



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



TO: Superintendents

FROM: Ajit Gopalakrishnan *Ajit Gopalakrishnan*
Chief Performance Officer

DATE: March 21, 2017

SUBJECT: 2017 Next Generation Science Standards Assessment Pilot

Commissioner Wentzell announced in her [memorandum from December 2016](#) that the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) is collaborating with Connecticut educators, national science experts, and assessment development specialists to develop a science assessment system that exemplifies the expectations for science learning that are articulated in the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). As you may remember, the Connecticut State Board of Education formally adopted the NGSS in November 2015.

Over the past several months, many Connecticut educators have worked closely with the CSDE to review newly developed items and provide critical feedback. After this iterative process, we are now ready for our first pilot test of these new items with Connecticut students.

The pilot test will occur this spring from May 1 to May 26 for students in Grades 5, 8 and 11. While the first operational administration of these assessments is not scheduled until spring 2019, this pilot test in 2017 is a vital step toward that goal.

To keep the demands on districts, schools, and students to a minimum, the CSDE has implemented a thoughtful and judicious sampling process to identify a representative sample of Connecticut schools and students for this pilot. In particular, only schools with 30 or more students in a tested grade (i.e., 5, 8 or 11) are included in this pilot. Moreover, any school that is participating in the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) 2017 administration in Grade 8 is excluded from this pilot.

Please note the following specifics with regard to this pilot test:

- To see if a school in your district has been selected for this pilot, please ask your District Administrator (DA) to:
 - log into the Test Information Distribution Engine (TIDE); and
 - select the **Secure Testing Materials** tab under the **Preparing for Testing** section.

A file listing the schools that have been selected will be located in this area of TIDE. Please note that only the DA has access to this list in TIDE.

- All students within a grade (i.e., 5, 8 or 11) for a selected school, except those who would normally qualify for an alternate assessment form (i.e., the CMT/CAPT Skills Checklist), are expected to participate in this pilot.
- This pilot test will take approximately 60 minutes to administer, with an additional 10 minutes for test directions.
- The pilot test will be administered online via the American Institutes for Research Test Delivery System. This is the same online system used to administer the Smarter Balanced tests, the CMT/CAPT Science tests and the Connecticut Alternate Assessments. The same secure browser that is required for these tests will be required for the pilot.
- Students who require accommodations will be eligible for the same accommodations provided for the CMT/CAPT Science tests. These accommodations must be entered into the TIDE system prior to testing. However, there will be no Large Print or Braille versions for this pilot.
- Students participating in the pilot test do not need to be tested on the same day or time. Students may be cycled through rooms with computers at any time during the May 1-26 window.
- To familiarize teachers and students with the new items prior to the pilot, sample test items will be released in April. Use of these items is optional, but encouraged.
- A test administration manual for this pilot test will be released by mid-April. The manual will be posted on the [Connecticut Comprehensive Assessment Portal](#) and a link will also be provided in the *Student Assessment News*.
- Teacher and student surveys will be available after the pilot test. Though these are optional, we hope that you will encourage both teachers and students to provide their feedback about the pilot experience. Their input is important to us.
- If a school in your district has not been selected for the pilot, but would still like to participate, please contact the CSDE Performance Office at 860-713-6860.

We truly appreciate your support of this pilot. A successful pilot is one that provides us with reliable information about student performance on these items. Therefore, it is important that students put forth their best effort when responding to these items. We trust that you will convey this importance to students and help them see how their efforts contribute to this broader goal.

We thank you in advance for your cooperation in developing a high-quality science assessment that will raise the bar for science learning for all Connecticut students. Please do not hesitate to contact Abe Krisst at 860-713-6894 or abe.krisst@ct.gov with any questions about this pilot.