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PRESENTATION: CCT, CCSS and State Program Approval/National Accreditation (NCATE)
Requirements: Understanding Connections

SLIDE 1: Introduction

We know educator preparation program faculty are extremely busy professionals. To facilitate and support faculty work around candidate preparation, we at the CSDE are trying to get much better at helping faculty understand the connections between the various standards-based initiatives that the CSDE is currently engaged in, including how these initiatives are related to the candidate training and assessment work that faculty do for state program approval, and for those institutions that are NCATE members, national (NCATE) accreditation.

SLIDE 2: BIG PICTURE – Relationship Between the Connecticut Common Core of Teaching (CCT), CSDE Standards-Based Initiatives, and Program Approval/National Accreditation

The Common Core of Teaching (CCT) articulates the art and science of teaching as essential knowledge, skills and qualities that educators need to be effective in today's P-12 classrooms. These foundational skills and competencies are grouped by domains but, in practice, are to be viewed as integrated parts of the complex and dynamic process of effective teaching. The CCT should be used to help guide and build educator competence beginning with pre-service and continuing throughout an educator's career. The six domains are attached to this handout; the complete CCT document is on the CSDE website (www.sde.ct.gov) under the TEACHER AND ADMINISTRATORS link, and then under the EDUCATOR STANDARDS link. The 2010 CCT also serves as the set of foundational knowledge, skills and qualities that educators must possess in order to participate in other important standards-based initiatives that focus on improving learning for all students:

Connecticut Accountability for Learning Initiative (CALI):

The Connecticut Accountability for Learning Initiative (CALI) is a model of state support to districts and schools to support the process of continuous school and district improvement and to accelerate the closing of Connecticut's achievement gaps. The CALI theory of action focuses on the use of data-driven decision making and standards-based instruction to address the learning needs of each and every student in the classroom. CALI training modules focus on supporting educators in understanding the connections between assessment, data analysis, and differentiation of instruction to improve student achievement, which are knowledge, skills and qualities described by the 2010 CCT.

Scientific Research-Based Interventions (SRBI):

Response to Intervention (RTI) is the practice of providing scientific, research-based instruction and intervention matched to student need based on measured student performance. Scientific Research-Based Interventions (SRBI) is Connecticut's framework for improving education for all students based on a three-tier RTI model involving increasingly intensive levels of intervention. Tier I represents the general education core curriculums, instruction (including differentiation of instruction), overall school climate and system of social-emotional learning and behavioral supports for all students. Tier II involves short-term interventions for students experiencing difficulties who have not responded adequately to the Tier I core curriculums and differentiation of instruction. Tier III involves more intensive or individualized short-term interventions for students who fail to respond to Tier II interventions. For all three tiers,

assessments are used to review the progress of all children and to identify student learning needs. The 2010 CCT describes knowledge, skills and qualities (e.g., assessment; differentiation of instruction) that educators must possess in order to participate in SRBI practices.

Teacher Education and Mentoring Program (TEAM):

The Teacher Education and Mentoring Program (TEAM) is a two-year induction program for beginning teachers that includes mentorship and professional development. Through a series of five modules, assigned mentors and beginning teachers work together to identify professional development needs based on the 2010 CCT proficiencies, and to establish goals and action plans based on identified needs.

Educational Leadership:

The Connecticut School Leadership Standards (CSLS), currently being revised, serve as the foundation for a variety of state educational leadership functions including leadership preparation program approval, licensure assessment, school administrator evaluation, and professional development. A critical expectation described by these standards is that Connecticut educational leaders possess a deep understanding of the 2010 CCT, not only so that leaders can support high quality educational instruction in all K-12 classrooms, but evaluate the performance of teachers as well.

Common Core Standards:

On July 7, 2010, the State Board of Education adopted new national academic standards, known as the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in English language arts and mathematics that establishes what Connecticut's students should know and be able to do as they progress through Grades K-12. In order for Connecticut educators to be able to support Connecticut K-12 students in learning across all content areas, including the English Language Arts and math proficiencies described by the CCSS standards, it is critical that they possess the knowledge, skills and qualities described by the 2010 CCT.

Certification Regulations:

New certification regulations should describe key areas of candidate training that would support teacher preparation programs in developing and implementing courses that would ensure candidates had opportunities to acquire and develop knowledge, skills and qualities described by the 2010 CCT. Additionally, certification regulations should describe fieldwork and clinical experience requirements that would ensure candidates have opportunities to practice and solidify 2010 CCT proficiencies through real world practice in actual K-12 classrooms.

State Educator Preparation Program Approval:

Institutions or organizations seeking new and continuing approval for educator preparation programs through the State Board of Education must provide evidence that candidates possess the knowledge, skills and qualities described by state standards (i.e., 2010 CCT) and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) performance standards, including national content-specific standards. This system of evaluation requires that candidates' knowledge, skills and qualities be measured formatively and summatively using key assessments throughout preparation programs.

SLIDES 3 THROUGH 9: Relationship Between the Connecticut Common Core of Teaching (CCT), the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), and Program Approval/National Accreditation

SLIDE 3 – Relationship Between the CCSS and the CCT:

The CCSS describe student learning goals specific to English Language Arts and mathematics, K-12. The 2010 CCT describes knowledge, skills and qualities that educators must possess to support

Connecticut K-12 student learning in all content areas, including English Language Arts and mathematics.

For example, one of the CCT proficiencies is: “Determining students’ prior knowledge to ensure that content instruction is at an appropriate level.” The prior knowledge being assessed should be student knowledge described by the CCSS standards, as should be further content related instruction. Another CCT proficiency is “Developing and organizing coherent and relevant units, lessons and learning tasks that build on students’ prior knowledge, skills and interests and engage students in the work of the discipline.” K-12 units, lessons and learning tasks should be tightly aligned with student proficiency outcomes described by the CCSS. A third CCT proficiency is “Using a comprehensive set of data that provides depth and breadth of understanding of student achievement at a particular point in time and over time.” K-12 student achievement should be tightly aligned with proficiency outcomes described by the CCSS.

SLIDE 4 – Measuring CCSS and CCT Proficiencies: Relationship Between the CCSS, the CCT, and State Program Approval/National Accreditation:

Connecticut is part of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (*Smarter Balanced*), which is a state-led consortium working to develop next-generation assessments that accurately measure student progress toward college- and career-readiness. Smarter Balanced is one of two multistate consortia awarded funding from the U.S. Department of Education in 2010 to develop an assessment system aligned to the CCSS by the 2014-15 school year. In Connecticut, student learning outcomes relative to the CCSS will be measured by the next generation of CMT and CAPT assessments. CCSS proficiencies will also be measured by other accountability assessments (e.g., common assessments at the district level) as well as classroom-based assessments developed and used by teachers. Educator preparation program faculty must help candidates understand linkages between learning outcomes described by the CCSS and how K-12 students will be assessed relative to those outcomes.

Where and how does state program approval and national accreditation assessment requirements fit in with all of this? Educator preparation program candidate learning outcomes relative to CCT standards – which as demonstrated above will include candidate proficiencies around using the CCSS for instructional planning, assessment, differentiated instruction, etc. – will be measured by required assessments that teacher preparation programs must develop and use for state program approval and national accreditation (NCATE).

SLIDE 5 – NCATE BIG PICTURE:

Since 2000, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) standards focus on candidate performance with an emphasis on knowledge and skills required to ensure PK-12 student learning. Standard 1 (Candidate Knowledge, Skills, and Professional Dispositions) describes the critical knowledge and skills that beginning educators should develop and master as they move through preparation programs, while standard 2 (Assessment System and Unit Evaluation) describes the assessment system that preparation programs need to develop and implement to measure candidate proficiencies described by standard 1. Standards 3 (Field Experiences and Clinical Practice), 4 (Diversity), 5 (Faculty Qualifications, Performance, and Development), and 6 (Unit Governance and Resources) describe other key components necessary to ensure optimizing opportunity for candidates to acquire and practice critical knowledge and pedagogical skills required to impact PK-12 student learning.

SLIDE 6 – NCATE Standard Assessment Requirements:

Educator preparation programs are required to collect candidate performance data at both the unit and program level as evidence that programs are meeting NCATE Standard 1: Candidate Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions.

Unit level assessment or “gatepoint” assessment entails developing and implementing assessments that measure candidate performance across all programs at four or five critical program gatepoints, including (1) entrance, (2) pre student teaching, (3) post student teaching, and (4) end of program. Program level assessment entails developing and implementing 6-8 program specific assessments that align with state (2010 CCT) and national content specific standards that measure mastery of knowledge and skills relative to four key areas: (1) content knowledge; (2) instructional planning; (3) student teaching evaluation; and (4) effects on student learning (assessment literacy). Assessment data yielded from these assessments should inform programs whether or not candidates are ready to go out into the world and teach.

For program level assessment, programs must develop and use at least six assessments, including two content knowledge assessments. Because the two content knowledge assessments include state licensure tests (assessment #1) and a coursework GPA based on content specific coursework (assessment #2), preparation programs only need to develop four additional assessments: **a measure of instructional planning (assessment #3); an evaluation of the student teaching experience (assessment #4); a measure of effects on student learning or assessment literacy (assessment #5); and one additional assessment (assessment #6).**

The two assessment “cuts” – unit (gatepoint) level and program level – overlap as candidates approach program completion. Pre student teaching assessments focus on tracking candidate progress and identifying candidate needs around remediation up to the point of, and during the student teaching experience. Program level assessments used to measure candidate performance at the end of the student teaching experience and at the end of the program also serve as final program gatepoint assessments.

SLIDE 7 – What Are We Measuring and Why?:

These four required program level assessments must measure the CCT 2010 proficiencies. The CCT proficiencies, as discussed above, need to be directly linked to the CCSS for early childhood education programs, elementary education programs, and secondary preparation programs for English Language Arts and math.

SLIDE 8 – Integrating the CCT and the CCSS into NCATE Assessment Requirements:

Consider the NCATE required assessment #3, which is a measure of candidate ability to plan instruction. One of the CCT proficiencies discussed above is: “Determining students’ prior knowledge to ensure that content instruction is at an appropriate level.” Also discussed above is how the prior knowledge being assessed should be student knowledge described by the CCSS standards, as should be further content related instruction. So, assessment #3 – candidate ability to plan instruction – should include the measurement of candidate proficiencies around determining students’ prior knowledge and ensuring appropriate content instruction as described by the CCSS standards.

Consider the NCATE required assessment #5, which is a measure of candidate ability to develop and use classroom-based assessments and other student assessment data for determining student progress and further instructional planning. One of the CCT proficiencies discussed above is “Using a comprehensive set of data that provides depth and breadth of understanding of student achievement at a particular point in time and over time.” Also discussed above is how K-12 student achievement should be tightly aligned with proficiency outcomes described by the CCSS. So, assessment #5 – candidate ability to develop and use classroom-based assessments and other student assessment data for determining student progress and further instructional planning – should include the measurement of candidate proficiencies around developing and using assessments and other measures of student achievement (e.g., CMT, CAPT; district level measures) for determining student progress relative to outcomes described by the CCSS.

SLIDE 9 – Crosswalking Assessments and Curricula:

Faculty must crosswalk assessments and curricula to ensure that CCT and CCSS linkages are being made.

Additionally, faculty must crosswalk assessments and curricula to ensure that 2010 CCT and national content standards are being measured. Remember, NCATE program level assessment requirements include the assessment of both the 2010 CCT and national content standards. The 2010 CCT describes critical general pedagogical knowledge and skills. The national content standards describe critical content specific knowledge and skills. THERE IS OVERLAP between the 2010 CCT and the content specific standards; each set of national content standards consists of some generic pedagogical skills not unique to any particular content area. Faculty need to cross walk the 2010 CCT standards with the content specific standards so that programs are measuring both the 2010 CCT standards and any unique content specific pedagogical knowledge and skills.

SLIDE 10 – Developing Good Assessments/Collecting Good Data/Making Good Adjustments

We see patterns of recurring issues associated with developing and using assessments for supporting and measuring candidate learning across all Connecticut educator preparation programs:

- (1) Standards are not sufficiently operationalized for measurement.
- (2) There is insufficient alignment between assessment tasks and assessment rubrics/scoring guides.
- (3) Rubrics/scoring guides lack language describing performance at various proficiency levels.
- (4) Rubric/scoring guide category language doesn't sufficiently differentiate levels of performance.
- (5) Large assessments (e.g., portfolios) are not parsed out to align with specific knowledge and skills.
- (6) Reporting of data is weak and/or not informative (e.g., reporting mean scores rather than performance proficiency data for assessments).