



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



TO: Connecticut Core Standards Districts Leads
FROM: Mary Anne Butler, Chief Academic Officer
DATE: March 10, 2016
SUBJECT: March Academic Office Newsletter

This is the March 2016 installment of the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) Academic Office monthly newsletter. We hope you will find helpful information within the newsletter that will support your district's implementation efforts of the Connecticut Core Standards, as well as other important work related to standards, curriculum, instruction, assessment and professional development.

Assessment

Elimination of Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) ELA Performance Tasks

Beginning this spring the ELA Performance Tasks for SBAC in Grades 3-8 will not be administered as part of the state assessment. Approximately 1 hour and 45 minutes of instructional time is recaptured by this modification. This is in addition to the hour of instructional time saved by the elimination of the classroom activities in both English language arts and mathematics. The performance tasks in the mathematics section of the test remain in place. Please read the press release from [Governor Malloy and Education Commissioner Wentzell about new steps to reduce state testing](#).

For further information about SBAC, please contact Steve Martin at steve.martin@ct.gov or Deirdre Ducharme at deirdre.ducharme@ct.gov.

Revised Test Window for the Connecticut Alternate Assessment

The Connecticut Alternate Assessment (CTAA) test window will open **April 18, 2016**. The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) has revised the CTAA test window as a result of the following considerations:

- The revised test window is now **April 18 to June 10, 2016**, and will provide eight weeks for testing, allowing trained teachers additional time to test students who must be tested individually.
- The revised test window will also allow teachers, schools, and districts more flexibility to assign staff and computer access for other statewide assessments.

The CTAA will NOT include the Writing Constructed Response Item in 2015-16

This decision was made based on the following considerations:

- Students with significant cognitive disabilities assessed with the alternate assessment are a relatively small population, and supporting evidence related to writing constructed-response items is limited. Therefore, the CSDE will seek additional evidence from national studies to support the inclusion of writing constructed-response items in the future.
- Excluding the writing constructed-response item in 2015-16 allows teachers of students with significant cognitive disabilities additional testing time for other test elements.

Questions regarding the CTAA can be directed to Janet Stuck at 860-713-6837 or via e-mail at janet.stuck@ct.gov.

Academic Standards

Update on Connecticut English Language Proficiency Standards

The Connecticut English Language Proficiency (CELP) Standards were adopted by the State Board of Education on October 7, 2015. Information sessions have occurred around the state to familiarize educators, parents, legislators and community members with an introduction to the standards. We are now implementing training of trainer (TOT) modules offered in all **Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs)** for English as a second language (ESL) service providers and general educators.

Upcoming trainings are scheduled at the following locations for both audiences:

EL Service Provider trainings:

2/25 ACES
3/8 Ed Conn
4/26 EASTCONN
4/26 CREC
5/4 CES
5/16 LEARN

General Educators trainings:

3/9 Ed Conn
3/24 ACES
5/3 EASTCONN
5/5 CES
5/5 CREC
5/17 LEARN

To register, please visit http://ctcorestandards.org/?page_id=11905. For more information pertaining to English Learners, please contact Megan Alubicki Flick, Education Consultant, at megan.alubicki@ct.gov/860-713-6786 or Joe Di Garbo, Education Consultant, at joe.digarbo@ct.gov/860-713-6863.

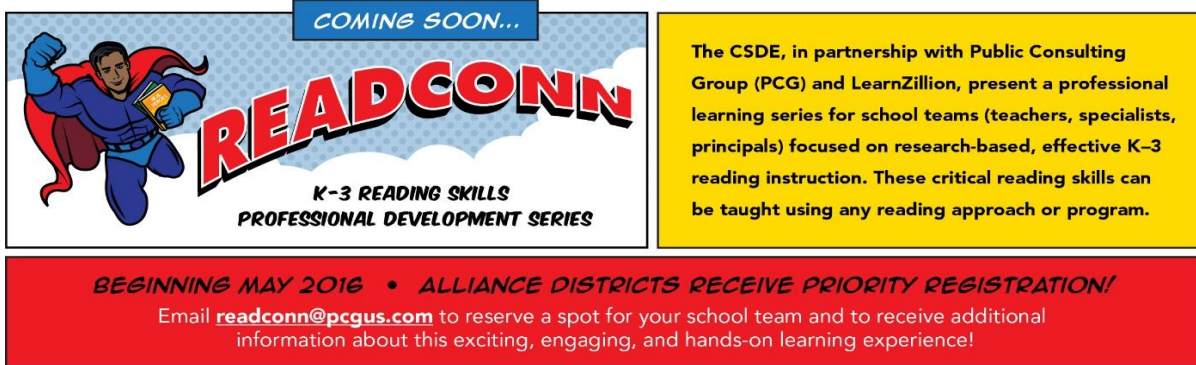
Next Generation Science Standards

The CSDE has mapped a [5-year NGSS transition plan](#) that includes sustained support and resources for educators, principals, teacher preparation faculty, families and other science educators. The CSDE is working on expanding current Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) resources to include curriculum development institutes, sample learning units, and new performance tasks.

Please contact Ron Michaels at ronald.michaels@ct.gov for questions regarding NGSS professional learning opportunities, science curriculum and instruction; and Jeff Greig at jeff.greig@ct.gov for questions regarding science assessments.

Professional Learning Opportunities

K-3 Reading Skills Professional Series



The banner features a superhero character on the left, holding a book. The text "COMING SOON..." is in a blue box at the top. The word "READCONN" is in large, bold, red letters. Below it, "K-3 READING SKILLS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES" is written in smaller black text. To the right, a yellow box contains text about the series. At the bottom, a red box contains registration information.

COMING SOON...

READCONN

**K-3 READING SKILLS
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES**

The CSDE, in partnership with Public Consulting Group (PCG) and LearnZillion, present a professional learning series for school teams (teachers, specialists, principals) focused on research-based, effective K-3 reading instruction. These critical reading skills can be taught using any reading approach or program.

BEGINNING MAY 2016 • ALLIANCE DISTRICTS RECEIVE PRIORITY REGISTRATION!

Email readconn@pcgus.com to reserve a spot for your school team and to receive additional information about this exciting, engaging, and hands-on learning experience!

Meeting the Needs of All Students: A Webinar Series

This webinar series is designed for all Connecticut educators and will focus on meeting the needs of all students. Leading experts in a variety of Connecticut Core Standards topics will share strategies and resources to support making learning accessible to all students. Specific attention will be given to the English learners and students receiving special education services. To register for webinar sessions, visit <https://registration.pcgeducation.com/>.

Student Engagement and Achievement

The CSDE is offering a one-day exploratory workshop on March 23, 2016, at the Radisson Hotel, 100 Berlin Road, in Cromwell, from 8:00 a.m.–3:30 p.m. entitled “Mastery-Based Learning: What, Why, and How It Can Help Student Engagement and Achievement.” The workshop is designed to support district teams interested in exploring the Mastery-Based Learning (MBL) as a school improvement model. Ideally, teams should be comprised of a district-level leader, building-level leader, and classroom teachers. The workshop will focus on the core elements of Mastery Based Learning. To register, click [HERE](#). For further information on MBL contact suzanne.loud@ct.gov.

College Career Pathways Draft Guidelines

The College Career Pathways (CCP) is a dual enrollment program funded, in part, through the Carl D. Perkins Grant at both the secondary and post-secondary levels. The purpose is to provide students with both college and high school credit in high-skill, high-wage, high-demand career paths. In an effort to ensure the program’s quality, as well as compliance with both federal and state Perkins requirements, and the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) requirements, a committee consisting of members of the Board of Regents, State Department of Education, and community colleges drafted the College Career Pathways Guidelines (CCPG). A draft of the CCPG may be found on the [Carl D. Perkins Information](#) page on the State Department of Education Web site with an accompanying link to collect feedback from practitioners. Feedback is welcome and the survey will remain open until March 31, 2016. For more information, please contact Marcy Reed at marcy.reed@ct.gov.