



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION



TO: Superintendents of Schools

FROM: Dr. Dianna R. Wentzell, Commissioner of Education *Dianna R. Wentzell*

DATE: January 30, 2017

SUBJECT: Annual Administration of Statewide Summative Assessments for Spring 2017

Both state and federal laws require the annual administration of statewide summative assessments in Connecticut schools in certain grades and subjects. These mandates have been in effect for many years and the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), as well as all public schools, must comply.

Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.) Section 10-14n, which refers to the statewide summative assessments as the mastery examination, require the following:

- "...each student enrolled in grades three to eight, inclusive, and grade eleven in any public school shall, annually, take a mastery examination in reading, writing and mathematics . . ."
- "...each student enrolled in grades five, eight and ten in any public school shall, annually, in March or April, take a state-wide mastery examination in science . . ."
- "No public school may require achievement of a satisfactory score on a mastery examination, or any subsequent retest on a component of such examination as the sole criterion of promotion or graduation."

Connecticut's annual statewide summative assessments include:

- the Smarter Balanced assessments for English language arts (ELA) and mathematics in Grades 3-8;
- the Connecticut SAT School Day in English language arts and mathematics in Grade 11;
- the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) in science in Grades 5 and 8; and
- the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) in science in Grade 10.

A small percentage of students with significant cognitive disabilities may be assessed, in accordance with the provisions of their individualized education program, using an alternate assessment. For ELA and mathematics, this assessment is the Connecticut Alternate Assessment, and for science it is the CMT Skills Checklist Science or the CAPT Skills Checklist Science.

Federal law continues to expect full participation of all students on the state summative assessments. The minimum standard for the participation rate is at least 95 percent of all students and all student groups for each subject. For accountability purposes at the district and school level, the CSDE evaluates the participation rate for all students, as well as students in the "High Needs¹" group, for all content areas (i.e., English language arts, mathematics, and science).

There are consequences for districts and schools not meeting this participation rate threshold on the state summative assessments. This [PowerPoint presentation available online](#) outlines the consequences (see slides 10 and 11) and also provides suggestions and resources for improving participation on state assessments.

It is important to note that Connecticut requires all English learners (ELs) including recently arrived ELs² to participate in **all** content areas of the state summative assessment. However, for accountability purposes, scores of recently arrived ELs will not be included toward academic achievement (i.e., Indicator 1) for two years. Instead, scores from year 1 will serve as a baseline for academic growth in Year 2. Growth based on Connecticut's matched student cohort growth model is an important component (Indicator 2) of the Next Generation Accountability System. In Year 3, the scores of recently arrived ELs will be included toward academic achievement and academic growth indicators in the accountability system.

If you have any questions, please contact Abe Krisst, Bureau Chief in the Performance Office, via e-mail at abe.krisst@ct.gov.

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¹ A student who is eligible for free/reduced price meals or is an English learner or a student with a disability is included in the "High Needs" subgroup category.

² Recently arrived ELs are those students whose initial entry date in a U.S. school is less than two years (i.e., 24 months) prior to test administration.