



# Turnaround Office Newsletter



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**I. Message from the Deputy Commissioner**

Dear Colleagues,

The summer marches on and soon we will be in the full swing of another school year. I hope each of you found time for some relaxation this summer. As educators, we give all day, every day and restoring ourselves makes continuous giving possible. Wishing you a wonderful remainder of this glorious season!

**Smarter Balanced Results**

Information on the embargoed and public release of Smarter Balanced Assessment baseline results and CMT/CAPT Science results will be forthcoming. At this time, embargoed secure release of district level results is estimated to be **no earlier than August 5, 2015**.

Meanwhile, a toolkit of materials has been created for district use. These materials may be customized when presenting Smarter Balanced results to educators, boards of education, families, and community members. [Click here](#) to view the toolkit.

**Approval of Alliance/ Priority District and Network School Plans**

After much review and revision, plans are going to the Commissioner for final approval beginning this week. You will receive notice of your plan's approval by mid-August. Meanwhile, you should have received final budget allocations for Alliance Districts and Priority District budgets are forthcoming.

**Professional Development Opportunities from the CSDE Academic Office**

We offer, in-district coaching, online mini-courses, online materials for PLCs, regional workshops, and more! [Click here](#) to view upcoming PD opportunities.

Wishing you a wonderful remainder of the summer season!

Ellen Cohn  
Deputy Commissioner

**II. Important Dates in 2015**



- August 11:** Session I: 5th Annual CSDE Data and Performance Summit 2015
- August 12:** Attendance Works Webinar: Finish Strong: Address the Attendance Gap for Teens
- August 24:** CHET Scholarship Application Window Opens
- September 9:** Session II: 5th Annual CSDE Data and Performance Summit 2015
- September 25:** CT Family Engagement Conference
- September 26-27:** Google Summit
- October 8:** Alliance District Convening

### III. Save the Date: 5th Annual CSDE Data and Performance Summit 2015

The CSDE will hold two session offerings for its 5<sup>th</sup> Annual CSDE Data and Performance Summit. Session I will be held on Tuesday, August 11, 2015 from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Crowne Plaza, Cromwell. Session II will be held on Wednesday, September 9, 2015 from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Four Points Sheraton, Meriden. Participants will engage in comprehensive CSDE data collection training sessions, discuss data quality, share best reporting practices and important policy changes. To view the Summit flyer, and to register, please [click here](#).

### IV. New Draft Connecticut English Language Proficiency Standards

A statewide committee was convened in the Fall of 2014 with a goal of selecting or developing new English language proficiency standards (CELP). The draft CELP standards have been reviewed by the Academic Standards Subcommittee and will be going to the State Board of Education for approval this fall. These standards involve the language necessary to engage in content-specific practices in ELA and literacy, math, social studies and science, and linguistic features that enable students to use the language of those content areas. To access a wide variety of supporting documents such as grade-level matrices, progressions, content correspondences and linguistic supports on the CSDE Web site, please [click here](#). The CSDE will also be offering a variety of free informational sessions:

**EASTCONN:** August 11, 2015/10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. [Register here](#)

**ACES:** August 12, 2015/3:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. [Register here](#)

**CAS:** August 13, 2015/10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. [Register here](#)

**CREC:** August 31, 2015/10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. [Register here](#)

### V. Manchester Extends Invitation to Attend Google Summit

Amy Radikas, Assistant Superintendent in Manchester, extends an invitation to other Alliance Districts to attend the Connecticut Google Summit that will take place at Manchester High School on September 26-27, 2015. This two-day high-intensity event focuses on deploying, integrating, and using Google Apps for Education (and other Google tools) to promote student learning in K-12 and higher education. For information on registration and costs [click here](#).

### VI. CHET Advance Scholarship

The CHET *Advance* Scholarship is an annual program offered by the State Treasurer's Office to help Connecticut students pay for college. This fall high school freshmen and seniors will be eligible to apply for scholarships. Schools preparing information about scholarships for the 2015-2016 academic year should include a notice that CHET *Advance* will be offered in September and October. The application period will be Monday, August 24 through Tuesday, October 6. To promote college savings, the CHET *Advance* Scholarship will award up to 100 seniors with a \$2,500 contribution toward their college expenses. Up to 100 freshmen will receive a \$2,000 contribution and be eligible for another \$500 if the winning student opens a CHET account and saves \$500 by the time they graduate. To be eligible, seniors must have a grade point average of at least 2.0. No grade point average is required for freshmen. Scholarship recipients will be chosen through a random drawing. More details and promotional material will be provided to schools in early August. If you have any questions, please contact Emily Bjornberg, Director of Financial Education at the State Treasury. She may be reached by e-mail: [Emily.Bjornberg@ct.gov](mailto:Emily.Bjornberg@ct.gov) or phone: (860) 702-3292.

### VII. Resource: *Making Whole Class Work More Effective* by Timothy Shanahan



Turnaround Office would like to draw your attention to a resource school leaders can use in the important discussions focused on improving academic rigor. [Click here](#) to read a blog post by Timothy Shanahan. Timothy Shanahan is Distinguished Professor Emeritus of urban education at the University of Illinois at Chicago where he was Founding Director of the Center for Literacy and chair of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction.

## VIII. Attendance Works Webinar: Finish Strong: Address the Attendance Gap for Teens

In many school districts across the country, chronic absence spikes in the transition to middle or high school. Research shows that by 9th grade, attendance is a better predictor of graduation than 8th grade test scores. How can communities address this alarming attendance gap in the later grades? Join Attendance Works and our guests from Get Schooled, MENTOR and the Center for Supportive Schools as they share innovative and evidence-based strategies that help teens persist in going to school every day so they can finish strong. <http://www.attendanceworks.org/peer-learning-resources/>.

**Webinar:** Wednesday, August 12, 2015: Finish Strong: Address the Attendance Gap for Teens (11-12:30 p.m. PT/2-3:30 p.m. ET). [Register here](#).

## IX. Free Connecticut Core Standards Online Learning Modules

Free Connecticut Core Standards (CCS) online learning modules are now available on the PCG Education professional learning platform Pepper™! Pepper provides an 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 [click here](#) or to sign up individually [click here](#).

## X. CT Family Engagement Statewide Conference

Save the date for the CT Family Engagement Conference on September 25, 2015 at the Sheraton, Rocky Hill. The conference will feature national speakers, best practice workshops, books and giveaways. The Conference will bring to life the U.S. Department of Education's new Dual-Capacity Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships. To view the framework [click here](#). Registration will open in mid-August. To sign up for the mailing list [click here](#).

## XI. Student Resource: Khan Academy Offers Free SAT Prep Program

The College Board recently announced they are partnering with the Khan Academy to provide the official SAT® Practice for the redesigned SAT live on KhanAcademy.org, making this online practice free and available for all students. To access student SAT online practice materials [click here](#).



### *Spotlight on Excellence*



#### **New Science Lab at Norwalk Pathways Academy**

The Norwalk Pathways Academy, formerly known as Briggs, is entering their third year in the Commissioner's Network. One of the biggest accomplishments, thanks to the support of the Network, is their new science lab. This space is designed to be interchangeable for the general science, physiology, and biology classes. This lab replaces a makeshift classroom where it was difficult to conduct hands on learning. The lab makes the best use of space with modular learning stations so it possible to teach inquiry, rather than teaching strictly from textbooks. The Norwalk Pathway Academy has created a flexible learning environment that replaced an aging classroom with the tools and technology for better teaching practices. The teachers and students are very excited and are looking forward to beginning the year in their new learning environment.