

NEWS

Connecticut Department of Education

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Reporting error on CAPT affects 51 school districts

HARTFORD, Conn. – State Education Commissioner Betty J. Sternberg announced today that Harcourt Assessment Inc. has informed her of a processing error that resulted in incorrect reading scores being reported for 355 students in 51 districts on the 2005 Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT).

Harcourt, the contractor that currently administers the CAPT for the state, reported that members of its staff used incorrect data files to generate reports and thus reported inaccurate scores for 355 students. In addition, scores for 12 students were not reported.

“This situation is inexcusable,” Commissioner Sternberg said. “I have directed that Harcourt be fined the maximum amount allowable under our contract.”

Commissioner Sternberg informed all Connecticut superintendents yesterday of the error Harcourt made. State Department of Education staff members are calling the individual high schools involved to review the situation.

There are five performance levels reported for CAPT: below basic, basic, proficient, goal and advanced. Correcting the error results in 110 students scoring in a higher performance level than originally reported, 20 students in a lower performance level, and 225 students not changing performance level despite a change in their scale score.

The company has taken full responsibility for its error. In addition, Harcourt has examined the results of the other subtests from 2005 (writing, mathematics and science) and has verified

that these scores were accurately reported. New score reports for the reading test with accurate data will be sent to school districts shortly. The contractor also has assured the Department that it is putting procedures in place to ensure that no errors will occur in the scoring or reporting of scores on the 2006 administration of the CAPT.

Harcourt is the contractor for the administration of the CAPT through 2006. This will be the final administration of the CAPT under the Harcourt contract. Harcourt is not to be confused with the California Testing Bureau (CTB), Connecticut's contractor for the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) whose contract was terminated in 2005. Measurement Incorporated (MI) currently administers the CMT and beginning in 2007, MI will also be the Department's new contractor for the CAPT.

CAPT scores are one component used to determine whether schools and districts have made adequate yearly progress (AYP) under the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. A Department review has determined that the changes in scores will not affect AYP status for any of the schools or districts involved. However, since many districts include achievement at CAPT performance levels among their graduation requirements, school personnel will have to review the corrected test scores in relation to their district requirements.

"Accurate scoring and reporting by testing companies across the country are critical because the consequences of incorrect scores can be damaging and costly to students and schools," Dr. Sternberg said. "I continue to question whether testing every student every year in every state in seven grades is simply too overwhelming."

A recently released study, 'Margins of Error: The Education Testing Industry in the No Child Left Behind Era,' by Thomas Toch, states that "the mounting scoring errors and reporting delays that have resulted from the many challenges confronting the testing industry and state testing agencies as they struggle to respond to NCLB's testing mandates have tarnished NCLB's testing-based system of school accountability."

"The most important thing right now," Sternberg concluded, "is resolving this situation quickly and accurately, and we are working hard to do that."

Districts and schools affected by reporting error on 2005 CAPT

District	School(s)	District	School(s)
Berlin	Berlin High ¹	North Branford	North Branford High ¹
Bethel	Bethel High ¹	Plymouth	Terryville High ¹
Brookfield	Brookfield High ³	Regional School District 1	Housatonic Valley Regional High ¹
Connecticut Technical High Schools	Bullard-Havens Tech ¹ E.C. Goodwin Tech ¹ H.C. Wilcox Tech ¹ H.H. Ellis Tech ¹ W.F. Kaynor Tech ¹ Oliver Wolcott Tech ¹	Regional School District 5	Amity Regional Senior High ¹
		Regional School District 6	Wamogo Regional High ²
		Regional School District 7	Northwestern Regional High ¹
		Regional School District 10	Lewis S. Mills High ¹
Clinton	The Morgan School ¹	Regional School District 13	Coginchaug Regional High ¹
Darien	Darien High ¹	Regional School District 14	Nonnewaug High ¹
East Haven	East Haven High ¹	Regional School District 15	Pomperaug Regional High ¹
East Lyme	East Lyme High ¹	Regional School District 17	Haddam-Killingworth ¹
East Windsor	East Windsor High ²	Regional School District 18	Lyme-Old Lyme High ¹
Ellington	Ellington High ³	Regional School District 19	E.O. Smith High ¹
Fairfield	Ludlowe High ¹ Warde High ³	Ridgefield	Ridgefield High ¹
		Simsbury	Simsbury High ²
Greenwich	Greenwich High ¹	South Windsor	South Windsor High ¹
Guilford	Guilford High ¹	Southington	Southington High ¹
Hamden	Hamden High ¹	Thompson	Tourtellotte Memorial High ¹
Hartford	Pathways to Technology Magnet ³	Tolland	Tolland High ¹
Lebanon	Lyman Memorial High ¹	Torrington	Torrington High ¹
Litchfield	Litchfield High ²	Waterford	Waterford High ¹
Madison	Daniel Hand High ¹	West Hartford	Conard High ¹ Hall High ¹
Monroe	Masuk High ¹		
Montville	Montville High ¹	Westbrook	Westbrook High ¹
New Britain	New Britain High ¹	Wethersfield	Wethersfield High ¹
New Canaan	New Canaan High ¹	Wilton	Wilton High ¹
New Milford	New Milford High ¹	Windsor	Windsor High ¹
Newington	Newington High ¹	Wolcott	Wolcott High ²
Total districts: 51 Total schools: 58			

¹Reporting errors

²Reporting errors and student(s) not reported

³Student(s) not reported

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