

**(B) Standards and Assessments (70 total points)**

**State Reform Conditions Criteria**

**(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards (40 points)**

The extent to which the State has demonstrated its commitment to adopting a common set of high-quality standards, evidenced by (as set forth in Appendix B) —

(i) The State’s participation in a consortium of States that — (20 points)

- (a) Is working toward jointly developing and adopting a common set of K-12 standards (as defined in this notice) that are supported by evidence that they are internationally benchmarked and build toward college and career readiness by the time of high school graduation; and
- (b) Includes a significant number of States; and

(ii) — (20 points)

- (a) For Phase 1 applications, the State’s high-quality plan demonstrating its commitment to and progress toward adopting a common set of K-12 standards (as defined in this notice) by August 2, 2010, or, at a minimum, by a later date in 2010 specified by the State, and to implementing the standards thereafter in a well-planned way; or
- (b) For Phase 2 applications, the State’s adoption of a common set of K-12 standards (as defined in this notice) by August 2, 2010, or, at a minimum, by a later date in 2010 specified by the State in a high-quality plan toward which the State has made significant progress, and its commitment to implementing the standards thereafter in a well-planned way.<sup>1</sup>

*In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion. The narrative or attachments shall also include, at a minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State’s success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.*

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<sup>1</sup> Phase 2 applicants addressing selection criterion (B)(1)(ii) may amend their June 1, 2010 application submission through August 2, 2010 by submitting evidence of adopting common standards after June 1, 2010.

Evidence for (B)(1)(i):

- A copy of the Memorandum of Agreement, executed by the State, showing that it is part of a standards consortium.
- A copy of the final standards or, if the standards are not yet final, a copy of the draft standards and anticipated date for completing the standards.
- Documentation that the standards are or will be internationally benchmarked and that, when well-implemented, will help to ensure that students are prepared for college and careers.
- The number of States participating in the standards consortium and the list of these States.

Evidence for (B)(1)(ii):

For Phase 1 applicants:

- A description of the legal process in the State for adopting standards, and the State's plan, current progress, and timeframe for adoption.

For Phase 2 applicants:

- Evidence that the State has adopted the standards. Or, if the State has not yet adopted the standards, a description of the legal process in the State for adopting standards and the State's plan, current progress, and timeframe for adoption.

## **(B)(1) DEVELOPING AND ADOPTING COMMON STANDARDS**

### **Introduction**

In its Phase 1 Race to the Top (RTTT) application, Connecticut committed to adopting the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) supported by aligned curriculum and professional development. Connecticut maintains that commitment in this RTTT application. Since January 2010, Connecticut has formulated a broader and much bolder agenda related to the new standards. This work is summarized in the table below.

<b>Summary of State Progress on Standards and Assessments - January through July 2010</b>		
<b>Action/Result</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>
<p><b>Statutory Change: High School Graduation</b>            New statutory language specifying higher graduation standards to be completed by students graduating in 2018 (Public Act 10-111)            Statutory Change: New statute authorizing early high school graduation options (Public Act 10-111)</p>	<p>May 2010             May 2010</p>	<p>CT General Assembly, 2010 Session</p>
<p><b>RTTT Partnerships for Change Established</b>            RTTT Partnership for Family and Community Engagement            RTTT Partnership for High School, College and Workforce Alignment            RTTT Partnership for Curriculum Innovation and Technology (includes STEM)</p>	<p>May 2010</p>	<p>Commissioner of Education with Partnership Leadership Team</p>
<p><b>Building Educator Knowledge of New Standards</b>            Stakeholder forums            LEA input on professional development needs            ACHIEVE Gap Analysis completed to align CT mathematics and English language arts achievement standards to CCSS            Stakeholder Engagement Conference            Stakeholder feedback compiled and posted on the Web            Adoption of CCSS</p>	<p>March 2010            March 2010            May-June 2010            June 2010            July 2010            July 2010            July 2010</p>	<p>Commissioner of Education            LEA forum participants            CT State Department of Education with ACHIEVE            CT State Department of Education            CT State Department of Education            CT State Department of Education            CT State Board of Education</p>
<p><b>Identification of Additional Standards Work</b>            Plan to align Preschool Curriculum Framework to CCSC for K-3            Plan to develop Career- and College-Ready Standards</p>	<p>February 2010            May 2010</p>	<p>CT State Department of Education</p>
<p><b>K-12 Curriculum Development</b>            www.CTcurriculum.org online</p>	<p>Spring 2010</p>	<p>CT State Department of Education</p>

Based on this work, Connecticut is now on track to:

- Adopt, disseminate and support the statewide implementation of CCSS in English language arts and mathematics;
- Increase high school graduation requirements and options for early entry to higher education;
- Develop the state's first set of college- and career-ready standards;
- Assure alignment of the CCSS with standards for early childhood education and post-secondary education;
- Expand K-12 curriculum development aligned with the CCSS;
- Act on LEA input on targeted professional development needs related to CCSS and assessments; and
- Increase family and community understanding of the new standards and their importance.

Further detail is provided in Section (B)(3).

**(B)(1)(i): Consortium Participation and Standards Adoption**

In May 2009, Governor M. Jodi Rell and Chief State School Officer, Commissioner Mark K. McQuillan, signed the CCSS Memorandum of Agreement issued by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governors' Association (NGA) Center for Best Practices, in partnership with Achieve, ACT and the College Board. With that memorandum, Connecticut joined 47 other states, two territories and the District of Columbia in a multi-state process of developing a common core of rigorous, internationally-benchmarked standards in English language arts and mathematics aligned to college and workforce readiness. A copy of the signed Memorandum of Agreement is provided as Appendix (B)(1)(a).

At the July 2010 meeting of the State Board of Education (SBE), the common standards will be presented for adoption. A copy of the draft national CCSS is provided as Appendix (B)(1)(b). SBE approval is the final and legal process for adoption of state standards; no legislative action is required for adoption in Connecticut.

**Section (B)(1)(ii): State Progress in Adopting and Implementing Standards**

The information below provides more substantial detail on current actions reported in the table above. Over the last seven months, content specialists at the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) have carefully monitored the CCSS development process and have provided specific feedback to drafts released in November 2009 and February 2010. While awaiting the publication of the finalized common standards, anticipated in early June 2010, the CSDE has developed a comprehensive plan to assure stakeholder acceptance and a confident transition to implementing the new CCSS standards.

First, the CSDE will do a thorough comparison of Connecticut’s standards in English language arts and mathematics to the CCSS. To accomplish this, an online Gap Analysis Tool developed by Achieve will be used. In April 2010, Achieve trained a team of CSDE content specialists to upload both sets of standards and generate an analysis report that will identify which standards appear in both documents, which appear only in the state’s current standards, and which appear only in the CCSS. This analysis will be completed in June 2010. The results will enable the department to understand the degree of similarity between the two sets of standards and to predict how the adoption of the CCSS may impact school districts, teacher preparation institutions and other education stakeholders.

Once the gap analysis study is completed, the CSDE will work with the RESC Alliance to convene a statewide Stakeholder Engagement Conference. The conference will bring together 125 representatives of a broad range of education stakeholders, including, but not limited to, teachers, principals, curriculum specialists, teacher preparation institutions, education advocacy groups, parent advocacy groups, social advocacy groups, special needs groups, business and industry and unions. The four goals of the conference are to:

- (1) Build credibility, acceptance and understanding of CCSS in advance of adoption and implementation;
- (2) Identify Connecticut state standards that should be added to the CCSS;
- (3) Collect data on the relative rigor, clarity and sequencing of the CCSS and the state’s standards; and
- (4) Elicit feedback to inform CSDE planning for rollout, transition support, new resources and professional development.

Working in facilitated small groups, stakeholders will respond to a department-developed questionnaire to provide quantitative data about the quality of the CCSS; what additional standards – unique to Connecticut – should be added, if any, to the CCSS; and what resources or support systems will be needed for effective implementation of the new CCSS. Stakeholder responses will be analyzed by an independent evaluator who will prepare a report summarizing the conference processes and findings (see Appendix (B)(1)(c)), copy of Stakeholder Engagement Conference data collection form and draft of new CCSS). The evaluator’s report and the Commissioner’s recommendation to adopt the CCSS, including Connecticut’s additional unique standards, will be presented for discussion and voted on at the July 2010 meeting of the SBE.

In light of the fact that the CCSS do not include early childhood standards, the CSDE is proactively planning to work with the state’s Early Childhood Cabinet to develop appropriate standards for children from birth to 5 years old and integrate them into the new Connecticut state standards. To assure a seamless alignment with the K-12 common standards, the work on new early childhood standards for Connecticut will begin once the final edition of the CCSS is published. In addition, the CSDE, working with the Partnership for High School, College and Workforce Alignment, will propose college- and career-ready standards within the next year (see Section (B)(3)).

**Appendices Referenced in Section (B)(1)(i-ii)**

Appendix (B)(1)(a) Memorandum of Agreement for Standards Consortium Participation

Appendix (B)(1)(b) Copy of Common Standards in Mathematics and English Language Arts

Appendix (B)(1)(c) Copy of Stakeholder Engagement Conference Data Collection Form

**(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments (10 points)**

The extent to which the State has demonstrated its commitment to improving the quality of its assessments, evidenced by (as set forth in Appendix B) the State's participation in a consortium of States that—

- (i) Is working toward jointly developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments (as defined in this notice) aligned with the consortium's common set of K-12 standards (as defined in this notice); and
- (ii) Includes a significant number of States.

*In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion. The narrative or attachments shall also include, at a minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.*

Evidence for (B)(2):

- A copy of the Memorandum of Agreement, executed by the State, showing that it is part of a consortium that intends to develop high-quality assessments (as defined in this notice) aligned with the consortium's common set of K-12 standards; or documentation that the State's consortium has applied, or intends to apply, for a grant through the separate Race to the Top Assessment Program (to be described in a subsequent notice); or other evidence of the State's plan to develop and adopt common, high-quality assessments (as defined in this notice).
- The number of States participating in the assessment consortium and the list of these States.

*Recommended maximum response length: One page*

**(B)(2) DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING COMMON, HIGH-QUALITY ASSESSMENTS**

**(B)(2)(i-ii)** Connecticut is committed to adoption of high-quality common assessments that reflect the depth and breadth of the CCSS. Since January, Connecticut has continued to expand its membership and roles in three consortia that are or will be engaged in the development of common assessments that flow from the CCSS.

Valid and reliable assessments are an essential component of an integrated system of education for instruction, management and public accountability. Assessments are designed to improve the performance of all students, particularly subgroups of students whose performance has not prepared them to graduate from public high schools or, if they did, to be successful in higher education and the workforce. A comprehensive, integrated and cohesive structure of formative, benchmark and summative assessments and performance tasks provides educators with a critical set of tools. These assessments are aligned with the rigorous curriculum standards, and educators can use them to measure students' progress, diagnose where learning issues are occurring, and plan instruction to move all students to higher levels of understanding.

### **SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium**

On April 13, 2010, Commissioner McQuillan signed the Document of Commitment through which Connecticut joined with 33 other states to participate in a state-led and -governed SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium to develop a new generation of comprehensive assessments aligned with the CCSS. Connecticut is a member of the Steering Committee for the development of the consortium's application for the Race to the Top Assessment Grant (Category A) for Comprehensive Assessment Systems. Eight CSDE staff members are participating in workgroups to draft sections of the application. A copy of the Document of Commitment, list of member states and Governance Structure and Priorities are included in Appendix (B)(2)(a). Connecticut expects to be one of the 'governing states' for the assessment system development when the application has been funded.

The SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium's primary goal is to develop a balanced system of formative and summative assessments for evaluating student achievement in meeting the CCSS and measuring growth over time. The priorities for the consortium's work will be to ensure that:

- Assessments are managed as part of an integrated system that also includes standards, curriculum, instruction and professional development

- Assessments provide evidence of how well students perform on challenging tasks that prepare them for college and the 21st century workforce
- Teachers are involved in designing and developing curriculum and assessments and are trained to reliably score assessments
- Technology contributes to higher-quality assessments and improved information systems to support accountability
- Assessments are structured to continually improve teaching and learning

### **National Center for Education and the Economy Consortium**

Connecticut is one of eight states working with the National Center for Education and the Economy (NCEE) in its application for funds in the Investment in Innovations (i3) Grant to support internationally benchmarked Board Examination Systems as alternative paths for students to complete high school graduation requirements and transition to college or the workforce. Connecticut is also a ‘governing state’ for NCEE’s application for the RTTT Assessment Grant (Category B) High School Course Assessment Programs, also to support the implementation of the Board Examination Systems. See Appendix (B)(2)(b) for a copy of the letter of intent and list of member states.

### **New England Secondary School Consortium**

Connecticut is also a member of the New England Secondary School Consortium (NESSC) with the Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont State Departments of Education and the Great Schools Partnership. See Appendix (B)(2)(c) for the NESSC Letter of Support. The NESSC is working closely with states to design and plan a variety of secondary school improvement initiatives to bring greater coherence to secondary school education in New England and to promote best practices, school innovation and forward-thinking educational policy in the region. The next phase of the Consortium’s work begins in July 2010 and includes developing performance assessments, coordinating the sharing of virtual high school courses among the member states, implementing consistent data definitions of high school effectiveness indicators (drop-out rate, graduation rate, college entry rate, etc.). A copy of the NESSC Phase II Work Plan is included in Appendix (B)(2)(d). Members of the Partnerships for High School, College and Workforce Alignment are participating in the Work Group, which meets monthly.

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### **Connecticut Race to the Top Phase 2 Application**

<b>Table (B)(-2)(i-ii)(a): January through July 2010 State Progress in Adopting Common Assessments and Related State Law and Policy</b>		
<b>Action/ Result</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>
<b>RTTT Category A - Comprehensive Assessment System Grant Application</b>	June 23, 2010	Consortium Executive Committee with Connecticut as a member
<b>RTTT Category B - High School Assessment Grant Application</b>	June 23, 2010	NCEE with Connecticut as a member
<b>NESSC Phase II Work Plan</b>	July 1, 2010	CSDE and NESSC

**Appendices Referenced in Section (B)(2)**

Appendix (B)(2)(a) Document of Commitment for the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium, Governance Structure and Priorities, and list of member states

Appendix (B)(2)(b) Letter of Intent for National Center for Education and Economy Consortium and list of member states

Appendix (B)(2)(c) NESSC Letter of Support

Appendix (B)(2)(d) NESSC Phase II Work Plan

**Reform Plan Criteria****(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments (20 points)**

The extent to which the State, in collaboration with its participating LEAs (as defined in this notice), has a high-quality plan for supporting a statewide transition to and implementation of internationally benchmarked K-12 standards that build toward college and career readiness by the time of high school graduation, and high-quality assessments (as defined in this notice) tied to these standards. State or LEA activities might, for example, include: developing a rollout plan for the standards together with all of their supporting components; in cooperation with the State's institutions of higher education, aligning high school exit criteria and college entrance requirements with the new standards and assessments; developing or acquiring, disseminating, and implementing high-quality instructional materials and assessments (including, for example, formative and interim assessments (both as defined in this notice)); developing or acquiring and delivering high-quality professional development to support the transition to new standards and assessments; and engaging in other strategies that translate the standards and information from assessments into classroom practice for all students, including high-need students (as defined in this notice).

*The State shall provide its plan for this criterion in the text box below. The plan should include, at a minimum, the goals, activities, timelines, and responsible parties (see Reform Plan Criteria elements in Application Instructions or Section XII, Application Requirements (e), for further detail). Any supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers must be described and, where relevant, included in the Appendix. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.*

**(B)(3) SUPPORTING THE TRANSITION TO ENHANCED STANDARDS AND HIGH-QUALITY ASSESSMENTS****Introduction**

Over the period January through May 2010, Connecticut has established a broad set of implementation goals to ensure that CCSS and high-quality curricula will be available and in use and that a full-range of aligned assessments will be in place to track the progress of student learning and the fidelity with which the common standards and curricula are being used. This work is anchored in five advances over this period.

First, we have strengthened our commitment to engaging families and community agencies in understanding and support of the new higher standards. Second, our 2008 plan for secondary school reform was enacted as part of Public Act 10-111 (See Appendix

(A)(1)(c)) adopted by the Connecticut General Assembly in May 2010). Third, we have begun work on our commitment to align the K-12 common standards and assessments with prekindergarten and postsecondary education. Fourth, Connecticut has moved forward to enrich its evolving framework for teaching and learning anchored in a STEM framework. Finally, we will improve the working relationship between PK-12 education and our strong public and private institutions of higher education to ensure that our prekindergarten, college- and workforce-readiness standards, to be developed and adopted by June 2011, are aligned with higher education

On December 3, 2008, the SBE approved the *Connecticut Plan for Secondary School Reform* (see Appendix B)(3)(a)). Four key themes of the *Connecticut Plan for Secondary School Reform* are concordant with the expectations of Race to the Top:

1. *Student engagement*, reflecting improvements in instructional both delivery and school climate;
2. *21st century skills* required for future success in college and careers, based in particular on the work of the Partnership for High School, College and Workforce Alignment;
3. *Rigorous expectations*, reflected in more demanding high school graduation requirements and higher, more clearly articulated course specifications; and
4. *Accountability* in the form of multiple assessments (including common formative assessments and end-of-course exams) linked to Connecticut's standards and frameworks.

Because there is strong concordance between the emerging CCSS, Connecticut's existing content standards and the elements of the *Connecticut Plan for Secondary School Reform*, Connecticut is already on track to launch the state's plan to help LEAs transition to the new common standards and assessments. Importantly, in May 2010 the Connecticut General Assembly enacted significant education reform legislation (see Appendix (A)(1)(c)) that incorporated into law key elements of the secondary school reform plan. Specifically, the freshman class entering high school in the fall of 2014 will need to successfully complete 25 rather than 20 credits,

complete additional mathematics and science courses along with end-of-course examinations, develop Student Success Plans and complete a senior year Capstone Project in order to graduate.

The balance of Section (B)(3) describes the goals of Connecticut’s transition plan, along with activities, timelines and responsible parties. Much of the work in Connecticut’s transition plan focuses on enhancing the effectiveness of the state’s teachers and administrators so they in turn will become better able to improve the performance of the state’s public school students. As a result, we expect that students entering high school in 2014 will graduate equipped with the necessary knowledge, 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and behaviors needed to be productive. Planning will take place in the final year to ensure that the initiatives will be sustained.

The table below provides a summary of the goals and timelines that will support Connecticut schools and districts in the transition to the CCSS and associated assessments. The details of the goals of Connecticut’s transition plan are listed below the chart and include activities, timelines and responsible parties. Although not the lead agency in most of the activities, higher education will be invited to participate in the planning and implementation to inform aligning their undergraduate and teacher preparation programs with the CCSS.

<b>Connecticut's Goals and Activities to Support LEA Implementation of Common Standards and Assessments</b>				
<b>Goals/Activities</b>	<b>2010-2011</b>	<b>2011-2012</b>	<b>2012-2013</b>	<b>2013-2014</b>
<b>Goal 1: Stakeholder Understanding</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Family and Community</li> <li>Educators and Educational Associations</li> <li>General Public and Policy Makers</li> </ul>	Continue work begun in 2010 October 2010 June 2010	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing
<b>Goal 2: Prekindergarten and Post-Secondary Standards Alignment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>College- and Career-Ready Standards</li> <li>Preschool Learning Standards and K-3 Standards Alignment</li> </ul>	Ongoing Ongoing	Adopt Adopt	Roll-out Roll-out	
<b>Goal 3: Professional Development</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CT Accountability for Learning Initiative (CALI) and SRBI Training</li> <li>Connecticut Student Assessment Forum: A Changing Paradigm</li> <li>Fall 2010 Conference on New Generation Learners</li> <li>Student Success Plans and Capstone Experience Training</li> <li>Benchmark Assessment Development Training</li> <li>Early Grade Learning Standards and Assessment Training</li> <li>Teacher Involvement in Test Development and Scoring</li> <li>LEA Requested Professional Development</li> <li>SLDS/CEDaR Training</li> </ul>	Ongoing August 2010 October 2010 Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing	Ongoing  Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing	Ongoing  Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing	Ongoing  Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing
<b>Goal 4: Multiple Pathways to Graduation for High School Students</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Board Examination Certificates</li> <li>Virtual New England Secondary Reform Consortium (NESSC) High School and College Course Offerings</li> </ul>	Ongoing  Ongoing	Ongoing  Ongoing	Ongoing  Ongoing	Ongoing  Ongoing
<b>Goal 5: Access to Digital Library</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued development of the www.CTcurriculum.org Web site with inclusion of frameworks-based curriculum units</li> </ul>	Begin Grades 6-12	Complete Grades 6-12; Begin PK-5	Complete PK-5	X
<b>Goal 6: Expanded access to STEM learning opportunities for students and LEA faculty</b>	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing

**(B)(3) Plan in Detail**

**Goal 1: Increase public and targeted stakeholder understanding of Common Core State Standards.**

As the result of this goal, educators, parents and the general public will clearly understand how the CCSS in mathematics and English language arts increase the expectations for the performance of all students, PK-12, and how they relate to the *Connecticut Plan for Secondary School Reform*.

**Activities**

**Family and Community Engagement**

- Create a Web-based information site – linked to Connecticut’s federally-funded Parent Information Resource Center (PIRC) – to inform parents and the community about the CCSS, assessments and the CALI (see Sections (D)(5), and (E)(1) (2)). Target completion date: July 2011.
- Working with the Partnership for Family and Community Engagement, develop a strategic communications and outreach strategy for improving family and community engagement in student learning, including providing family-friendly, multi-language presentations on the new CCSS. Target completion date: July 2011.

**Teachers, Administrators and Statewide Education Associations**

- Working with the Partnership for Pre-Service Training and Professional Development, develop and disseminate to statewide stakeholders (including institutions of higher education) and LEAs a matrix presenting similarities and differences between the CCSS and Connecticut’s previous standards and requirements in the *Connecticut Plan for Secondary School Reform*, highlighting any key areas of change. This will be disseminated through the Regional Education Service Center (RESC) Alliance. Target completion date: October 2010.

- Working with the Partnership for Pre-Service Training and Professional Development and the Partnership for High School, College and Workforce Alignment, update existing resources such as grade-level expectations, pacing guides and model curricula and provide information to LEAs, higher education institutions and other constituents about how existing state curriculum resources dovetail with the requirements of the new common standards and the *Connecticut Plan for Secondary School Reform* requirements as codified in Public Act 10-111, and disseminate through professional development meetings at the RESCs. Target completion date: November 2010.
- Working with the Partnership for Pre-Service Training and Professional Development and the Partnership on High School, College and Workforce Alignment, conduct statewide and regional events to present the CCSS at the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE)/Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS) annual meeting and to the early childhood education sector. Target completion date: November 2010.
- Working with the Partnership for Pre-Service Training and Professional Development, CSDE will develop targeted professional development sessions/materials to address concerns and questions raised by educators, beginning with those raised at the March 2010 forums. Target completion date: June 2011.

#### **General Public and Policymakers**

- With the RTTT Knowledge Network and the Partnership for High School, College and Workforce Alignment, conduct a media campaign to inform the general public and state policymakers (beyond the field of education) about the importance and implications of CCSS and assessments for the continued improvement of student achievement.

***Timeframe:*** June 2010-July 2011. Continued public and stakeholder education each subsequent year, 2011-2014

***Responsible Parties:*** CSDE; Partnership for Pre-Service Training and Professional Development; Partnership for High School, College and Workforce Alignment; and Partnership for Family and Community Engagement; and the RTTT Knowledge Network

**Goal 2: Construct, review and adopt college- and career-ready standards and align Preschool Curriculum Framework to create cohesive PK-3 framework.**

As the result of this goal, Connecticut’s implementation of common standards will be enhanced by creating vertical alignment with preschool and post-secondary standards.

**Activities**

- Led by the Partnership for High School, College and Workforce Alignment, CSDE will develop and adopt college- and career-ready standards by June 2011.
- Following review by the Partnership for High School, College and Workforce Alignment, the CSDE will endorse and promote the International Society for Technology in Education’s National Educational Technology Standards for Students, Teachers, and Administrators (NETS-S, NETS-T, NETS-A). These internationally embraced standards address technology and other essential 21st century skills.

**Early Learning Standards and PK-3 Vertical Curriculum Alignment**

Connecticut’s Early Childhood Education Cabinet was designated by the Governor in February 2009 as the State Advisory Council for Early Education and Care under the Head Start Act of 2007. As part of its federally-mandated functions, the council must address issues related to preschool that are analogous to the levers of change within the RTTT framework.

- Align Early Learning Guidelines (B-3) with the Preschool Curriculum Frameworks (3-5) for B-5 standards.
- Align B-5 standards with the CCSS for a PK-3 continuum.

**Timeframe:** Adoption by June 2011

**Responsible Parties:** CSDE; Partnership on High School, College and Workforce Alignment; Early Childhood Education Cabinet; School Readiness Network; Head Start Association; and the elementary principals’ network (hosted by the Connecticut Association of Schools)

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**Connecticut Race to the Top Phase 2 Application**

**Goal 3: Provide educators from PK through 12 schools and higher education institutions with high-quality professional development related to the transition to and use of CCSS and the state’s evolving assessment system.**

As the result of this goal, educators demonstrate the skills and knowledge necessary to continually improve curriculum and instruction so that their students perform at high levels.

*Activities*

**Continue CALI and SRBI Training**

These training programs will be made available to LEAs through the RESC Alliance and incorporated into pre-service training for undergraduates majoring in education. Target date: Annually beginning in fall 2010. See Sections (A)(1)(i) and (E)(3).

***Timeframe:*** Annually starting in the fall of 2010

***Responsible Parties:*** CSDE, RESC Alliance and higher education institutions

**Connecticut Student Assessment Forum: A Changing Paradigm**

Working with the University of Connecticut Neag School of Education and assessment and technology vendors, the CSDE will offer a two-day forum with nationally-acclaimed keynote speakers, presentations and workshops. The emphasis will be on using assessment data to inform curricular and instructional decisions and current state initiatives such as the Connecticut Benchmark Assessment System (CBAS), the Student Growth Projection Model, K-2 Assessments Consortium, research on accommodations on assessments for students with disabilities and English language learners, and performance formative assessments. The use of technology in assessment and reporting will be highlighted, as well the new generation of assessments that are being developed by consortiums nationally to measure student progress and growth relative to the CCSS that Connecticut adopted in July.

***Timeframe:*** August 2010

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**Connecticut Race to the Top Phase 2 Application**

**Responsible Parties:** Connecticut State Department of Education, University of Connecticut Neag School of Education and vendors

**Fall 2010 Conference on New Generation Learners (October 2010)**

Working with the Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS), the Partnership for Curriculum Innovation and Technology and the Knowledge Network, the department will offer a day-long conference for teachers and administrators showcasing district and school initiatives that are effective in increasing support for, and improving the performance and engagement of students, particularly those who are most academically at risk.

**Timeframe:** October 2012

**Responsible Parties:** CSDE, CAS, Partnership for Curriculum Innovation and Technology and the Knowledge Network

**Professional Development Workshops on Implementing Student Success Plans and Capstone Experience**

Beginning in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade and continuing through high school, each Connecticut student will develop a Student Success Plan. The plan incorporates the student's individual interests and abilities and establishes an individualized program of study that will help every student remain interested in school and achieve post-high school educational and career goals. These electronic Student Success Plans are integrated within the local student information system so that school professionals can help students monitor their progress in meeting grade-level and college- and career-readiness standards online. The capstone experience is a culminating performance-based project to help graduating students focus on an area of interest as they transition to college or the workforce. Through the capstone experience, each student demonstrates 21st century skills and content knowledge mapped to their Student Success Plans, including research skills and the ability to communicate their findings in written and oral presentations.

Beginning in the fall of 2010, the RESC Alliance, working in conjunction with the Partnership for Family and Community Engagement, will provide professional development to LEA personnel in implementing Student Success Plans and capstone experience projects that adhere to the guidelines posted on the state Web site and on CTcurriculum.org (see Table (B)(3)(a)).

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**Connecticut Race to the Top Phase 2 Application**

**Timeframe:** Begin in fall of 2010. Continue annually through 2014

**Responsible Parties:** CSDE, RESC Alliance, Partnership for Family and Community Engagement

**Benchmark Assessment Development and Training**

The Connecticut Benchmark Assessment System (CBAS) provides rapid-time access to school- and classroom-level data to inform instruction and the need for supports. CBAS is based on the grade-level expectations (GLE) for mathematics and the assessment strands for reading, as defined in the Department’s *Sequenced Mathematics Grade-Level Expectations* in grades 3-5, the *Mathematics Curriculum Pacing Guides* for grades 6-8, and the grades 3-8 *Reading Comprehension GLEs and Pacing Guide* system for benchmark assessments. CBAS is composed of 18 tests that mark student progress from the fall of grade 3 to the spring of grade 8 in mathematics and reading comprehension. CBAS results are available to teachers almost immediately following the administration of the assessment. Total mathematics and reading comprehension scores and mathematics GLE or reading comprehension strand raw scores are reported.

For the past four years, Connecticut has worked with LEAs to develop its online CBAS for grades 3 through 8. The state made CBAS available this year to all LEAs on a voluntary basis and 80 districts participated. The state is committed to developing a comprehensive, high-quality assessment system that integrates *summative* assessments with *formative* assessments for learning. The formative assessments provide teachers with feedback to help them diagnose how well students learn, so that they can adjust instruction and help students monitor their progress. In addition, *benchmark* assessments are used to monitor students’ mastery and retention of skills and concepts over time and help students and their parents understand whether the child is on track to meet the grade-level requirements.

Connecticut’s *Initiative to Support a Comprehensive Assessment System: Guidelines for Implementing Formative Assessment at the District Level* in Appendix (B)(3)(b) outlines the integration of these types of assessments into a cohesive system. To this end, Connecticut has been working with its testing contractor and LEAs to develop, pilot and administer the online CBAS for grades 3

through 8 in mathematics and reading. For each subject, CBAS provides LEA staff members with electronic reports for three sets of standards-based interim assessments annually that teachers can use to monitor student progress toward meeting grade-level standards over the course of a school year. The long-term goal for the CBAS project is to produce a large bank of items classified for specific educational objectives. The expectation is that teachers will be able to use the item bank to produce customized assessments that can be administered at the LEAs' convenience to provide immediate information to teachers regarding student performance relative to state defined standards. Professional development will be provided on an ongoing basis to assist and support LEA professionals in the use of the CBAS.

Upon adoption of the CCSS, the CSDE and its testing contractor will revise the benchmark assessments to align with the new standards. LEAs will then begin to chart their own progress and that of their students toward meeting the CCSS. Connecticut will also expand CBAS to include the Direct Assessment of Writing benchmarks for the same grades, to be administered three times per year, which will be scored using an artificial intelligence application to provide timely feedback to teachers and students.

***Timeframe:*** Training annually, in the fall

***Responsible Parties:*** CSDE, LEAs and assessment vendors

### **Entry to Early Grade Standards and Assessments**

Connecticut recognizes that each child's success in elementary, middle and high schools is largely dependent on the skills and knowledge they have when they enter pre-school or kindergarten. As a result, the state requires kindergarten teachers to administer and report the results of a Kindergarten Inventory, which summarizes the skill-level that children have at the beginning of the year in the areas of language, literacy and numeracy, as well as social, artistic and physical skills. Results are used as a statewide indicator to monitor kindergarten preparedness. Training is provided annually to inform kindergarten teachers about assessment standards and appropriate use of the Inventory. Results of this assessment are transmitted back to the districts late in the fall and released on the department's Web site (see Section (C)(2)).

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To complement the Inventory information and provide districts with tools for early intervention, the CSDE and the Capitol Region Education Council (CREC) are working on a K-2 Assessment Consortium Project to bring together practitioners and experts in early childhood instruction and assessment to explore current practices in formative assessment in literacy, mathematics and science for our schools' youngest learners. The Consortium will work to identify unmet needs in this area and develop developmentally appropriate formative assessment materials and protocols in specific content areas for the early elementary grades. The project's focus in the first year is an appropriate formative assessments in math and science for grades K-2. The consortium is composed of representatives from 15 Partner Districts that are working with the Bureau of Accountability and Improvement, the CSDE and the regional educational service centers (RESCs). This includes practicing early childhood teachers (K-2); early childhood coordinators; and math, science and language arts specialists familiar with early childhood curriculum. The representatives who compose the Consortium are meeting six times per year to work on writing protocols for assessment administrations, piloting, editing, revising and finalizing created assessments and formats, developing administrative procedures and data analysis protocols, and creating a Web site to host the final assessment products. These assessments will be made available to LEAs, and the RESC will provide professional development for teachers so that they can reliably administer the assessments and interpret the results.

***Activities:***

- District assessment calendars collected and analyzed, 2010
- Release of Year 1 mathematics/science assessments, summer 2010
- Consortium meets to identify next steps for assessment development and professional development, June 2010
- 2010-11 plan developed, July 2010

Through the Partnership for Pre-Service Training and Professional Development, the School Readiness Councils and the Early Childhood Education Cabinet, orientation and professional development opportunities will be provided to the Connecticut sector including K-2 teachers, principals and coordinators, with awareness training done for the early childhood field.

***Timeframe:*** Assessment completion in June 2010 and ongoing orientation and training beginning October 2010

***Responsible Parties:*** CSDE, CREC, State Education Resource Center (SERC), Partnership for Pre-Service Training and Professional Development; School Readiness providers, Connecticut Early Childhood Education Cabinet, LEAs and higher education institutions

**Teacher Involvement in Test Development and Scoring Protocols**

Connecticut has a long history in involving practicing educators in all aspects of test development. The department will offer professional development statewide through the RESC Alliance to train teachers to teach rigorous statewide standards on key units, with special outreach to teachers in LEAs with large numbers of high-need students. Committees of educators will be trained to develop formative constructed-response and extended-response items and performance tasks that complement each model curriculum, including applying the Principles of Universal Design (a proprietary design compliance construct) to ensure access for students with disabilities and English language learners. Expert teachers, higher education faculty and researchers will participate in the development of the designated model curricula, formative assessments, sample lessons and end-of-course exams for the designated courses. Beginning in the fall of 2011, the RESC Alliance will provide annual training and professional development to district staff members in scoring constructed- and intended-response items and performance tasks using rubrics so that there is consistency. CTcurriculum.org will house the newly developed assessment tools and scoring rubrics.

***Timeframe:*** Annually beginning in the fall of 2011

***Responsible Parties:*** CSDE, RESC Alliance, LEAs

**LEA Requested Professional Development**

The Commissioner of Education hosted a series of stakeholder input sessions in late March 2010 to explore ways of both strengthening this RTTT application and better meeting the needs of LEAs in implementing the new CCSS. Results of these sessions

will form the basis of targeted professional development opportunities for teachers and instructional leaders. Among the areas requested for targeted professional development by LEA staff and administrators in 2010-2011 were the following:

- The relationship between the CCSS and emerging formative assessments;
- A crosswalk between current state and local curricula and the CCSS to facilitate the development and sharing of curriculum units that appropriately reflect the new standards; and
- The use of student performance data to modify current classroom instructional practice, an expansion of CALI.

***Timeframe:*** 2010-2011

***Responsible Parties:*** CSDE, Partnership for Pre-Service Training and Professional Development, LEAs

**Training in Connecticut's State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) and Its CEDaR Data Web site**

The RESC Alliance will coordinate professional development activities to integrate SLDS technical training for teachers and other district staff to effectively use the enhanced SLDS.

Teachers and administrators will be trained to utilize student assessment data to draw valid inferences from the data to improve their curriculum and the instruction they provide individual students. The enhanced system will also pilot a module matching teachers to students and courses.

***Timeframe:*** July 2010 through June 2014, phased-in over the four-year period to reach all districts, based on district technology capacity

***Responsible Parties:*** The CSDE and the Partnership for Pre-Service Training and Professional Development

**Goal 4: LEA implementation of multiple pathways to graduation including Board Examination Systems, Virtual High School Courses, expanded advanced placement courses and dual enrollment options for high school students.**

As the result of this goal, Connecticut’s students who meet college- and career-readiness standards will be able to accelerate their learning through new options for post-secondary education during their high school years.

*Activities*

**Board Examination System**

Section 17 of Public Act No. 10-111 authorizes the CSDE to implement, on a pilot basis, the National Center on Education and the Economy’s Board Examination System, allowing students to complete high school at the end of 10<sup>th</sup> grade and enroll in post-secondary schooling the following fall (see Appendix (A)(1)(c) for specific statutory language). It is anticipated that this alternate pathway to a diploma will be of interest to students pursuing a career in health, business, science, technology, engineering, mathematics or other emerging 21st century professions. See Appendix (B)(3)(c) for information on Board Examination Systems that was made to the SBE.

Programs that are a part of the Board Examination System are:

- ACT Quality Core;
- Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) Exams and Advance International Certificate of Education (AICE) Exams;
- Edexcel International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) Exams;
- College Board Advanced Placement; and
- International Baccalaureate.

Each program offers a comprehensive system of high school course curriculums, instructional materials, professional training for teachers, and formative and summative assessments. Nineteen LEAs opted to participate in this new opportunity as part of their RTTT Memorandum of Understanding with the CSDE. For specific language see Appendix (A)(1)(g). Ten to 15 schools are expected to be selected to become pilot sites.

***Timeframe:*** Beginning in the fall of 2010, pilot high school staff will begin training to be able to implement the system for grade 9 and 11 students in September 2011. A second cohort of teachers from the pilot districts will be trained in 2011 to implement the system for grade 10 and 12 students beginning in September 2012.

***Responsible Parties:*** CSDE, NCEE, pilot districts

### **Virtual High School and College Courses**

Connecticut is working with other states in the New England Secondary School Consortium (NESSC) to coordinate each state's virtual online course offerings to expand enrollment opportunities for students and adults and reduce duplication of offerings. These courses can be used for credit recovery, enrichment or to suit students' interest in disciplines that are not part of their local district's curriculum offerings. The virtual high school programs offer most standard high school courses and provide the capacity to expand district offerings of Advanced Placement courses and courses for college credit.

***Timeframe:*** June 2011

***Responsible Parties:*** LEAs; CSDE; NESSC Working Group; and the Partnership for High School, College and Workforce Alignment

### **Concurrent and Dual Course Enrollment**

Working with the High School, College and Workforce Partnership, CSDE will expand its focus on effective transitions from high school to post-secondary education and productive careers. We will place renewed emphasis on developing regional consortia of high

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schools and two- and four-year colleges to enroll students in dual and concurrent programs, including increasing mastery of STEM skills and interest in STEM courses. With the Partnership, we will monitor the alignment of new Common Core standards and curriculum to college- and career-ready standards, research and identify best practices and models for districts to support high school graduation of low-achieving students--including dual/concurrent enrollment in community colleges, job shadowing, and before and after-school internships emphasizing STEM and 21st century skills and behaviors. Efforts are already underway to create a more formalized “pipeline” between the CT PreEngineering Program, Project Lead The Way and CT Career Choices, to establish a smooth engineering-related transition from middle school into high school and into the community college's College of Technology program.

**Goal 5: Access to constantly expanding digital library – [www.CTcurriculum.org](http://www.CTcurriculum.org).**

As the result of this goal, LEAs, parents and community organizations will have free access to standards, curriculum units, assessments, home schooling materials and other information and resources related to student learning and achievement.

***Activities***

Connecticut’s digital curriculum and assessment library will be housed at the state’s online curriculum Web site – [www.CTcurriculum.org](http://www.CTcurriculum.org). Development of [www.CTcurriculum.org](http://www.CTcurriculum.org) has continued in the period January 2010 through May 2010, and a first public version of the site and its contents is accessible online now. The CSDE worked with master teachers to create the Web site. The purpose of the Web site is to help educators and parents understand how standards can guide and energize student learning. As the site is increasingly populated with content related to the common standards, we expect that teachers will use the information for professional development purposes and to explore the future direction of model curriculum development in Connecticut.

The Web site enables the user to access student assessment tasks, scoring scales and student work based on the standards. Educators can also use this site to share their own curriculum ideas with other teachers, by entering new tasks. The multimedia student work brings curriculum to life, by enabling users to see and hear the level of performance called for by Connecticut's current standards. New to the site is the addition of two-year college and high school curriculum projects submitted by mathematics, science and technology educators participating in a National Science Foundation (NSF) Advanced Technological Education (ATE) grant administered by the Connecticut Business and Industry Association (CBIA). The projects were inspired by the educators’ experiences in the workplace, and help students make the connection between what they are learning in class and what is expected on the job.

Parents report in national surveys that they have little information about their children’s curriculum and lack strategies for supporting learning. Empowering parents to support learning outside of school is a critical strategy for reducing Connecticut’s

achievement gap. The Web site [www.CTcurriculum.org](http://www.CTcurriculum.org) will contain links to information written in parent-friendly language describing what students should know and be able to do, by grade, for mathematics and English language arts initially.

**Timeframe:** Ongoing 2010-2014

**Responsible Parties:** CSDE, with the Partnership for Curriculum Innovation and Technology; the Partnership for High School, College and Workforce Readiness; Partnership for Family and Community Engagement; LEA teachers; and students.

**Goal 6: Expanded access to high-quality STEM learning opportunities for students and LEA faculty.**

As a result of this goal, students in all participating school districts will have access to high-quality STEM teaching, courses and engaging resources.

All Connecticut students need to graduate high school with strong skills in the STEM areas. Currently, STEM requirements and expectations, instruction, curriculum, course availability and teaching resources vary greatly by district. Public Act 10-111 calls for increased emphasis on standards-based STEM skills, and greater credits and specific course requirements for both math and science. The new law also includes a requirement for at least one more credit in science, technology, engineering or mathematics, with the flexibility to add additional credits in these areas to accommodate student interests and goals as established in their individualized Student Success Plans. Model curricula and end-of-course assessments, all connected to the CCSS, will be developed for STEM courses of Biological/Life Sciences, Algebra, Geometry, Algebra II and Probability and Statistics, as well as hybrid courses (online and face-to-face) BIO21, CHEM21, PHYS21. Additionally, model curricula in Scientific Inquiry and Experimentation for students in grades 6-8 will be developed. These model curricula will serve as a base to ensure that, regardless of the Connecticut school a student attends, he or she will be provided rigorous, standards-based STEM content and course expectations.

To assure greater equity of resources, elementary and middle school students in all participating LEAs will be provided with standards-based online multimedia resources in science. An easy-to-use accompanying online tool will help teachers find simulations, demonstrations, activities, reading passages in English and Spanish, assessments and other resources for the standards they must teach. Currently, Connecticut makes these available for middle school and they have been extremely well received and widely used. Now, similar resources will be provided to elementary students. Professional development in using the resources effectively is available online and regionally through the RESC Alliance.

The availability of STEM courses will be expanded through support for online course access. Through RTTT funds administered on a scholarship basis, students from high-poverty districts will have the opportunity to continue STEM learning beyond courses offered in their schools, including advanced science and mathematics courses, robotics, nanotechnology, AP courses and others. Section 6 of Public Act 10-111 requires LEAs to develop policies to assure that these on-line courses are rigorous, structured to engage students and taught by highly qualified teachers skilled in teaching in an online environment.

Through the Next Generation of Teachers and Leaders professional development modules (see section D-5), teachers will learn how integrating the use of technology and other 21<sup>st</sup> century skills can facilitate students' abilities to meet standards. Specific modules will target teaching elementary mathematics and science standards. Other modules will be designed for secondary school teachers specific to their content areas.

***Activities*** (Activities listed here are addressed and budgeted for in section D)

- Acquire/develop model curricula and end-of-course assessments, based on CCSS
- Expand access to hybrid BIO21, CHEM21 and PHYS21 courses
- Expand online science resources to grades 3-8 for all students in participating LEAs
- Develop online STEM course scholarship program for students from high-poverty districts

- Provide professional development for teachers in teaching to the new standards through new curricula, online resources, and engaging methodologies specific to each content area and student development level

**Timeframe:** September 2010–June 2014

**Responsible Parties:** RESC Alliance; Partnership for Pre-Service Training and Professional Development; Partnership for Curriculum Innovation and Technology; and Partnership for High School, College and Workforce Alignment

**Targeted Changes in Student Performance Attributed to Adoption and Implementation of CCSS and the State’s RTTT Plan**

The following contains the annual performance targets that Connecticut expects its students to achieve as the result of the state’s transition to the CCSS and new assessment system.

<b>Performance Measures</b> Performance measures for this criterion are optional. If the state wishes to include performance measures, please enter them as rows in this table and, for each measure, provide annual targets in the columns provided.	Baseline (2008 - 09)	Actual Data: End of SY 2009-10	End of SY 2010-11	End of SY 2011-12	End of SY 2012-13	End of SY 2013-14
The percentage of all students scoring at the goal level on the CMT increases by 2 percentage points per year for reading.	66	68	70	72	74	76
The percentage of all students scoring at the goal level on the CMT increases by 2 percentage points per year for writing.	64	66	68	70	72	74
The percentage of all students scoring at the goal level on the CMT increases by 2 percentage points per year for mathematics.	66	68	70	72	74	76
The percentage of all students scoring at the goal level on the CAPT increases by 3 percentage points per year for reading.	48	51	54	57	60	63

<b>Performance Measures</b> Performance measures for this criterion are optional. If the state wishes to include performance measures, please enter them as rows in this table and, for each measure, provide annual targets in the columns provided.	<b>Baseline (2008 - 09)</b>	<b>Actual Data: End of SY 2009-10</b>	<b>End of SY 2010-11</b>	<b>End of SY 2011-12</b>	<b>End of SY 2012-13</b>	<b>End of SY 2013-14</b>
The percentage of all students scoring at the goal level on the CAPT increases by 3 percentage points per year for writing.	55	58	61	64	67	70
The percentage of all students scoring at the goal level on the CAPT increases by 3 percentage points per year for mathematics.	48	51	54	57	60	63
The state graduation rate increases by 2 percentage points per year.	79	81	83	85	87	90

**Appendices Referenced in Section (B)(3)**

- Appendix (B)(3)(a) The Connecticut Plan for Secondary School Reform
- Appendix (B)(3)(b) Connecticut’s Initiative to Support a Comprehensive Assessment System: Guidelines for Implementing Formative Assessment at the District Level
- Appendix (B)(3)(c) Information on Board Examination Systems (March 2010)