



STUDENT ASSESSMENT NEWS

October 30, 2017

[Archived Student Assessment News](#)

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Science Waiver Approved, Revised Summative Calendar and NGSS Field Test

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A notification regarding the [Science Waiver Approval and Revised Summative Calendar](#) was sent to Superintendents from Commissioner Wentzell on October 19, 2017. Please consider the following when planning for the spring 2018 Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) Field Test.

- All students in Grades 5, 8 and 11 will participate in the NGSS Field Test.
- This field test will be delivered using the American Institutes for Research (AIR) Test Delivery System. (This is the same system used to deliver the Smarter Balanced test). Student accounts will also be managed through AIR's Test Information Distribution Engine (TIDE) for this field test.
- A [practice test](#) with examples of the new NGSS-aligned assessment items is available at the Elementary, Middle- and High-School levels. Students in Grades 5, 8 and 11 may access the appropriate practice test prior to the administration of the NGSS Field Test in the spring.

Neither testing times, nor the number of sessions has been finalized for the NGSS Field Test.

Although there will be a *recommended* time allotment for this field test, like Smarter Balanced, students will be allowed to use as much time as needed. Nobody will need to enter an accommodation or designated support for time extensions, because time extension is considered to be a non-embedded Universal Tool.

However, in the case of the NGSS Field Test, extended time will only be allowed on the same school day that the test was started. If a student goes home, then extended time will not be allowed on any subsequent day. While students may take breaks as needed, the test session must be completed on the same day it was started.

In addition to the Standard NGSS Field Test, there will also be a new Alternate NGSS Field Test this spring. As a result, teachers should not be administering the CMT/CAPT Skills Checklist Science this school year. Teachers who are accessing alternate-assessment training now (or who were trained in 2015-16, or 2016-17) will be allowed to administer the new alternate assessment in the spring. Page 9 of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) will not need to be altered if the Alternate Science was previously selected for students in Grades 5, 8 or 11.

CTAA

Connecticut Alternate Assessment



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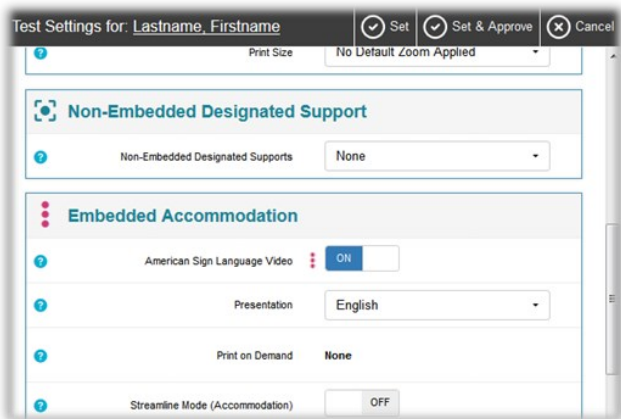
Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments: Guidance for Entering Designated Supports and Accommodations

Now that the 2017-18 Smarter Balanced Interim Assessment Blocks (IABs) are available for administration, there are some considerations that impact the selection of **accommodations** prior to test administration. Because the selection of accommodations in TIDE is dependent on a student’s special education and 504 status, accommodations will not be selectable in TIDE until the 2017-18 Public School Information System (PSIS) student batch upload into TIDE occurs on November 20, 2017. If your school or district expects to administer an Interim Assessment Block prior to November 20, 2017, accommodations will need to be selected in the Test Administration (TA) Interface at the time of testing. Please see the guidance, below, for administering Interim Assessment Blocks, and entering Designated Supports or Accommodations, prior to November 20, 2017:

1. **Designated Supports** should be entered directly into TIDE by the District Administrator (DA) or School Test Coordinator (SC) either manually or via the upload process. These supports will be immediately visible to the School Test Administrator in the TA Interface and will be immediately available to the student for use while taking the IAB. Once a designated support is set in TIDE, this setting will persist in TIDE.
2. While Designated Supports are persistent in TIDE over time, **Accommodations** (both Embedded and Non-Embedded) should be entered manually by the School Test Administrator using the TA Interface prior to the approval/administration of an Interim Assessment Block (see Figure 1).

Note: The Test Administrator will need to set accommodations for each applicable student every time an Interim Assessment Block is administered.

Figure 1. Test Setting Menu Available on the Test Administration Interface



After the PSIS upload on November 20, 2017, accommodations set in TIDE (for students with the Special Education Indicator) will be available to students taking the IABs, and the manual entry of these accommodations through the TA Interface Test Setting Menu will no longer be required. It is still advised that the School Test Administrator verify these supports prior to test administration and contact their DA if there are questions or concerns about the student test settings.

AIR Ways Reporting System User Guide

The 2017-2018 [AIR Ways Reporting System User Guide](#) provides instructions and support for users viewing student interim assessment performance reports in AIR Ways.

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2017-18 Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments Webinar Series

Since the Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments were first made available to districts this year on September 26, 2017, many districts have administered at least one block.

Located on the Connecticut Comprehensive Assessment Program Portal, educators with a TIDE account can access the 2017-18 updated Interim Assessment Blocks for mathematics and English language arts using the Assessment Viewing Application (AVA). Supporting systems, such as the Teacher Hand Scoring System (THSS) and the AIR Ways Reporting System also contain enhancements that make scoring and data analysis more user friendly.

This year, the Bureau of Student Assessment is planning on offering in-person training to support teacher hand scoring of interim assessment open-ended items. We also plan to offer sessions on interim assessment best practices. Dates and locations will be announced soon.

For starters, however, we are pleased to present the 2018 Interim Webinar Series with two recently released webinars. A PDF of each webinar is also available on the [Student Assessment Smarter Balanced Interim Assessment](#) Web page and on the [Connecticut Comprehensive Assessment Program Portal](#) under the *Resources* tab. The yellow stars (pictured below) indicate where these resources are posted.

[2018 Interim Assessments Webinar Series #1](#)

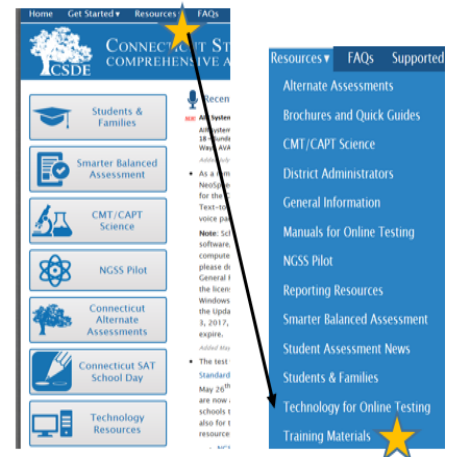
The Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments

This [webinar](#) is designed for educators who may be new to the Smarter Balanced Interim Assessment System, or to those returning educators who need a refresher. In this session, we discuss the purposes of the interim assessments as well as how to navigate the systems on the Connecticut Comprehensive Assessment Program Portal that allow users to view, administer, and score interim assessment blocks. We also present updated test blueprints for mathematics and English language arts/literacy, and highlight new enhancements to the Teacher Hand Scoring System.

[2018 Interim Assessments Webinar Series #2](#)

Using Interim Assessment Data

This [webinar](#) gives information about using the Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments to inform instruction. In this session, we explain the score reporting process, as well as the various reporting platforms and reporting features available. We also identify resources and instructional tools available through the Digital Library that can directly support instruction based on interim assessment outcomes.



Smarter Balanced Interim Assessment Test Administration Manual (TAM)

The [2017-18 Smarter Balanced Interim Assessment Test Administration Manual \(TAM\)](#) provides information for Test Examiners administering the Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics. This manual includes screenshots and step-by-step instructions on how to administer the Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments online.



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Special Populations Updates

LAS Links Technology Readiness Survey

To ensure a smooth transition to the required online testing for students participating in the LAS Links (see August 30, 2017, [memorandum](#)), each English Learner Assessment Coordinator (ELAC) was e-mailed a Technology Survey on October 2, 2017, from Data Recognition Corporation (DRC). This critical information was due by October 13, 2017. Our records indicate many districts have **not** accessed or completed the survey. If you are an ELAC and did not receive this e-mail from DRC, or if you had difficulty accessing or completing the survey please contact [Janet Stuck](#) immediately.

DRC ONLINE LAS Links Testing Headset Recommendations

Students participating in the LAS Links ONLINE assessment will require headsets to allow for recording and playback during the speaking section of the assessment. The [handout LAS Links Online Via DRC INSIGHT Headset Recommendations](#) provides more information.

English Learner Assessment Coordinator Training

English Learner Assessment Coordinators will be notified by e-mail about registration for live half-day trainings for the Online LAS Links Form C to be held December 13, 14, and 15, 2017. This live training is intended for **only** the ELAC and **one** other individual of their choice. Additional online training will be available mid-December for district staff. More information regarding this training will be coming very soon.

LAS LINKS Online Practice Test

The LAS Links Online Practice Test is available from DRC to LAS Links participants. The LAS Links Online Practice Test is designed to provide students an opportunity to:

- familiarize themselves with the look and feel of an online assessment;
- access a sample testing experience and the appearance of the test items on the computer/device prior to taking the assessment;
- experience one-to-two sample items in each of the four domains of Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing;
- explore the navigation, tools and item formats of the assessment; and
- ask questions prior to the test.

The practice test takes approximately 15 minutes to administer. There will be three ways to access the practice test:

1. Via Chrome URL: <https://wbte.drccdirect.com/LL/portals/ll>. ([anticipated opening November 1, 2017](#))
2. From the LAS Links INSIGHT Portal.
3. Launch from the INSIGHT testing application.

The LAS Links Online Practice Test is an open/public URL:

- no test ticket is required;
- no login credentials need to be assigned—the credentials to login to the practice test are provided right on the login screen;
- while practice tests are available in English and Spanish, please ensure students access the English Form C;
- provided in the following grade spans: K-1, 2-3, 4-5, and 6-12. **Note:** the Online LAS Links live test grade spans are: K, 1, 2-3, 4-5, 6-8, 9-12.



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Training Opportunity: Alternate Assessment Counts!

In response to new federal guidance, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) is conducting multi-session trainings to provide needed understanding and the skills necessary to respond to increased monitoring of students with significant cognitive disabilities participating in Connecticut's Alternate Assessments. Each session has multiple dates and locations to choose from.

[Register for Session 1 in person: School-level leaders, Principals, Planning and Placement Team \(PPT\) Chairs](#)

[Register for Session 2 in person: District Administrator for testing, Special Education Directors, English Learner Coordinators, Department Leaders.](#) (For consistency and for federal accountability purposes, attendees for the *Alternate Assessment Counts! Session 2* **must have had** an individual from their school (or district if applicable) participate in *Alternate Assessment Counts! Session 1* training.)

[Session 3 Webinar: \(Registration coming soon\) District and school-level leaders, certified educators working with students with significant cognitive disabilities, certified educators in general education.](#)

2017-18 CSDE Usability, Accessibility and Accommodations Training and 2017-18 CSDE Alternate Assessment System Training

District Administrators were e-mailed a letter regarding the [2017-18 CSDE Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Training, and 2017-18 CSDE Alternate Assessment System Training](#). Like last year, both trainings are available as an online or live in-person option.

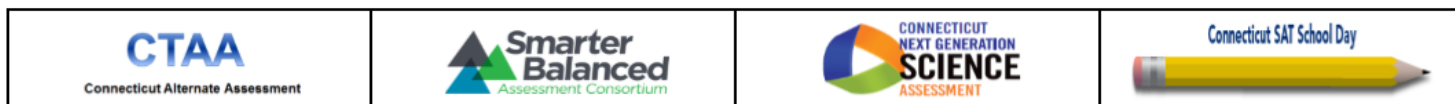
Additional Clarification for Teacher Administering the Alternate role

The CSDE is updating the Teacher Administering the Alternate (TEA) user-role list based on whether a teacher's state required training is up to date. This will allow these educators to both submit the Learner Characteristics Inventory (LCI) and, therefore, to register students for the alternate assessments, as well as to administer the test in spring of 2018.

- If these individuals will be administering the Alternate Assessments in the 2017-18 school year **and** are current in their CSDE training they will receive an e-mail by November 10, 2017, from AIR to update their TEA accounts.
- Individuals who will be administering the Alternate Assessments in the 2017-18 school year and are **not** current in their CSDE training, will need to register for the [2017-18 Alternate Assessment System](#) training. These educator names will be added to the TIDE trained-teacher list once they have completed and passed the course. At that time, they will receive an e-mail from AIR to create a password.
- TEA accounts are typically issued for specific schools based on school codes. If a trained educator will be administering the alternate assessments in multiple schools, they will need to contact their District Administrator who will then contact the AIR helpdesk (1-844-202-7583 or cthelpdesk@air.org) with the appropriate school facility codes to gain access at each school.

2017-18 Testing Designated Supports/Accommodations Form

The new [2017-18 Testing Designated Supports/Accommodations Form](#) is available online. You may use this form for students with an individualized education program (IEP), a Section 504 Plan and/or for English learners (ELs). As a reminder, there is no need to amend IEPs if you used last year's form and do not need to make any changes.



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Summative Assessment Updates

Desmos Calculator on Smarter Balanced Assessments

During 2018 spring testing, the Desmos calculators will be embedded in the online tests that require calculators. Broadly speaking, this includes the upper level, Smarter Balanced tests in mathematics, and also the NGSS field test in science. The Desmos calculators come in three versions. There is the basic Desmos *four-function calculator*, the Desmos *scientific calculator*, as well as the Desmos *graphing calculator*. Student access to the calculators is based on grade, subject and item being assessed. For the Smarter Balanced Mathematics Test, Grade 6 students will have access to the four-function calculator, while Grade 7 and 8 students will be using the scientific calculator.

The NGSS Science Field Test will be administered this year at Grades 5, 8, and 11. For the science field test; Grade 5 students will use the four-function calculator, Grade 8 students will use the scientific calculator, and Grade 11 students will use the graphing calculator.

Embedded calculators are not part of the Connecticut SAT School Day since that is a paper-and-pencil exam. Handheld calculators will need to be used by Grade 11 students during some of the mathematics sections of the Connecticut SAT School Day.

The scientific and graphing Desmos Calculators that appear on the Connecticut Statewide Assessments differ somewhat from the freely available Desmos calculators that anyone can find online. For a full list of differences, please see the [Desmos Testing](#) page. General information about the calculators can be found at www.Desmos.com. However, students can practice with the test version of these higher level calculators at: [Grade 6 Smarter Balanced Mathematics Calculator](#) or [Grades 7-8 Smarter Balanced Mathematics Calculator](#).

Test Administrator User Guide

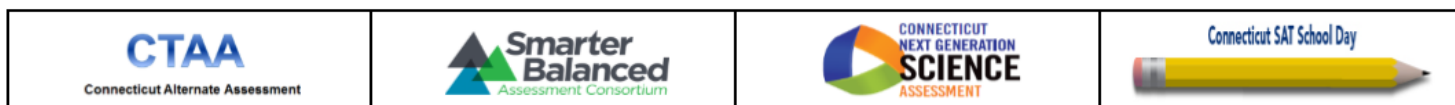
The [Test Administrator User Guide](#) is designed to help users navigate the Test Delivery System (TDS) including the Student Interface and the Test Administration Interface, and help support School Test Administrators manage and administer online testing for students.

Nexus School Reports

This year, for the first time, the shipment of paper-score reports from the state included separate file folders containing reports for students for whom your district is fiscally responsible. These score reports are for students with disabilities who are educated in an “Other Public School District” (your nexus students outplaced to a public school or program in another district).

Districts that have such students will find in folders labeled “Nexus School,” paper-score reports for the district’s nexus students that should be kept on file by the district. (Science reports are shipped separately from Smarter Balanced reports, but each shipment could include “Nexus School” file folders.)

These Nexus School reports do *not* need to be mailed home to parents even if districts receive multiple copies. The public school where these students *attend* received the reports that are to be mailed home. In most cases, the best thing for the District’s Testing Administrator to do with these folders is to put them in the hands of either, the district’s Director of Special Education or of the individual student’s planning and placement team (PPT) Chair.



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Assessment Calendar

2017–18 Summative Assessment Calendar			
Content Area(s)	Assessment	Grade(s)	Testing Window
English Language Proficiency: Speaking, Listening, Reading, and Writing	LAS-Links	K–12	January 3–March 9, 2018
English Language Arts & Mathematics	Connecticut Smarter Balanced	3–8	March 26–May 25, 2018
	Connecticut SAT School Day	11	<i>Primary Test Date:</i> March 21, 2018 <i>Makeup Dates:</i> April 24 and 25, 2018
	Connecticut Alternate Assessment	3–8 and 11	March 26–May 25, 2018
Science	Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) Assessment Field Test	5, 8 and 11	March 26–May 25, 2018 (Grade 11) April 30–May 25, 2018 (Grades 5 and 8)
	NGSS Alternate Assessment Field Test	5, 8 and 11	April 30–May 25, 2018 (Grades 5, 8, and 11)

Connecticut SAT School Day Updates

A webinar regarding updates to the 2018 Connecticut SAT School Day administration and accommodations for Special Populations will be held on **Monday, November 6, 2017, from 1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.** This webinar is intended for Connecticut SAT School Day Test Center Supervisors and Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) Coordinators. Please [register](#) for this event. Contact [Michelle Rosado](#) with any questions.

SAVE THE DATE:

Workshops for District Administrators regarding the 2018 Smarter Balanced Assessment, Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) Science, and Connecticut Alternate Assessment (CTAA) will be held the week of January 15, 2018. Connecticut SAT School Day workshops for Test Center Supervisors will be held on February 13 and 14, 2018. More details will follow.

Register for email updates

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

