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State Summative Assessments

Student Choice on Smarter Balanced Assessments

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) was awarded a Competitive Grant for State Assessments (CGSA) in October 2024, in collaboration with the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium and other Smarter Balanced states. The grant supports research into assessment innovations designed to increase student engagement by providing opportunities for students to select from topics of choice.

As part of this work, new English Language Arts Brief Writes and Math Performance Tasks have been developed to incorporate student choice and locally responsive content. During the 2024–25 school year, students and educators from selected Connecticut schools participated in interest workshops and cognitive labs to inform the development of these test questions.

In spring 2027, the CSDE will field test items in the following grades and content areas:

Spring 2027 Field Test Items

Grade and Content Area	Field Testing Window and Method	Field Testing Sample
Grade 6 English Language Arts — Brief Writes	Embedded field test administered during the spring 2027 state summative testing window.	All Grade 6 Students
Grade 8 Mathematics — Performance Tasks	A “stand-alone” field test administered March 8–19, 2027, two weeks before the standard testing window.	A sample of grade 8 schools will be selected, and all grade 8 students in those schools will participate. <u>Selected schools will be notified in early November.</u>

Additionally, please also note the following important information:

- Items will be field tested using Cambium Assessment, Inc.’s Test Delivery System. Students will use the same Test Delivery System and Secure Browser used for other statewide assessments and should be encouraged to do their best. No additional browser or software will be required.
- These items are being administered for field testing purposes only and will not contribute to students’ summative assessment scores. Based on field-test results, we may consider selected items for inclusion in future assessments.
- Some participating students will receive an item that offers a “choice” of topics, while others will receive a standard field test item. The format of the Brief Write and Math Performance Task will remain unchanged.
- Test administration guidance is being developed and will be distributed in late January.

Questions may be emailed to CTStudentAssessment@ct.gov.

Center for Connecticut Education Research Collaboration

During the 2025-26 school year, researchers from the [Center for Connecticut Education Research Collaboration](#) evaluated 16 districts for Smarter Balanced and NGSS assessment administration (grades 3-8) to address U.S. Department of Education monitoring requirements and to improve local and state practices. The Performance Office learned very valuable information that will be used to improve the assessment experience for students and educators.

As a result of the success and the agency’s commitment to improving practices, this evaluation will continue in 2026-27 in the following areas:

- Smarter Balanced and NGSS Assessments
- Accommodations
- English Language Proficiency Assessment (LAS Links)

The sampling plan is currently being finalized. The CSDE and CCERC will contact districts that have been selected for the next evaluation.

The final report from the 2025-26 evaluation will be released soon and posted to the [Center for Connecticut Education Research Collaboration](#).

Accessibility Supports and Accommodations and Optional Trainings for Educators

In recognition of the complex and individual needs of all students, the [Accessibility Considerations](#) document was created to support educator planning when determining accessibility features that can be incorporated into the instructional and assessment setting to promote student access and independence. This document provides high-level guidance to district administrators with recommendations for developing a consistent process for embedding accessibility supports that minimize barriers to learning. It also includes sample checklists to support planning and implementation as well as measuring effectiveness with input from students.

The [CSDE Assessment Guidelines](#) provides detailed explanations for each of the accessibility features across assessments (e.g., Smarter Balanced, NGSS, and CT SAT School Day). Planning and Placement Teams should be familiar with this resource to better understand available accessibility supports and their functionality in the context of state assessments. Accessing this information will help ensure accuracy and consistency when choosing accommodations that are most appropriate for the unique needs of students.

The [Description of Designated Supports and Accommodations for Smarter Balanced and Next Generation Science Standards Assessments](#) is an abridged version of the CSDE Assessment Guidelines. Think of it as a companion guide for teams when reviewing accessibility supports and accommodations for students with an IEP/Section 504 Plan.

The [Documenting Designated Supports and Accommodations in TIDE](#) brochure walks administrators through the process of how to document designated supports in TIDE for students who do not have an IEP/Section 504 Plan. It explains the syncing process between CT-SEDS and TIDE for students who have accommodations finalized in an implemented IEP/Section 504 Plan. It also provides guidance for documenting designated supports in TIDE for eligible students in the general population. Use this resource when planning accessibility supports for use on interim and summative assessments.

The Smarter Balanced and NGSS [Accessibility Charts](#) are high-level charts organized by embedded and non-embedded Universal Tools, Designated Supports, and Accommodations. Accessibility Charts are also available for [LAS Links](#) and the [CT SAT School Day](#).

The [Embedded and Non-Embedded Designated Supports for English Learners/Multilingual Learners](#) may be used for students who are English learners/multilingual learners (ELs/MLs) that benefit from using designated supports when participating on the Connecticut statewide assessments.

The Office of Student Assessment is committed to growing the list of available training sessions to support educator understanding of accessibility supports and accommodations. Take a moment to visit the [Training Page](#) on the CSDE's Sensible Assessment System webpage. Training sessions include but are not limited to:

- Language Supports for English Learners/Multilingual Learners
- Reader Options for Smarter Balanced and NGSS
- Best Practices for Determining Accommodations for Statewide Assessments
- Overview of the Connecticut Alternate Assessment System

Special Populations

Connecticut SAT School Day: Things to Know About Accommodations

The Connecticut SAT School Day Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) Accommodations Window is November 18, 2026 – January 12, 2027. To access SSD Online, SSD Coordinators will need to log on to ssdonline.collegeboard.org.

If you are a new SSD Coordinator and do not have an account, request an account through the College Board and complete the online [SSD Coordinator Form](#). Students may have already been approved by the College Board for test accommodations if requests were made for other assessments such as the PSAT or SAT. Once students are approved for accommodations, they will remain available for use on subsequent SAT administrations including the CT SAT School Day. However, it is important for SSD Coordinators to review these accommodations to ensure they are still needed and supported per the student's implemented Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan in CT-SEDS. SSD Coordinators should meet with their students early on to review accommodations and determine the appropriateness based on documented need and evidence throughout the plan. Additionally, per the students implemented IEP/Section 504 Plan, SSD Coordinators may need to submit new accommodation requests or make changes to those already approved in SSD from past test administrations.

For a listing of available universal features, EL/ML language supports, and accommodations for students with IEPs/Section 504 Plans, refer to the [2026-27 Connecticut SAT School Day Accessibility Chart](#).

If your EL/ML is eligible and needs Up to 50% Time and One-half or Text-to-Speech for Math Only, accommodation requests should be made in SSD prior to January 12, 2027.

Refer to the [2026-27 Accommodations Crosswalk for Connecticut SAT School Day](#) for a comparative guide of accommodations on the legacy paper-pencil assessments to the digital SATs and alignment with the accommodations in CT-SEDS. This resource will help PPTs, Section 504 Teams, and SSD Coordinators identify the digital accommodation based on student need.

Educators are encouraged to arrange time for students to trial their accommodations and/or assistive technology (AT) early in the year using the College Board's digital Practice Tests on Bluebook. This allows SSD Coordinators to make timely accommodation requests/changes within the SSD submission window, if applicable, to promote optimal test conditions on test day. [Refer to the Practice - State Testing - SAT Suite of Assessments](#) for more information.

Use the [SSD Form Upload for Documentation Requests](#) when required, to submit additional documentation in SSD Online. Please note: this form does not take the place of evidence that may be needed for paper test requests or certain accommodation requests.

While details will be shared during the College Board SSD Coordinator Training on November 18, 2026, resources are available on the [CT SAT School Day webpage](#) to support educator teams (PPT/Section 504) and SSD Coordinators as they prepare accommodations for eligible students taking the spring Connecticut SAT School Day.

Connecticut Alternate Assessment System

What is the Connecticut Alternate Assessment System?

The Connecticut Alternate Assessment System is designated for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. This system includes:

- the Connecticut Alternate Assessment (CTAA) for English language arts and mathematics for eligible students in Grades 3–8 and 11;
- the Connecticut Alternate Science (CTAS) Assessment for eligible students in Grades 5, 8, and 11; and
- the Connecticut Alternate Assessment of English Language Proficiency (CAAELP) for students identified as English learners/multilingual learners (ELs/MLs) with significant cognitive disabilities in Grades K–12.

How is Eligibility Determined?

The Planning and Placement Team (PPT) will determine if the student meets eligibility criteria by completing the [Connecticut Alternate Assessment System Eligibility Form](#) within the Special Education Data System (CT-SEDS). A paper version of this [form](#) (and [annotated version](#)) is available for reference on the Portal, along with access to a variety of resources.

Tasks for Planning and Placement Teams

Planning and Placement Teams should be aware of the specified timelines for determining eligibility for students being considered for alternate assessments. Please share this communication and associated resources to support PPT understanding and planning.

Alternate Assessment System Eligibility Form Timeline

CT-SEDS Implementation Date	Assessment
Fully Implemented IEP by December 22, 2026	Eligibility forms must be approved, verified, finalized, and implemented within the IEP in CT-SEDS for the following assessments for the students to be correctly registered for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CAAELP (students identified as EL/ML in Grades K–12); and • CTAA and CTAS (Grade 11)
Fully Implemented IEP by March 19, 2027	Eligibility forms must be approved, verified, finalized, and implemented within the IEP in CT-SEDS for the following assessments for the students to be correctly registered for the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CTAA (Grades 3–8, and newly identified students in Grade 11); and • CTAS (Grades 5, 8, and newly identified students in Grade 11)

- [Determining Student Participation on Connecticut Statewide Summative Assessments](#)
- [FAQ About the Connecticut Alternate Assessment System](#)
- [CT-SEDS to TIDE Designated Supports/ Accommodations Sync FAQ](#)
- [Connecticut Alternate Assessment System Resources Quick Guide for Planning and Placement Teams \(PPTs\)](#)

Tasks for District Administrators

District Administrators will need to ensure that teachers are assigned a TEA user role in TIDE and that upon completion of the course, TEAs take the associated quiz and achieve a score of at least 80% or higher to receive trained status. Trained status provides TEAs access to critical testing systems and associated test

administrator materials. For details refer to the [Connecticut Alternate Assessment System Training – Overview for District Administrators](#).

Please communicate these important updates and share the [Connecticut Alternate Assessment System Training – Overview for Teachers Administering the Alternate](#) with applicable teachers.

Tasks for Teachers Administering the Alternate: Complete the 2026–27 Alternate Assessment Training!

The 2026–2027 Connecticut Alternate Assessment System Training for Teachers Administering the Alternate is now available on the [Connecticut Comprehensive Assessment Program Portal](#). Training is required and must be completed by teachers who will be administering an alternate assessment to eligible students during the spring 2027 summative assessment window.

There are two separate training series based on student EL/ML eligibility status and student grade of enrollment:

- The Connecticut Alternate Assessment Training is available to teachers who have the primary responsibility for assessing students in Grades 3–8 and 11 on the CTAA Math and English Language Arts and the Connecticut Alternate Science (CTAS) Assessment for students in Grades 5, 8, and 11.
- **New** - The Connecticut Alternate Assessment for English Language Proficiency (CAAELP) is designed for teachers assessing CAAELP to dually identified ELs/MLs with the most significant cognitive disabilities in Grades K–12.

Teachers may be required to participate in both training series depending on their student’s English learner status and associated grade. It is recommended that teachers complete training early in the school year so that they are prepared for the testing windows, especially since the CAAELP assessment window begins on January 11–March 5, 2027. Teachers will also need a critical understanding of certain topics such as the CAAELP Domain Exemption for Speaking and/or Listening and the Early Stopping Rule for students who have not established a communicative response. These topics are covered in both alternate training series and reference important procedures and timelines, therefore completion of training early in the year will ensure that teachers are aware of the process and timely considerations.

English Language Proficiency Assessments

LAS Links Accessibility

LAS Links Accommodations are available for students who are dually identified as EL/ML and either IDEA or Section 504 in PSIS and CT-SEDS. Accommodation resources and information can be found on the [Connecticut Education Accessibility Resources | LAS Links](#) page. Please note, accommodations must be determined by the Planning and Placement Team (PPT) or Section 504 Team in CT-SEDS through a finalized and implemented plan.

LAS Links Accommodation Spotlight

Teams should be aware of the new **LAS Links Speech-to-Text (STT) for all Domains (Embedded Accommodation)** features and allowable configurations prior to selecting this accessibility support such as:

- This accommodation is a Permissive Mode tool that allows 3rd party approved Windows software to be utilized as a voice dictation tool.
- The third-party Windows tool can be used to answer open ended written responses for students with a documented need determined by the IEP or Section 504 Team.
- **Only** Windows Voice Dictation and Windows Read&Write (Talk&Type) are available software applications.
- Mac, iPad, and Chrome devices and applications are **not** currently supported by the test vendor.
- This support requires that the tool be set up prior to testing by the LAS Links IT Coordinator.

LAS Links Training

Reminders for LAS Links ELAC Training and LAS Links IT Coordinator Training

It is imperative that all ELACs attend at least **one in-person training session** in the fall. This year, based on feedback from ELACs, we were able to update the system and introduce new or improved features. Please click on a link in the table below or visit the [CSDE Events Calendar](#) to register.

2026-27 LAS Links Administration Training for English Learner Assessment Coordinators

LAS Links ELAC Training Dates	Time
Tuesday, November 3, 2026	12:00–3:00 p.m.
Wednesday, November 4, 2026	9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.
Thursday, November 5, 2026	9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

LAS Links Accommodated Paper Training

The LAS Links Accommodated Paper Training session is **required** for ELACs who will be administering one of the accommodated paper forms; braille paper form, large-print paper form, or standard paper form, within the 2026–27 school year. Please note that ELACs **must attend one training course** to receive the Accommodated Paper Order Form.

LAS Links Accommodated Paper Training for English Learner Assessment Coordinators

LAS Links Accommodated Paper Training Date	Time
November 18, 2026	9:00–10:00 a.m.
December 17, 2026	2:00–3:00 p.m.

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.

2026-27 State Assessment Calendar

Content Area(s)	Assessment	Grade(s)	Testing Window
Physical Fitness	Connecticut Physical Fitness Assessment	4, 6, 8, and once during high school	August 31, 2026 - May 28, 2027
K–3 Literacy Universal Screening	Grades K–3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessment	K-3	Sept. 8–Oct. 16, 2026 - BOY Dec. 7, 2026–Feb. 5, 2027 - MOY April 19–June 4, 2027 - EOY
Language, Literacy, Numeracy, Physical/Motor, Creative/Aesthetic, and Personal/Social	Kindergarten Entrance Inventory	Kindergarten	Snapshot Date: October 1, 2026 Submission Due Date: December 4, 2026
English Language Proficiency: Speaking, Listening, Reading, and Writing	LAS Links	K-12	January 4–March 5, 2027
English Language Proficiency: Speaking, Listening, Reading, and Writing	Connecticut Alternate Assessment of English Language Proficiency (CAAELP)	K-12	January 11–March 5, 2027
English Language Arts (ELA) & Mathematics	Connecticut SAT School Day	11	March 1–April 30, 2027 ¹
Science	Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) Assessment	5, 8, and 11	February 1–May 28, 2027 (Grade 11) March 22–May 28, 2027 (Grades 5 and 8)
English Language Arts (ELA) & Mathematics	Connecticut Smarter Balanced	3-8	March 22–May 28, 2027
English Language Arts (ELA) & Mathematics	Connecticut Alternate Assessment (CTAA)	3-8 and 11	March 22–May 28, 2027
Science	Connecticut Alternate Science Assessment (CTAS)	5, 8, and 11	The CTAS can be administered all year. Upload Dates: March 22–May 28, 2027

¹ Within the testing window, schools can choose their primary and make-up test dates.