



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



**TO:** Superintendents of Schools

**FROM:** Mary Anne Butler, Chief Academic Officer *MAB*

**DATE:** March 11, 2016

**SUBJECT:** CORRECTION: Administration of Annual Assessments

***NOTE:*** *SDE is issuing this CORRECTED Memorandum to clarify the annual assessment requirements for English Learners. This replaces the Memorandum issued on March 9, 2016. The correction is noted below. In addition, the statutory reference for the science mastery exam has been added.*

Both state and federal laws require the administration of annual assessments in our public schools in certain grades and subjects. Federal law requires participation rates at/above 95 percent of students in tested grades. These mandates have been in effect for many years and the CT State Department of Education, as well as all public schools, must comply.

In Connecticut, our annual assessments include the Smarter Balanced Assessments for ELA and Math in grades 3-8; the SAT for Reading, Writing and Language, and Mathematics in grade eleven; and the CMT and CAPT in Science in grades five, eight and ten. Some students may be assessed using alternate assessments such as the Connecticut Alternative Assessment (CTAA) in ELA and Math, and the Science CMT Skills Checklist or the CAPT Science Skills Checklist, in accordance with the provisions of an IEP.

The following statutory references may be useful in your communications about student participation in annual State Assessments.

- Connecticut law requires that “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 . . .” C.G.S. § 10-14n.
- In addition, “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 . . .” C.G.S. § 10-14n.
- Following the passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the United States Department of Education directed all states with approved ESEA Flexibility waivers to adhere to their ESEA flexibility plans through August 1, 2016. In addition, the federal participation requirements for state assessments noted above (at/above 95 percent) remain in place and the same state assessments are required to be administered to all public school students, except for certain students with disabilities.
- Pursuant to federal and state law, all students are required to take annual state assessments, subject to the exceptions noted below. C.G.S. §§ 10-14n, 10-14q.
- **CORRECTION RE: ENGLISH LEARNERS:** Pursuant to Connecticut’s approved ESEA Flexibility waiver, all English Learners, regardless of how long they have been enrolled in school, shall take the mastery examination. However, under the ESEA Flexibility waiver and Section 10-14n(f) of the 2016 Supplement to the C.G.S., scores on each component of the mastery examination

for English Learners who have been enrolled in school for fewer than twenty (20) school months shall not be used for the purposes of calculating the school performance index.

- If a student has special needs due to a disability or medical condition, testing accommodations may be available.
  - The school district must determine what accommodations, if any, would appropriately address the child's needs, in accordance with procedures required by applicable law, including Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, 29 U.S.C. § 794.
  - As permitted by C.G.S. § 10-14q, in rare cases, a planning and placement team for an individual student receiving special education services may determine that an alternative assessment, as approved by the State Board of Education, is appropriate for the student. Such approved alternative assessments include the Connecticut Alternate Assessment and the CMT Science Skills Checklist or CAPT Science Skills Checklist.
- For each eleventh grade student who meets or exceeds the state-wide mastery goal level on any component of the mastery test, each local school district shall certify such achievement on the student's transcript and shall issue a certificate of mastery for such component. C.G.S. § 10-14n(d).
- "The scores on each component of the mastery examination . . . for each eleventh grade student may be included on the permanent record and transcript of each student who takes such examination." C.G.S. § 10-14n(d).
- "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." C.G.S. § 10-14n(e).

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