



Board of Education

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Dear Parent or Guardian:

We strive to ensure that your child – and all Watertown students – receive an education that prepares them with options for future success in college, career and community. That is why Connecticut schools have adopted challenging academic standards including the Connecticut Core Standards in Mathematics and English Language Arts, as well as the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). Our teachers and administrators are committed to working together to support students with great instruction and resources to meet these challenging standards for academic instruction. Our district certainly recognizes that these assessments are one snapshot of a student's overall progress, and that many factors contribute to a student's growth over time.

With these statewide learning goals, Connecticut needs ways to measure student progress. The state of Connecticut requires assessments in the areas of English Language Arts and Mathematics for students in grades 3-8 and 11, and in science in grades 5, 8 and 11. Participating in standard assessments for English Language Arts, Mathematics or Science may not be appropriate for a small group of special education students.

Eligible students with significant cognitive disabilities in grades 3-8 and 11, who are identified through the Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meeting, must participate in an alternate assessment for English Language Arts and Mathematics. These students participate in the Connecticut Alternate Assessment (CTAA) rather than the Smarter Balanced or Connecticut SAT School Day because it meets their need for greater accessibility to the grade-level content being assessed.

Similarly, for science, eligible students with significant cognitive disabilities in grades 5, 8 and 11, identified through the PPT process, participate in the Connecticut Alternate Science Test (CTAS) due to their disabilities and access needs. The CTAA and CTAS are designed to measure skills through reading comprehension, writing, mathematics, and science questions that require students to demonstrate their understanding of the grade-level content. Both the CTAA and the CTAS are administered to each student by a trained teacher and are designed specifically with the needs of these students in mind.

To find more resources specifically for parents and guardians, including ways to help your child with the new standards at home, please visit <https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/CT-Core-Standards> or <https://www.nextgenscience.org>. For resources specific to alternate assessments, please visit <https://ct.portal.cambiumast.com/resources/general-information-and-connecticut-alternate-assessment/>.

If you have any questions, please feel welcome to call me to discuss these assessments. Thank you for your continued support of our students and our school.

Sincerely,

Lisa M. Fekete

Lisa M. Fekete
Director of Curriculum & Instruction
Watertown's State Testing Coordinator