



STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION



**TO:** Superintendents of Schools

**FROM:** Dr. Dianna R. Wentzell, Commissioner of Education *DRW*

**DATE:** December 13, 2016

**SUBJECT:** Science Assessments Transition Timeline

The Connecticut State Board of Education adopted the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) in November 2015. The NGSS places more emphasis on critical thinking than on rote memorization. In an NGSS classroom, students investigate natural phenomena and real-world problems in much the same way that scientists and engineers do.

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) is aware that its current science assessments (CMT/CAPT) do not align well to the NGSS performance expectations. The CSDE is working closely with Connecticut educators, science education partners, and test development experts to develop a new assessment that is aligned to the NGSS. This assessment is expected to be ready for administration in the 2018-19 school year (i.e., for the spring 2019 administration).

One persistent question from Connecticut educators is whether the high school science assessment will remain in Grade 10 or be administered, as with the English Language Arts and Mathematics assessments, in Grade 11. The unanimous feedback from science educators has been to move the high school science assessment to Grade 11. They assert that an assessment that is administered in Grade 11 will align better with the discipline-specific structure of science courses in high school; it will ensure that high school students have been taught the breadth and depth of science content and engineering practices, prior to the assessment. The CSDE concurs.

Therefore, effective 2018-19, the CSDE plans to administer the high school science assessment in Grade 11. The CSDE recognizes that though this change is educationally appropriate, it adds one more assessment to the 11<sup>th</sup> grade year. Therefore, the CSDE will consider a broader test window for the science assessment so that students have the flexibility to complete it prior to the SAT, AP, etc.

To eliminate double-testing during the transition period, the CSDE plans to not administer the CAPT high school science assessment in 2017-18; Grade 10 students who would otherwise have taken CAPT in 2017-18 can plan to take the NGSS aligned assessment in Grade 11 in 2018-19. Note that Grade 10 students will take the CAPT Science assessment as scheduled in 2016-17 (i.e., spring 2017).

Students in Grades 5 and 8 will continue to take the CMT Science assessments in both 2016-17 and 2017-18. Students in those grades will also transition to Connecticut's NGSS-aligned assessments in 2018-19.

In order for us to have an operational assessment in 2018-19, we will need your assistance over the next two years with various aspects of the test development process including item reviews, item pilots, field testing and standard setting. I trust that we can count on your enthusiastic collaboration in this important endeavor. Please contact [Abe Krisst](#) at 860-713-6894 with any questions.

Thank you.

cc: Ajit Gopalakrishnan, Chief Performance Officer