



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



TO: Common Core District Leads

FROM: Ellen E. Cohn, Interim Chief Academic Officer, *ETC*

DATE: June 16, 2015

RE: June Academic Office Newsletter

This is the June 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.

SMARTER BALANCED ASSESSMENT

- **Samples of Individual Student Reports of Assessment Results:** Attached are several important documents for your review. The student reports have been designed to resemble CMT/CAPT reports. These reports will be mailed to schools in late August or early September. The CSDE will also provide schools with parent brochures to be mailed with the Individual Student Reports.
- **Scale Score Ranges and Achievement Levels and Achievement Level Descriptors:** Attached are documents showing score ranges by grade and level. Also included are the descriptions that will appear by performance level at each grade band (3-5; 6-8; and 11).
- **Assessment Resources:**
 - **English** <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/parents-students/>
 - **Spanish** <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/parents-students/como-ayudar-a-todos-los-estudiantes-a-que-tengan-exito/>
 - **Coming soon! New Standards, New Test, New Results**
 - ✓ CSDE's "Explaining Your Child's Progress and How You Can Help" brochures (to accompany test results)
 - ✓ CSDE's District, School, and Teacher Communication Resources – PowerPoints, screen shots, and talking points for discussing assessment results
- **Connecticut Alternate Assessment (CTAA):** The first operational National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC)/ Connecticut Alternate Assessment (CTAA) was administered between March 30th and May 15th. The data from this multi-state assessment, designed specifically for students with significant cognitive disabilities, is being processed now and standard setting will occur in August 2015. NCSC will guide participants in creating four performance levels which states will subsequently review. We appreciate that several Connecticut teachers with content and/or special education expertise will be participating in this process. Since reporting is dependent upon the standard setting process, we anticipate the student results for the NCSC/CTAA will be available in the fall (most likely late October 2015). Questions may be directed to Joseph.Amenta@ct.gov or Janet.Stuck@ct.gov

- **New Report Highlights Large Gaps between State Test Results and 2013 NAEP Results**: Attached is a May 2015 report from Achieve that discusses the distance in scores between NAEP and many previously used state assessments. The report highlights that using NAEP results to make comparisons to newer college and career ready standards based assessments (like SBAC or PARCC) may be a better yard stick.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

- **Mastery Based Learning (MBL) Guidelines**: At their regular meeting on June 3, 2015, the State Board of Education adopted the Connecticut Mastery Based Learning Guidelines. As directed by the Connecticut General Statute 10-221a, the Connecticut State Department of Education developed **Guidelines for Mastery-Based Learning (MBL)** as a resource for school districts. The MBL guidelines provide guiding principles around Community Engagement, Policy, and Practice. The guidelines are not rigid requirements, but are instead recommendations/ advice to assist district and school leaders implementing Mastery-Based Learning models. The guidelines can drive the development of high-quality implementation plans across the state. While the critical components of Community Engagement, Policy and Practice should be taken into consideration by all, the guidelines respect that each school and district has unique needs, specific capacity, and availability of resources that will inform their implementation journey. To access the guidelines, [click here](#). For more information, contact Suzanne.loud@ct.gov
- **Kindergarten through Grade 3 Social, Emotional, and Intellectual Habits Framework**: The [framework](#) represents the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that form an essential blueprint for college and career readiness to achieve academic success and social/emotional learning. Social skills and habits of learning set the stage for all future learning. With support from adults during the early elementary years, children learn to interact with others, develop psychosocial attitudes in relation to academic work, develop a cognitive framework regarding academic behaviors and thinking critically, maintain focus irrespective of obstacles, deal with frustration, and begin to manage their own learning. The framework builds from the foundational skills in the Cognitive and Social and Emotional Development Domains of the [CT Early Learning and Development Standards](#), highlighting the continued growth and development that must be supported over the early elementary years.

The framework does not require districts to develop new curricula or programs to support social/emotional learning. Many of the social knowledge, skills, and dispositions can be addressed throughout the course of the regular school day, during daily routines and during academic instruction. Academic Office consultants and many Connecticut educators developed [K-3 Subject Area Connections for Social, Emotional, and Intellectual Habits](#) documents to serve as resources to teachers, administrators, and curriculum developers for integrating social/emotional learning into current curriculum documents (e.g., units of study, lessons). We welcome your feedback on the organization and potential utility of the documents. Results from the feedback survey will help inform the revision process, future activities for stakeholder group engagement, and ultimately, dissemination of the documents. [Click here to complete the brief feedback survey](#).

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

1. **Social Studies Framework Activities for Social Studies Leaders and Teachers**: Two series of four-day summer institutes will be held this summer for social studies curriculum developers and teachers. Utilizing the new frameworks, inquiry in the secondary and primary grades, and global and local perspectives on history will all be topics of discussion. **Heidi Hayes Jacobs** will be a featured speaker at both summer institutes. There will

be two “levels” at these summer institutes, meaning that social studies professionals who attended last summer will receive almost all new materials this year.

The institutes will be held from **June 29-July 2** and **August 17-20** (the same institute delivered twice). Location for both will be at Central Connecticut State University. All social studies teachers and curriculum leaders are invited. Cost of the institute will be \$50 per participant. To register for either event go to www.ctsocialstudies.org. For questions or additional information contact Steve Armstrong, state social studies consultant at Stephen.armstrong@ct.gov.

2. **Algebra 2 and Geometry Model Curricula:** In-depth training on the Geometry Model Curriculum will take place from August 3—6 at Gateway Community College and from August 10—13 at Central Connecticut State University. The training on the Algebra 2 Model Curriculum will be from July 27—30 at Gateway Community College and from August 3—6 at Central Connecticut State University. Each 4 day session will provide 3 hours of training on each unit of the model curriculum. All sessions will run from 9am to 4 pm. For more information, contact Jennifer.michalek@ct.gov
3. **Summer Teacher Training for Computer Science:** Trainings for the Code.org K-5 Curriculum and StarLogo will be offered at all of the RESCs this summer. The Code.org full day workshops will cover courses 1-3 and offer supplies needed to teach the courses. Courses blend online, self-guided and self-paced tutorials with “unplugged” classroom activities that require no computer. StarLogo training is a fun, hands-on half day workshop is for middle school teachers interested in learning how to program 3D games and/or science simulation models using StarLogo Nova, a free online educational software tool with a graphical programming interface. For more information, contact Jennifer.michalek@ct.gov
4. **Summer Curriculum Institutes for ELA and Mathematics:** In partnership with CSDE, PCG will hold a series of three-day Summer Curriculum Institutes to guide teams of educators in designing Connecticut Core Standards (CCS) ELA & Literacy and Math-aligned curriculum units. Using a backward design model, participants will create a unit that aligns learning goals, assessment evidence, and learning progressions with the CCS. Specific sessions will be held for ELA & Literacy in content areas and Mathematics.

Who:	Curriculum design teachers or administrators in teams of 2 or 3	
Prerequisites:	A firm understanding of the structure and intent of the Connecticut Core Standards and instructional shifts. Prior to the institutes, participants are encouraged to complete the online modules in Pepper : For ELA Institutes -- <i>Modules 1 & 2: Focus on Instructional Shifts</i> and <i>Focus on ELA Instruction</i> For Math Institutes -- <i>Modules 1 & 2: Focus on Practice Standards</i> and <i>Focus on Content Standards</i>	
What to bring:	Texts, resources, or other materials that will help you create your unit.	
What you will create:	On all three days, teams have time to work on developing their units, with facilitator coaching and feedback. Using your own resources and materials that you bring to the sessions, you can expect to complete the design of a unit during the institute: Day 1 Participants will create a unit overview, and will design Stage 1: Goals , which include standards, understandings, essential questions, and knowledge and skills. Day 2 Participants will learn about Stage 2: Evidence , including summative assessments–performance tasks in particular–and rubrics. Participants will also address Stage 3: The Learning Plan . Day 3 Includes an in-depth look at how unit design can support all students with Universal Design for Learning (UDL).	
When and Where:	ELA & Literacy Dates: July 14-16 Location: Holiday Inn East Hartford	Mathematics Dates: July 14-16 Location: Holiday Inn East Hartford
	Dates: August 4-6 Location: Holiday Inn East Hartford	Dates: August 4-6 Location: Holiday Inn East Hartford

5. **Connecticut Core Standards Online Learning Modules** are now available on PCG's professional learning platform Pepper™! Pepper provides a free of charge, online learning community where educators have on-demand access to engaging, high-quality professional learning content. The interactive content for educators can be applied immediately in the classroom including instructional resources, teaching videos, and technology-enhanced assessment items. As teachers participate in the activities, they will build a portfolio of work that can be shared with coaches and peers. Current modules include:



English Language Arts

Module 1 - Focus on Instructional Shifts

- Deepen understanding of the CCS-ELA and the implications of the standards for instruction; i.e., foundational reading in early grades, and literacy across the content areas.
- Explore key instructional practices and engage with the standards through video analysis and interactive activities.
- Develop aligned lessons using a lesson planning template that is consistent with CSDE's sample lessons and resources.
- Use the EQuIP rubric and evidence guides for planning instruction that aligns with the CCS-ELA & Literacy standards.

Module 2 - Focus on ELA & Literacy Instruction

- Become familiar with components of the backward design process for CCS-ELA & Literacy units and lessons.
- Know elements of a high quality CCS-ELA & Literacy unit or lesson.
- Become skillful in creating sequences of text-dependent questions, including those related to academic language.
- Deepen understanding of the relationship between reading and text-based discussion and know how to incorporate discussion into lesson design.
- Understand the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and learn some strategies for incorporating UDL into lesson design.

Mathematics

Module 1 - Focus on Practice Standards

- Gain an initial understanding of the CCS-Math and the embedded changes and instructional shifts.
- Explore the eight Standards for Mathematical Practice and identify how they are related.
- Identify evidence of the practices.
- Discuss descriptors for the eight practices, and create formal grade level descriptions.
- Explore how specific instructional strategies (e.g., questioning, engaging students in mathematical discourse, and requiring multiple representations) can help students meet major learning goals.

Module 2 - Focus on Content Standards

- Examine the implications of the language of the content standards for teaching and learning.
- Identify CCS-aligned tasks that combine high-level content with mathematical practices.
- Identify and adapt tasks that combine high-level content with the practice standards.
- Analyze the progression of topics in the content standards both within and across grade levels.
- Deepen understanding of the potential of the CCS-Math to change mathematics teaching and learning.

* To register your entire district or school contact ctcorestandards@pcgus.com or to sign up individually [click here](#).
Questions? Need More Information? Visit: ctcorestandards.org Email: ctcorestandards@pcgus.com