



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



TO: CT Core Standards Districts Leads
FROM: Mary Anne Butler, Chief Academic Officer
DATE: December 22, 2015
RE: December Academic Office Newsletter

This is the December 2015 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 Common Core State Standards, as well as other important standards, curriculum, instruction, and assessment work.

Assessment

Connecticut SAT (CT-SAT) updates

On Wednesday, November 25, 2015, the Student Assessment Newsletter was forwarded to all District Test Coordinators with upcoming professional development opportunities and important deadline information specific to accommodation requests.

Here are some key highlights:

- All schools should be registered as Testing Centers. If any schools have not registered, please contact Abe Kristt at abe.kristt@ct.gov.
- The CT-SAT testing date is Wednesday, March 2, 2016, with a make-up date of Wednesday, April 27, 2016.
- Professional development is underway.
- A Communication Toolkit including "Frequently Asked Questions for Districts and Schools" and "Frequently Asked Questions for Families and Students" are attachments accompanying this newsletter. We will continue to provide additions to this SAT Communication Toolkit in the immediate future including, but not limited to "Frequently Asked Questions About Accommodations for Students who are English Learners, Students with individualized education program (IEPs) and Students with 504 Plans," as well as FAQs on scoring, and reporting.

Connecticut SAT registration

This year the registration process for the CT-SAT is a hybrid model using both previous electronic registration and paper registration. Any student who has previously registered with the College Board for the PSAT, SAT, NMSQT, or an AP exam will automatically be registered for the state assessment (approximately 80 percent of Connecticut students). For those students who are not yet registered, the CSDE requires that students register using paper forms ONLY.

Paper Registration

Forms will be sent to each school over the next few weeks with instructions on how to complete the form and deadlines for returning the forms to College Board. Students will complete limited fields on the form to minimize the loss of instructional time and maximize data privacy. **It is imperative for the educators who are supervising the paper registration process to follow these directions carefully and monitor the paper registration process.**

If students wish to later have access to their scores electronically, it is necessary for the student create a College Board Account online which asks students for limited information. They can create an account any time before or after the test date. Questions about the CT-SAT may be directed to Michelle Rosado at michelle.rosado@ct.gov.

Academic Standards

Improving Student Performance in Mathematics

Student performance in mathematics remains a concern across the country and here in Connecticut. Recruitment efforts are underway to form the Commissioner's Council on Mathematics which will study the issue and develop concrete steps to improve the quality of mathematics instruction and ensure students are mastering the Common Core mathematics standards. At the district level it is important to emphasize to both, educational leaders and teachers, the need to implement the eight new Mathematical Practices. These should be visible in all the K-12 classrooms and demonstrated daily through student discourse and critical thinking. The eight practices are:

1. Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.
2. Reason abstractly and quantitatively.
3. Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others.
4. Model with mathematics.
5. Use appropriate tools strategically.
6. Attend to precision.
7. Look for and make use of structure.
8. Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning.

Additional guidance on how these practices look in the classroom may be found at: http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/backtoschool/ccss_principal_look_fors_flipbook.pdf.

Next Generation Science Standards

Connecticut State Board of Education Adopts Next Generation Science Standards

Thanks to a strong showing of stakeholder support, the [Next Generation Science Standards](#) (NGSS) were adopted by a unanimous vote of the Connecticut State Board of Education on November 4, 2015. These new science standards will set Connecticut on a course toward making Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) more engaging, relevant, and accessible to all students.

The adoption decision marks the beginning of a multi-year, phased-in transition period during which the CSDE and partners will build capacity for achieving the significant changes to science teaching and learning embodied in the NGSS. The NGSS professional development system will include courses and workshops to support NGSS approaches to instruction, curriculum design and adapt teaching resources. For more information please contact Liz Buttner at elizabeth.buttner@ct.gov.

Professional Learning Opportunities

Connecticut Core Standards Online Learning Modules

The CSDE is proud to partner with Public Consulting Group (PCG) Education to offer online professional learning opportunities to Connecticut educators. Connecticut educators will be able to access online content to support the implementation of the Connecticut Core Standards.

Self-Paced Online Learning Modules - The modules provide an online learning community where educators have on-demand access to engaging, high-quality professional learning, resources, and a professional network. Each module is interactive and includes instructional resources and videos that can be used immediately in the classroom. As teachers participate in the activities, they will build a portfolio of work that can be shared with coaches and other teachers. Current modules for English Language Arts and Literacy include Focus on Instructional Shifts (Module 1) and Focus on ELA and Literacy Instruction (Module 2). Mathematics modules include Focus on Practice Standards (Module 1) and Focus on Content Standards (Module 2). To register your entire district or school, contact ctcorestandards@pcgus.com or to sign up individually visit: <http://surveys.pcgus.com/s3/Connecticut-Core-Standards-Online-Course-Registration>.

Facilitated Online Module - Designing Powerful Instructional Units –The modules begin with a grounding in the structure and intent of the Connecticut Core Standards and the instructional shifts as they relate to unit design. Using a backward design model, participants will analyze a model unit and create their own units with individualized feedback and guidance from an expert facilitator. Over approximately five weeks, participants will work through the development of a full unit. Participants can expect to spend two to three hours per week working through the module activities and their unit design. The facilitated design of the modules will allow participants to manage time by working when and where they want. Cohorts of 30 educators will be accepted for each of the ELA & Literacy and Math modules. To register visit <http://surveys.pcgus.com/s3/CT-Blended-Online-Course>.

Illustrative Mathematics Fluency Modules

The Grade 1 (1.OA.6) and Grade 5 (5.NBT.5) Illustrative Mathematics Fluency Module [webinar](#) recording is available for viewing. Each unit is designed to support teachers to develop a deeper vision of what the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) mean by mathematical “fluency” and provide tools to support students in becoming fluent. The module includes units for each of the 10 fluencies in the CCSS for mathematics. Each unit features pencil-paper assessments, instructional tasks, and in some cases, an interview assessment and video of student strategies. Presenters, Jody Guarino and Valerie Henry, guide participants through the tools in the units and how they might be used to support teacher and student learning.

Connecticut Next Generation Science Standards Web-based Short Courses

The CSDE and professional development partner, the Connecticut Science Center, are pleased to announce that registration is now open for two short courses designed to help educators understand and implement the advances to teaching and learning called for in NGSS. As a result of participating in professional learning, educators will be able to make informed and appropriate NGSS modifications to curriculum, classroom culture, and instructional materials. Both short courses will continue to be available year-round in 2016-19 and beyond.

- [Next Generation Science-CT](#): an introduction to Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and a broad overview of the changes to science teaching and learning envisioned in the *Framework for K-12 Science Education* (National Research Council, 2012). No-cost; web-based; self-paced; 15 modules offer 16 to 60 hours of structured professional learning for groups of educators.
- [Next Gen Science Exemplar System](#) (NGSX): a web-based, expert-led experience of a “3-Dimensional” culture of science learning, where students use science “practices” (specifically modeling and arguing with evidence) and “crosscutting concepts” to co-construct scientific explanations of real-world phenomena. Expert-facilitated; tuition fee; 30-36 hours of seminar-style learning for groups of teachers.