



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION



TO: Superintendents of Schools

FROM: Dr. Dianna R. Wentzell, Commissioner of Education *DRW*

DATE: February 13, 2018

SUBJECT: Next Generation Science Standards Alternate Assessment

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) will be field testing a new alternate assessment for science this spring. This alternate assessment is aligned to the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). This NGSS Alternate Assessment will replace the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT)/Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) Skills Checklist Science. For the 2018 field test, teachers will be asked to administer a portion of the assessment to eligible students in Grades 5, 8 and 11. Submission of teacher ratings from the field test will occur during the NGSS Alternate Assessment window from **April 30, 2018, to May 25, 2018**.

Assessment Development Informed by Extensive Feedback from Connecticut Educators

Prior to beginning the design and development of the NGSS Alternate Assessment, the CSDE sought informal and formal feedback from educators across the state on the science assessment format that would be most relevant and appropriate for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who were eligible for the alternate assessment. Based on that feedback, the following guiding principles were established for the NGSS Alternate Assessment. This assessment should:

- be meaningful and accessible to participating students;
- guide science curriculum and instruction throughout the year by providing a coherent sequence of assessment activities;
- allow for administration throughout the year;
- include an appropriate balance of the breadth and depth of NGSS Learning Progressions across grade bands;
- assess the three-dimensions of NGSS (i.e., science and engineering practices, disciplinary core ideas, and crosscutting concepts);
- incorporate scientific phenomena that students make sense of or use to solve a problem; and
- expect consistent demonstration of the performance expectations by students statewide.

To provide ongoing guidance on the basic format and function of the NGSS Alternate Assessment, the CSDE established a committee that is comprised of Connecticut educators with knowledge of NGSS and/or experience working with students with significant cognitive disabilities. This committee has participated in each component of assessment development. They helped prioritize the NGSS Performance Expectations and identified those most appropriate for students who are eligible to participate in the alternate assessment. They also assisted in the drafting and review of Essence Statements and Core Extensions see the ([Components of the NGSS Alternate Assessment](#)). Through their conscientious participation, this committee has helped to ensure fidelity of the assessment to the guiding principles stated above.

NGSS Alternate Assessment Administration

For the NGSS Alternate Assessment field test, each student will be expected to participate in three of six Storylines (one from each content area). The assignment of specific Storylines to districts and Approved Private Special Education Programs for purposes of the field test will be posted online in March.

The Storyline Performance Tasks and Core Extensions will also be released in early March. Teachers are encouraged to begin administering the Performance Tasks to their students and completing the ratings shortly after release. A record of the teacher ratings should be maintained locally and submitted using the online Data Entry Interface (DEI) during the upload window, beginning **April 30, 2018 and ending on May 25, 2018.**

The CSDE will provide information for district administrators on the NGSS Alternate Assessment during a webinar on **February 16, 2018.** More information about this webinar will be provided to District Test Coordinators.

The table below summarizes key activities for the administration of the 2018 NGSS Alternate Assessment field test.

NGSS Alternate Assessments Field Test Timeline

Date	Activity
February 2018	CSDE releases Essence Statements by Storyline and by Grade .
February 16, 2018	CSDE provides District Administrator training webinar.
Early March 2018	CSDE releases Storyline Performance Tasks and Core Extensions. Educators begin administration and recording student performance ratings.
April 30-May 25, 2018	Educators submit ratings of student performance and feedback on the assessment through the online Data Entry Interface (DEI).
Summer 2018	CSDE and educator committee review results and feedback from the NGSS Alternate Assessment Field Test and make modifications as needed.

Please contact Jeff Greig (jeff.greig@ct.gov) or Abe Krisst (abe.krisst@ct.gov) from the CSDE Performance Office (860-713-6860) with any questions. Thank you for your cooperation in making this important field test a success.

cc: Ajit Gopalakrishnan, Chief Performance Officer