



STUDENT ASSESSMENT NEWS

November 26, 2019

[Archived Student Assessment News](#)
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Connecticut Educators Participate in Smarter Balanced Meetings

Use the quick links below to access articles and/or sections included in this newsletter.

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Forty-one teachers from 27 Connecticut districts participated in item writing, item review, range finding and Digital Library meetings for English language arts and mathematics by the Smarter Balanced Consortium in 2019. The districts that were represented were: Avon, Berlin, Brookfield, Brooklyn, Canton, CES, Cheshire, Columbia, Coventry, CREC, East Granby, Fairfield, Guilford, Hartford, Middletown, Naugatuck, New London, North Haven, Region 6, Region 10, Shelton, Simsbury, Wallingford, Waterbury, Watertown, West Hartford, and Windsor.



Connecticut Educators at the Digital Library meeting held in October in Minneapolis



Letter of Justification for School Districts Exceeding the 1.0 Percent Threshold

A [memo dated November 1, 2019](#), was sent to Superintendents related to the justification for school districts exceeding the 1.0 percent threshold for students participating in the alternate assessment in 2018-19. Any school district exceeding the 1.0 percent alternate assessment threshold in either English language arts or mathematics **must** complete and submit the [form titled "Justification for School Districts Exceeding the 1.0 Percent Threshold."](#) This form should be submitted via e-mail to marlene.chamero@ct.gov no later than **Friday, December 6, 2019**.

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Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Completion

On November 19, 2019, the CSDE held a webinar regarding Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Completion that featured Dr. Chaka Felder-McEntire from Windsor and Michelle Catucci from Cheshire. On the CSDE [Web site](#) you will find copies of the slides, as well as a recorded version of the webinar and other related resources. Two additional resources for working with families on FAFSA Completion are [Gear Up Family Engagement Toolkit: Strategies and Resources to Communicate with Families](#) and [Tips for Engaging Parents in FAFSA Completion](#).



Connecticut SAT School Day Updates

Connecticut SAT School Day Webinar Slides and Recording

The [slides](#) and [recording](#) of the November 13, 2019, webinar for Connecticut SAT School Day Coordinators and Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) Coordinators regarding the 2020 Connecticut SAT School Day Administration Updates and Accommodations are available on the CSDE [Web site](#).

2020 Connecticut SAT School Day Test Coordinator Handbook

The [2020 Connecticut SAT School Day Test Coordinator Handbook](#) is an excellent resource available for all test coordinators but especially new coordinators. The handbook provides information to assist in the planning of the 2020 administration.

Score Sends for the Connecticut SAT School Day

Students who take the Connecticut SAT School Day in 2020 receive four free score sends. Students will enter the college codes for the free score sends on their answer sheet prior to or after testing. Many free score sends go unused by Connecticut students. The CSDE has a flyer, [Sending Your Scores](#), to encourage using the free score sends for Connecticut's public colleges and universities. Schools may post this flyer and/or use it during testing. Schools are encouraged, but not required to use this resource.

2020 Sample Parent Letters and FAQs

Connecticut SAT School Day sample parent letters in [English](#) and [Spanish](#) have been updated for 2020. Updated **Frequently Asked Questions for Families and Students** in [English](#) and [Spanish](#) and [Frequently Asked Questions for Districts & Schools](#) are also available.

SAT Practice Tests and Khan Academy

Schools can access full length SAT practice tests for students from the [College Board's Web site](#). Practice tests are also available for students using [MP3](#) or [Screen Reader](#) or [Assistive Technology](#). Schools can also request large print or braille SAT practice tests for students by contacting the [College Board's SSD](#). Additionally, students may access free online SAT practice through [Khan Academy](#). Students *may* also choose to link their College Board account to their Khan Academy account. Students who link their accounts will receive personalized practice. Please contact [Alan Bernstein](#) at the College Board if you would like to know the percentage of students in your school who have linked their accounts.



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Connecticut SAT School Day Updates (continued)

Connecticut SAT School Day Accommodation Reminders

Students with an active Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Section 504 Plan are eligible to receive accommodations on the Connecticut SAT School Day. Additionally, a variety of supports are available to identified English learners.

In preparation for the upcoming Connecticut SAT School Day, SSD Coordinators should plan to meet with students in advance of testing to explain accommodation options, review plans to determine if there are any changes based on their IEP, 504, or EL Plan, and submit any changes or new requests using the [SSD Online](#). Students should understand how their accommodations/EL supports function in accordance to timing regulations and test procedures. Refer to the [CSDE Assessment Guidelines](#), [Types of College Board Accommodations](#) and [English Learner Supports](#) brochures for more information. Additional reminders:

- As SSD Coordinators review/create student accounts in SSD Online, they should select the disability category that is as closely aligned to the student’s primary disability category listed on Page 1 of the Individual Education Program or as described by the 504 Plan. Selecting “Other” as a disability category will delay approval.
- The IEP or 504 Plan provides the “parental approval” to apply for accommodations; therefore, no additional permissions are required by the College Board.
- Students who elect to test without accommodations require a written statement signed by a parent/guardian or by the student, if over 18 years of age. These letters should be filed and maintained locally, and are not sent to the College Board. The accommodation *Change Form* should be faxed to the College Board to permanently remove accommodations for all College Board tests.
- Students must have approval of their accommodations (or 50 percent Extended Time for ELs) on the SSD Online before taking the test with accommodations. The use of accommodations without College Board prior approval results in the cancellation of test scores.
- Students who were denied a request for accommodations for a previous College Board test, should reapply for accommodations for the Connecticut SAT School Day.

Questions regarding accommodations can be directed to [Deirdre Ducharme](#).

The College Board is investing \$25 million in a new scholarship program, with students able to earn \$5 million in scholarships each year, beginning with the class of 2020. No application is necessary. **This scholarship opportunity will open to students in the class of 2021 in December.** To learn more about this, please visit the [College Board Opportunity Scholarship web page](#).

Results from the October 2019 PSAT will be available to school districts on December 2, 2019, through the College Board’s K-12 score reporting portal. Students will be able to access their scores via their College Board account on December 9, 2019. Learn more about the release of PSAT results on the [College Board’s web site](#).

AP teachers can apply to be an AP test reader! More information is available on the [College Board web site](#).

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Special Populations Updates

Connecticut Alternate Assessment Teacher Training

The required, online Connecticut Alternate Assessment System Training is now available on the [Connecticut Comprehensive Assessment Program Portal](#) for teachers who have the primary responsibility for assessing students in Grades 3-8 and 11 on the Connecticut Alternate Assessment System. Teachers must have a Test Distribution Engine (TIDE) Teacher Administering the Alternate (TEA) account to access the training and administer these assessments.

Data Entry Interface is Now Open for Submission of Connecticut Alternate Assessment Eligibility Form

The secure [Data Entry Interface](#) (DEI) is now open for the submission of the [Connecticut Alternate Assessment Eligibility Form](#) by the **trained** TEA. While the timely submission of eligibility forms ensures that students will have access to the Alternate Assessment at the time of testing, please note the DEI deadlines specific to the student’s enrolled grade and subgroup:

Connecticut Alternate Assessment Eligibility Form Submission Deadlines	Student Subgroup
January 15, 2020	Grade 11 students; Dually identified (special education and English learner) in Grades 3-8 and 11
February 14, 2020	Grades 3-8 students; Extended deadline for new Grade 11 students
June 5, 2020	Submissions are permitted after February 14, to account for changes to testing status per the Planning and Placement Team (PPT) and the enrollment of new students. Notify the Performance Office regarding any late submissions at 860-713-6860 so that the Alternate Assessment Indicator can be activated in the student’s TIDE account. The DEI closes on June 5, 2020.

Test Information Distribution Engine is Now Open for Submission of Designated Supports/Accommodations

The [TIDE](#) system is now open for the entry and/or batch upload of designated supports and accommodations for interim and summative assessments. A CSV or Excel template is available for download in TIDE for those using the batch upload process.

As a reminder, accommodations can only be submitted for those students who have an activated IDEA or Section 504 Indicator in the Public School Information System (PSIS). Given that the PSIS provides data to test delivery systems for state summative assessments administered to Connecticut public school students, District PSIS Coordinators must work closely with District Administrators (DAs) responsible for statewide student testing, to ensure that student information is being reported accurately. Select data fields such as English learner (EL) status, Special Education status, and Section 504 status must be updated in PSIS prior to selecting or uploading accommodations in TIDE.



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Special Populations Updates (continued)

English Learner Assessment Coordinator Workshops

The English Learner Assessment Coordinator (ELAC) Workshops was conducted November 19-21, 2019. Materials from the workshop are available on the Student Assessment [Web site](#).

IT webinar for LAS Links Preparation

On September 24, 2019, the *Supporting English Learners During the 2019-20 School Year* [memo](#) was sent to all registered English Learner Assessment Coordinators (ELAC). This memo reminds ELACs about the LAS Links assessment window, identifying the IT coordinator to support the online LAS Links Assessment and other critical dates related to the assessment of English learners. **The final IT webinar will be conducted at noon on December 4, 2019.**

Connecticut Alternate Science Assessment Administration

In conjunction with completing the Connecticut Alternate Assessment System Training, TEAs administering the alternate assessments to students in Grades 5, 8, and 11, should begin preparing for administration and administering the Connecticut Alternate Science (CTAS) Assessment to eligible students. Please refer to the [Connecticut Alternate Science \(CTAS\) Assessment Test Administration Manual](#) and the [Connecticut Alternate Science Assessment TEA Responsibility Checklist](#) for pre-planning and administrative activities. As a reminder, hard copy test materials are available locally for sharing with TEAs. [Digital copies](#) of the CTAS are also available on the Connecticut Comprehensive Assessment Program Portal.

Special Documented Accommodations

In exceptional circumstances, there may be a student whose disabilities are such that the allowable accommodations listed in the [Assessment Guidelines](#) would be insufficient to provide access to the Smarter Balanced Assessments, the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), or the Connecticut SAT School Day. In these cases, upon request, the District Administrator (DA) will be provided information regarding a [Petition for Approval of Special Documented Accommodations](#). To initiate this request the District Administrator (DA in TIDE) must contact the Performance Office at 860-713-6860. Please refer to the [2019-20 Assessment Guidelines](#) for more information.

Special Documented Accommodations Deadline	Assessment
December 9, 2019-January 24, 2020	Smarter Balanced and NGSS
November 22, 2019-February 4, 2020	Connecticut SAT School Day



Special Populations Updates (continued)

Updates on the Speech-to-Text

Speech-to-text (STT), or voice-recognition software, allows students to use their voices as input devices to the computer to dictate responses or give commands (e.g., opening application programs, pulling down menus, and saving work).

This accommodation is available for a specific subset of students who need it on the summative assessments based on their disability and access needs (per their Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan). For example, students who have motor or processing disabilities (such as dyslexia) may use this accommodation in class and find it beneficial.

While STT may be used by all types of students during instruction, the purpose and benefits must be considered carefully when determining the appropriateness on the summative assessments. The majority of all test items on the math and ELA summative assessments are not open-ended items. Those that are open ended require a brief, typed response (usually a few sentences). There are no open-ended items on the NGSS interim and summative assessments. With this in mind, not all students who use this accommodation instructionally may need to utilize it to access the summative assessments given the infrequency and demands of the typed response. Individual consideration is warranted. It's recommended that teachers work with potential candidates on the Practice Tests to determine the extent for which a student can provide a typed response independently.

If it is determined that STT is needed to access the summative assessment, teachers will need to determine if the STT software is compatible with the test delivery interface. When voice-recognition software, such as Dragon Naturally Speaking, is downloaded to a computer and used as a standalone that is compatible with the secure online test delivery system, it can be accessed when the Permissive Mode option is activated in the student's TIDE test settings. This feature should be piloted in advance of summative testing using the secure Practice Test to ensure that it functions correctly.

While some applications for STT are compatible with the American Institutes for Research (AIR) Secure Browser and Test Delivery System, many programs are not depending upon the testing platform, manufacturer, the application, version updates, and security considerations. When the STT cannot be used on the same device as the secure interface (e.g., a Chromebook), a work-around using two devices can be used. One device provides access to the Secure Student Interface; whereas, the second device (e.g., Chromebook) provides familiar access to the STT application. The student will respond to test items on the first secure device and respond to open-ended items on their familiar second device with STT. Students are expected to transcribe their open-ended responses back into the Student Secure Interface. If a student can perform this transcription independently, no further action is required. At the end of the test session, all responses must be deleted from the secondary device with the STT.

However, if students using this work-around are unable to transcribe their responses and require the use of a scribe, District Administrators will be required to fax a request for a Customized Speech-to-Text accommodation. This form will be available for download later this month on the Connecticut Comprehensive Assessment Program Portal along with instructions for completion. Students may not use the Customized Speech-to-Text accommodation without the submission of this form or approval for use by the CSDE. For more information, contact the Performance Office at 860-713-6860.

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Special Populations Updates (continued)

Calculator Use on the NGSS Practice, Interim, and Summative Assessments

The embedded [Desmos](#) calculator is available on the NGSS Practice Tests so that students can practice the custom features and functions of the calculator specific to their grade level and science item. These calculators include graphs that are accessible to students who are blind, offer colors with sufficient contrast, and adjustable font size settings. Note the distinctions by grade:

Grade 5-Basic Calculator **Grades 8**-Scientific Calculator **Grade 11**-Scientific, Graphing, and Regression Calculator

It is recommended that students have an opportunity to practice with the Desmos prior to participation in the interim and summative NGSS. If the embedded Desmos Calculator is not suitable for a particular student, a battery-operated hand-held calculator may be provided as a universal tool for Science only. However, proctors must 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. Students may not share calculators.

Please keep in mind that there are specific security requirements that must be adhered to during testing:

- Calculators with keyboards and/or communication functionality are **NOT** allowed unless requested through a special documented accommodation per a student’s IEP or 504 Plan.
- Calculators cannot be shared between students during testing. Each student will need to use either their own calculator or the online calculator available through the student interface.
- Calculators used during testing should be those used during instruction so they are familiar to the students.
- Talking calculators may be used by students who require them per their IEP or 504 Plan; however, the School Test Administrator (TA) must prevent distractions for other students using procedures such as using the calculator with ear phones or testing the student in a separate test environment.
- Test examiners must actively proctor to ensure that students are not accessing stored information on the calculator.

Please refer to the [Assessment Guidelines](#) for more information and a list of approved calculators that should be used as guidance for the Grade 11 NGSS Assessment.



Smarter Balanced Resources for Educators

<p>Smarter Content Explorer This site provides information on interpreting results, planning activities aligned to grade level claims and targets, and blueprints and scoring rubrics.</p>	<p>Sample Items Website This site provides examples of test questions used on Smarter Balanced assessments in English language arts/ literacy and math.</p>
<p>Practice Test Resources and Documentation This site provides information about the practice tests including scoring guides and annotated anchors.</p>	<p>Smarter Balanced in the Classroom This site provides examples of how schools are using the Smarter Balanced interim and formative assessments in the classroom.</p>

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Summative Assessment Calendar for 2019-20

Assessment	Dates
The AIR secure browsers for the 2019-20 school year must be downloaded for all 2019-20 online tests	Currently available
Connecticut SAT School Day Accommodations Window IEP and 504 Plan	November 22, 2019-February 4, 2020
LAS Links	January 2, 2020-March 6, 2020
Connecticut SAT School Day Accommodations Window EL Students	January 14, 2020-February 4, 2020
Connecticut SAT School Day	Primary Test Dates: March 25, 2020, or April 14, 2020 (Based on school selection) Makeup Dates: April 28 and/or 29, 2020
NGSS Assessment	February 3–June 5, 2020 (Grade 11) March 23–June 5, 2020 (Grades 5 and 8)
Connecticut Smarter Balanced	March 23–June 5, 2020
Connecticut Alternate Science Assessment - CTAS	(Upload Window for Submission through the DEI) March 23–June 5, 2020 (Grades 5, 8, and 11)
Connecticut Alternate Assessment - CTAA	March 23–June 5, 2020

Interim Score Reporting

Starting this year, all interim score reporting is only available in AIRWays. The Online Reporting System (ORS) will not provide access to any interim scores from the 2019-20 school year. This is in preparation of the full migration of reporting to AIRWays next year.

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.

