet sites or emailed.

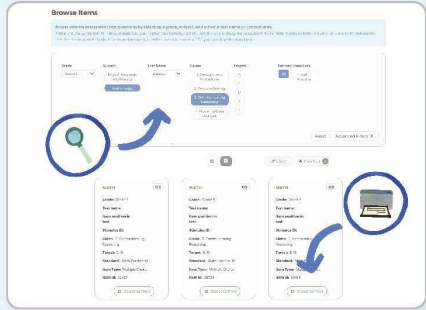**Figure 18: Accessing Interim Items in Tools for Teachers**

Science Resources

There are a number of science resources available on the CSDE Science Standards and Resources page including a number of webinars. A video, Using NGSS Science Interim Assessments in the Classroom, addresses a variety of formal and informal ways to use the items in the NGSS Science Interim Assessments and the results of those assessments in the classroom.

The NGSS site provides assessment and instructional resources, as well as tools for parents to support science learning during remote instruction.

For a comprehensive explanation of the NGSS Standards and expectations, visit the Bozeman Science – Next Generation Science Standards Video Series, which explains the concepts contained within the K–12 Science Framework. There are 60 videos that provide an NGSS overview, and further information on 8 practices, 7 crosscutting concepts, and 44 disciplinary core ideas.

All NGSS Interim and Summative Assessment information, including administration manuals, tools, item specifications, and quick guides, can be found on the Comprehensive Assessment Program Portal under NGSS Resources.

Videos on the Smarter Balanced and NGSS Interim Assessments on the CSDE website include:

- Smarter Balanced and NGSS Interim Assessments Overview
- Smarter Balanced and NGSS Interim Assessment Content
- Smarter Balanced and NGSS Interim Scoring and Reporting
- Integrating Smarter Balanced and NGSS Interim Assessments into Practice

Captioned videos and scripted PDFs of all Sensible Assessment Community of Practice meetings can be found on the CSDE Training page. Each video linked below addresses one aspect of the use of interim assessments as formative assessment tools or the use of results from interim administrations. Presentations done by Connecticut educators and administrators incorporate best practices implemented successfully by various districts.

- Non-Standard Uses of Smarter Balanced/NGSS Interim Assessments and District Sharing
- Tools for Teachers and District Sharing
- NGSS Interims and District Sharing
- Smarter Balanced Interims and District Sharing
- Using Smarter Balanced/NGSS Interim Results and District Sharing