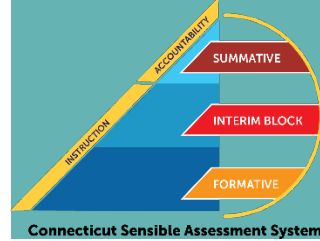


Student Assessment News



Connecticut State Department of Education

Performance Office

April 2026

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State Testing Windows Extended by One Week

Please note that due to inclement weather and resulting impact on instructional time, the CSDE has extended the testing windows from May 29, 2026, to June 5, 2026, for the Smarter Balanced, NGSS, and Connecticut Alternate Assessments. In addition, the K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessments have been extended to June 12, 2026.

Reminder Student Assessment Office Hours

[Registration](#) is open for the weekly Student Assessment Office Hours. Only one [registration](#) is required to participate in all Office Hours sessions.

English Language Proficiency (ELP) Assessments and CT-SEDS

The [English Language Proficiency Assessments and CT-SEDS](#) training was developed to help support teams in determining and documenting accessibility supports and the applicable ELP assessment (LAS Links or CAAELP). This resource, including the [transcript](#), is located on the [Resources for PPTs and 504 Teams - CT-SEDS and Statewide Assessments](#) page.

Connecticut Alternate Assessment of English Language Proficiency (CAAELP)

Optional CAAELP/Alt ELPA Feedback Survey

Reminder, the [2025–26 CAAELP Feedback Survey](#) for educators will be available until **April 30, 2026**.

CAAELP Resources

Resources for educators and families to help with understanding the CAAELP reports and scores can be found on the [CAAELP Resources page](#).

After testing resources for educators:

- [CAAELP Quick Guide to Understanding Student Score Reports](#)
- [CAAELP Overall Proficiency Determinations and Modality Descriptors](#)
- [CAAELP Performance Level Descriptors \(PLDs\)](#)

After testing resources for parents/guardians:

- [CAAELP Parent Guide to Individual Student Reports \(ISR\)](#): Available in 12 languages.

CAAELP Score Release

The CAAELP results will be available in mid-May. Please refer to [How to Access the CAAELP Scores in the Centralized Reporting System \(CRS\)](#) for information on obtaining student results.

Accessibility Supports for Smarter Balanced and NGSS

Distribute Appropriate Guidelines/Protocols for Students Approved for Accessibility Supports

District Administrators (DAs) should work with their case managers to identify which students are selected for designated supports, accommodations, and special documented accommodations in CT-SEDS. Then, as applicable, provide assigned test administrators with proper training and guidelines before the

accommodation is provided to the student. Below are examples of supports that may be needed by certain students to access the assessments.

- [Printed Test Directions \(Student Version\)](#) - This designated/language support provides the student with a visual reference in English for test directions/script within the SAY boxes in the Summative Test Administration Manuals (TAMs) for Smarter Balanced and NGSS Assessments. For eligible students, the test administrator must download, print, and distribute the printed test directions to the student at the time of testing.
- [Translated Directions for Smarter Balanced Math and ELA](#) (Not available for science) - This is a word-to-word translation of the directions and functions students encounter when using the online test delivery system (TDS). For eligible students, the test administrator must download, print, and distribute the printed test directions to the student at the time of testing.
- [Bilingual Dictionaries and Glossaries Authorized for Use by English Language Learners](#) (Available for science) This resource provides examples of word-to-word glossaries allowed on the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) Assessments as a non-embedded language support for English Learners/Multilingual Learners. These resources are used with permission of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the NYS Steinhardt. Bilingual dictionaries and/or glossaries that provide definitions or explanations are not permitted on state assessments. The CSDE does not require or endorse these listings for commercial publications.
- [Guidelines for Simplified Test Directions in the Test Administration Manual](#) (Not available for science) The designated support for simplified test directions for Smarter Balanced English language arts (ELA) and mathematics allows the test administrator to simplify or paraphrase the test directions found in the test administration manual according to the Simplified Test Directions Guidelines. Students who need additional support understanding the test directions may benefit from this resource. This designated support may require testing in a separate setting to avoid distracting other test takers.
- [Smarter Balanced Assessments: Read Aloud Guidelines](#) This document provides a comprehensive overview of the role of the human reader for students eligible for a read aloud of Math stimuli and items, and ELA test items, and in special cases, the Read Aloud of the ELA Reading Passages accommodations for students with the most significant print and visual disabilities. Human Readers must follow the procedures and protocols outlined in this document.
- [Smarter Balanced Mathematics and Next Generation Science Standards \(NGSS\) Assessments: Guidelines for Spanish Read Aloud of Stimuli and Items](#) This document provides a comprehensive overview of the role of the human reader for students eligible for a Spanish read aloud of Math and Science stimuli and items. Note: the test presentation must be set to Spanish Toggle for math and/or science in TIDE prior to testing. Human Readers must follow the procedures and protocols outlined in this document.
- [Scribe Special Documented Accommodations Protocol for Smarter Balanced and Next Generation Science Standards Assessments](#) A scribe is an educator who writes/types responses provided by a student verbally or in a variety of ways (e.g., American Sign Language (ASL), braille, assistive communication device). The guiding principle in scribing is to ensure that the student has

access to and is able to respond to test content. Scribes must follow the procedures and protocols outlined in this document.

- [Math Manipulatives Brochure](#) A variety of math manipulatives are available on the Smarter Balanced Math Assessments as a non-embedded special documented accommodation to allow eligible students to use concrete mathematical tools strategically to support their problem solving as they transition to more abstract supports. Teachers administering the math assessment to a student that qualifies for math manipulatives must follow the procedures and protocols outlined in this document.

Text-to-Speech Functionality

What is it? The text-to-speech (TTS) functionality allows students to choose to have a portion of text read on demand. Like all accessibility features, teachers should use practice tests to determine how accessibility features work and are utilized on the platform. Educator teams should review the [CSDE Assessment Guidelines](#) and [Connecticut Smarter Balanced and NGSS Assessments Reader Options Table](#) for information about student eligibility.

How it works:

- Students who have TTS of ELA items and math/science stimuli & items, choose the *Text-to-Speech* icon located in the task model tool above the item. Then, select “Speak...”.
- For students approved for TTS of the ELA Reading Passages, select the *Text-to-Speech* icon located at the top of passage. Then, they will select “Speak...”.
- To turn off the TTS, the student will select the *Text-to-Speech* icon again and select “Stop Speaking.”
- To have a specific portion of text reread, the student will right click their mouse and choose “Start Speaking from Here”.
- Try this using a Math or Science Practice Test with your student to make sure it works. Also note the “Settings” icon on the upper right portion of the student’s test screen allows the student to adjust the TTS volume, pitch, and rate.
- Text-to-Speech does not work with a limited number of ELA writing items that measure grammar usage/punctuation; this is intentional, as the oral presentation of the item might otherwise cue a student to respond in a certain way.

If you need technical support, please contact the Connecticut Help Desk (Cambium Assessment) at 1.844.202.7583 or via email at cthelpdesk@cambiumassessment.com.

Spanish Presentation for Math and Science

What is it? Spanish Presentation and Text-to-Speech (in Spanish) is a language support for eligible ELs/MLs on the Smarter Balanced Math and NGSS assessments. Refer to the [CSDE Assessment Guidelines](#) and the [Embedded and Non-Embedded Designated Supports for English Learners/Multilingual Learners](#) for information about student eligibility.

- **Spanish Presentation (Math, Science Toggle):** Spanish presentation will allow the proficient reader and speaker in Spanish to toggle between a full Spanish translation of the assessment (including items and stimuli) and English. By default, all test directions, navigation buttons, and test content

will be presented to the student in the Spanish language. The use of this support may result in the student needing additional overall time to complete the assessment and may increase reading and cognitive load. Unless the student also has an IEP or Section 504 Plan, this designated support must be batch uploaded or manually entered in the Embedded Accommodation section of the student’s test settings in TIDE within the Presentation (Designated Supports and Accommodations) tab for Math and/or Science. Select Spanish toggle. Refer to your DA for Testing for details related to local procedures.

FIGURE 1 LOCATING TEST PRESENTATION IN TIDE: SPANISH TOGGLE FOR MATH AND SCIENCE

Embedded Designated Support			
	1) ELA	2) MATH	3) SCIENCE
Color Contrast	Black on White	Black on White	Black on White
Masking	OFF	OFF	OFF
Medical Device	OFF	OFF	OFF
Mouse Pointer	System Default	System Default	System Default
Permissive Mode	OFF	OFF	OFF
Print Size	No Default Zoom Applied	No Default Zoom Applied	No Default Zoom Applied
Streamline Mode	OFF	OFF	OFF
Text-To-Speech (Designated Supports and Accommodations)	Items	Stimuli&Items	Stimuli&Items
Translation (Glossary)	English Glossary	English Glossary	Not Applicable
Embedded Accommodation			
American Sign Language Video	OFF	OFF	Not Applicable
Audio Transcriptions	OFF	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Braille Type	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Closed Captioning	OFF	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Customized Medical Accommodation	OFF	OFF	OFF
Exempted Domains	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Math Manipulatives	Not Applicable	OFF	Not Applicable
Presentation (Designated Supports and Accommodations)	English	Spanish (toggle)	Spanish (toggle)

- Text-to-Speech (Math and Science, English (Default), and Spanish):** This support allows text to be read to the student via embedded TTS technology. Text-to-speech in Spanish for Math and Science functions when both Spanish Presentation (Math and Science toggle) and text-to-speech for Stimuli & Items are selected from the Math and Science drop-down menus in TIDE. A Spanish voice pack must also be downloaded or activated on the student’s testing device. A headset is required unless the student is testing in a separate setting.

FIGURE 2 LOCATING TEXT-TO-SPEECH IN TIDE

Embedded Designated Support			
	1) ELA	2) MATH	3) SCIENCE
Color Contrast	Black on White	Black on White	Black on White
Masking	OFF	OFF	OFF
Medical Device	OFF	OFF	OFF
Mouse Pointer	System Default	System Default	System Default
Permissive Mode	OFF	OFF	OFF
Print Size	No Default Zoom Applied	No Default Zoom Applied	No Default Zoom Applied
Streamline Mode	OFF	OFF	OFF
Text-To-Speech (Designated Supports and Accommodations)	Items	Stimuli&Items	Stimuli&Items

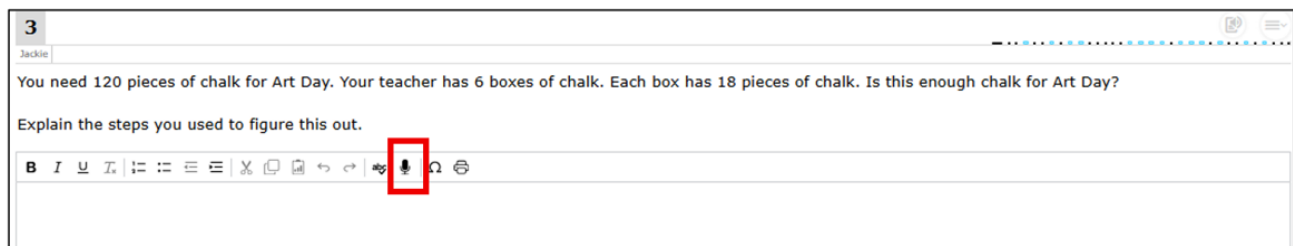
Speech-to-Text Accommodation

What is it? Often used with students who have motor or processing disabilities (such as dyslexia), speech-to-text (STT) allows students to orally dictate their responses to Smarter Balanced math and ELA open-ended items using Cambium Assessment's internal STT software.

How it works:

- Students who have STT selected in TIDE per their IEP/Section 504 Plan must first select the microphone icon in the response option box to dictate an answer.
- As the student speaks, the transcribed text will appear in the provided response area.
- The student is permitted to dictate up to 5 minutes of speech at a time.
- This feature auto punctuates and capitalizes as it transcribes a student's dictation.
- Students should proofread and edit responses before moving onto the next item.
- Students using this accommodation must test in an individual test setting.
- Districts are highly encouraged to allow students to practice STT using the Smarter Balanced Math Performance Task Practice Tests in advance of summative testing.

FIGURE 3 ACTIVATING SPEECH -TO-TEXT



Checking Student Demographics, Accessibility Supports, and Conflicting Accommodations in TIDE for Students with a 504 or IEP Prior to Testing

As you prepare for spring testing, we recommend that districts work with their CT-SEDS OSEP Aggregate Data Manager or OSEP Aggregate District Administrator to review the Accommodations Report in CT-SEDS Everyday and confirm that the designated supports and accommodations have populated correctly in TIDE prior to testing and that they don't conflict (e.g., the selection of an embedded and non-embedded version of the same accommodation).

If the designated support/accommodation is not correct in TIDE, the district should follow these steps:

1. Confirm that the correct designated supports and accommodations are set within CT-SEDS for students with a finalized and implemented IEP/Section 504 Plan. CT-SEDS is the official system that documents designated supports and accommodations. Any change to a student's test accommodations must be documented through a PPT meeting, Section 504 Plan meeting, or an amendment.
2. Ensure that the IEP/Section 504 Plan has been finalized and implemented. If the IEP/Section 504 Plan has not been implemented, delay testing until the plan implements and the accommodation populates in TIDE. This may take 48 hours after implementation. Please note that syncing occurs from Monday-Friday and not on weekends or holidays.

3. PSIS must accurately reflect the student's status to sync with TIDE. Without these indicators set in PSIS, accommodations will not sync between CT-SEDS and TIDE.
4. Contact your PSIS Coordinator if a student is newly identified in CT-SEDS under IDEA or Section 504 status, or if the student is dually identified with either of these categories and is an EL/ML. These fields must reflect student eligibility in PSIS at the time of testing.
5. The Alternate Assessment Indicator in TIDE will activate for students who qualify for the Alternate Assessment per the completion of the Connecticut Alternate Assessment System Eligibility Form for the student's current grade in CT-SEDS. **Do not schedule testing** if the Alternate Assessment Indicator does not accurately reflect student eligibility. Contact the Case Manager to review any discrepancies or missing documentation.

Resources to support teams with this process are listed below:

- [Cross-Checking Student TIDE Test Settings and CT-SEDS](#)
- [CT-SEDS to TIDE Designated Supports/Accommodations Sync Frequently Asked Questions](#)

Conflicting Accessibility Supports and Accommodations

If conflicting accommodations are identified, please reach out to the student's Case Manager to determine which accommodations are appropriate for student access and amend the plan. It is important that teachers administering the assessment know exactly which accommodations should be provided to the student to prevent test irregularities and over testing.

Examples of conflicting accessibility supports include:

- Embedded Text-to-Speech and Non-Embedded Read Aloud
- Embedded Speech-to-Text and Non-Embedded Scribe
- Embedded Color Contrast and Non-Embedded Color Contrast or Color Overlay
- Embedded Print Size Online and Non-Embedded Large Print Test Booklet
- Specialized Calculator (Grade 6-8 Math or Science Grades 5, 8, 11), which is a Braille/Talking Calculator, and Calculator (Math Grade 6-8 Special Documented Accommodation)

Refer to the [CSDE Assessment Guidelines](#) and the [Description of Designated Supports and Accommodations for Smarter Balanced and Next Generation Science Standards Assessments](#) for an explanation of each accessibility support. You may also contact [Deirdre Ducharme](#) or [Katie Seifert](#) for more information.

Selecting Tests for NGSS

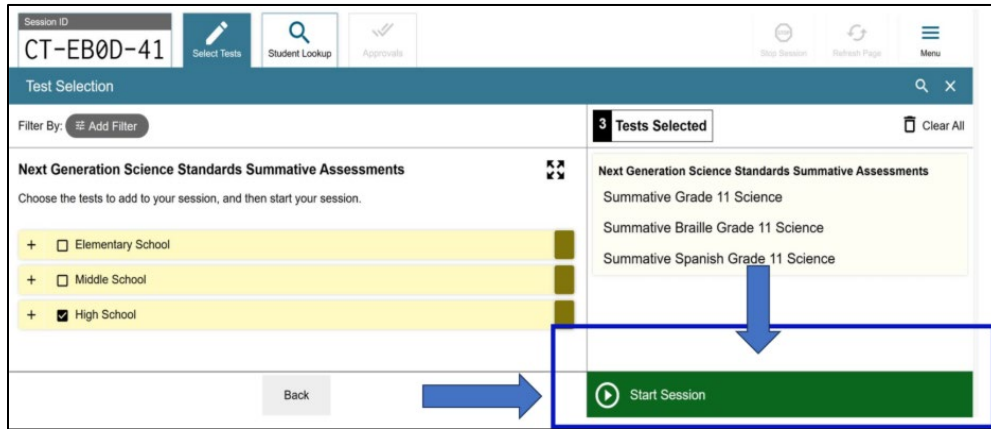
Teachers administering the NGSS often ask which of the three testing options should be selected when starting a test using the Test Administration Interface. For example, after the teacher selects the grade-level appropriate assessment (Elementary, Middle, and High School), three test presentations appear on the right-side of the test menu:

- Summative Grade [5, 8, or 11] Science
- Summative Braille Grade [5, 8, or 11] Science
- Summative Spanish Grade [5, 8, or 11] Science

The teacher should keep these three options as is and select **Start Session**. Depending on the student’s test configuration in TIDE, students will have access to the NGSS presentation that is appropriate for them: English (default), Braille, or Spanish.

If the student does not have the appropriate version of the science assessment, teachers should not approve the test. First, check TIDE to verify the student’s test settings and contact the District Administrator.

FIGURE 4 TEST ADMINISTRATION INTERFACE: NGSS MENU



Preparing for Special Documented Accommodations

The DA and assigned teacher/proctor should review the [Special Documented Accommodations for Smarter Balanced and Next Generation Science Standards \(NGSS\) Assessments Overview](#) for the applicable guidelines and protocols associated with the student’s approved accommodation.

Teachers must be trained in the use of the special documented accommodations and participate in local training for testing. They must also complete the associated Test Security Protocols and Agreement Forms included in the Appendix and return them to their District Administrator for signature and filing.

Testing must occur in a 1:1 test setting.

Register for Email Updates

To automatically receive the *Student Assessment News* and/or other announcements, [register for e-mail updates](#) on the CT Comprehensive Assessment Program Portal.

Student Assessment Email

Contact the Performance Office via email: ctstudentassessment@ct.gov.

2025-26 State Assessment Calendar

Content Area(s)	Assessment	Grade(s)	Testing Window
English Language Proficiency	LAS Links	K-12	January 5 - March 6, 2026
English Language Proficiency	Connecticut Alternate Assessment of English Language Proficiency (CAAELP)	K-12	January 12 - March 6, 2026
English Language Arts (ELA) & Mathematics	Connecticut Smarter Balanced	3-8	March 23 – June 5, 2026*
English Language Arts (ELA) & Mathematics	Connecticut SAT School Day	11	March 2 - April 30, 2026
English Language Arts (ELA) & Mathematics	Connecticut Alternate Assessment (CTAA)	3-8 and 11	March 23 – June 5, 2026*
Literacy Universal Screening	Grades K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessment	K-3	Sept. 8 – Oct. 17, 2025 Dec. 8 – Feb. 6, 2026 April 20 – June 12, 2026*
Science	Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) Assessment	5, 8, and 11	February 2 – June 5, 2026* (Grade 11) March 23 – June 5, 2026* (Grades 5 and 8)
Science	Connecticut Alternate Science Assessment (CTAS)	5, 8, and 11	Dates to upload to the DEI: March 23 – June 5, 2026* The CTAS can be administered all year.
Physical Fitness	Connecticut Physical Fitness Assessment	4, 6, 8, and once during high school	September 2, 2025 - May 29, 2026
Language, Literacy, Numeracy, Physical/Motor, Creative/Aesthetic, and Personal/Social	Kindergarten Entrance Inventory	Kindergarten	Snapshot Date: October 1, 2025 Submission Due Date: December 5, 2025

*An asterisk indicates a change to the original testing window end date.

2026-27 State Summative Assessment Calendar