



Assessment Reduction Grant

Academic Office

Purpose: This grant opportunity will support local efforts to eliminate tests that are outdated and do not contribute to student learning – thereby increasing classroom time for teaching – and to improve the quality of student assessments already in use, including the tailoring and personalization of assessments to student needs.

Application Submission Date: January 9, 2015

Stefan Pryor, Commissioner of Education
Connecticut State Department of Education
165 Capitol Avenue | Hartford, CT 06106
www.sde.ct.gov

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Levy Gillespie
Equal Employment Opportunity Director
Title IX / ADA/Section 504 Coordinator
State of Connecticut Department of Education
25 Industrial Park Road
Middletown, CT 06457 Phone: 860-807-2071 Fax: 860-807-2157

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Assessment Reduction Grant

I. Overview

As a result of Governor Malloy's concern related to the unintentional overuse of testing, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) is making available up to \$500,000 in grants to Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) to study the types and amount of testing in individual districts, as well as to make changes based on the study of local district testing practices. The grant will enable districts to inventory the assessments administered in their districts and the extent to which the testing can be limited.

The CSDE recognizes that a variety of pressures at the federal and state level has often resulted in more local testing than is needed. The following trends in testing have been observed:

- New local tests were added without first reviewing the efficacy of existing tests, resulting in more testing than is truly necessary to inform effective decision-making.
- In the non - assessed subjects and grade levels, often constrained by limited time and resources, LEAs may have chosen to create or purchase tests relying primarily on selected-response questions. In many of these instances, performance-based assessments would provide more information for instruction.
- To set goals for students, LEAs may have chosen to use pre-tests rather than using prior academic performance to set baselines, adding to assessment time and reducing instructional time.

Given these trends, this grant aims to encourage LEA applicants to take a constructive view of their assessment practices in order to determine how to best make changes that will positively impact teaching and learning processes, thus benefitting the students served.

While many LEAs are in the process of reviewing their assessments, many have not yet developed a comprehensive inventory plan. To increase transparency, LEAs should inform educators, parents, and the community about the review process and how it will improve teaching and learning. Applicants for the funding can use an inventory system such as the Achieve Student Assessment Inventory for Districts (<http://www.achieve.org/assessmentinventory>), or another assessment inventory tool similar to the Achieve Student Assessment Inventory for School Districts.

The RESC Alliance will assist the CSDE by soliciting and evaluating the Assessment Reduction grant proposal.

Grants of up to \$10,000 will be shared with individual districts.

II. Eligibility

Local Educational Agencies (local and regional boards, the Connecticut Technical High School System, charter schools, RESCs, and endowed academies) are eligible to submit applications.

III. Specific Criteria

Acceptable proposals will include:

1. Grant Cover Page
2. Executive Summary
3. Proposal Narrative
4. Budget (requested amount) and Budget Narrative (how the funds will be used)
5. Sustainability Plan

IV. Selection Process

All proposals will be evaluated by individual RESC teams using a standardized rubric (see Appendix A) and evaluative process. All awards are subject to the availability of funds. Grants are not final until the award letter is executed. The CSDE anticipates a competitive process resulting in funding being awarded to only those applicants submitting well-developed proposals.

The RESC Alliance, in consultation with the CSDE, will determine those who have been selected for the grant awards. The CSDE will then distribute funds directly to local districts.

V. Accountability

Grantees will be obligated to provide an end of year report detailing the progress to meet goals set in the Program Narrative. In an effort to share best practices across the state, grantees may also be requested to participate in technical assistance or professional development offerings.

VI. Grant Awards

Grantees must complete program activities by June 30, 2015. They must fully encumber funds by June 30, 2015 but can liquidate encumbrances through July 30, 2015. These grants cannot be carried over and cannot be amended after June 30, 2015. No payments can be made in a subsequent year to cover prior year activities. Unexpended funds must be refunded and cannot be reallocated in a subsequent year. All awards are subject to availability of state funds.

VII. Submission Process

The grant proposals should be submitted in the following two ways:

- 1) Submitted through email by 4:00 p.m. on January 9, 2015 to Assessmentgrant@eastconn.org.
- 2) Submitted through mail (with original signatures) postmarked by 4 p.m. on January 9, 2015 to: EASTCONN, Assessment Grant, 376 Hartford Turnpike, Hampton, CT 06247

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GRANT COVER PAGE

To be Completed and Submitted with the Grant Application

GRANT PERIOD

February 1 2014, to June 30, 2015

APPLICANT NAME(s):

Name, District, Address, Telephone, Fax, E-mail

<u>CONTACT PERSON(s):</u>	<u>FUNDING REQUEST:</u>
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Name, Address, Telephone, Fax, E-mail

I, _____, the undersigned chief administrative official, submit this proposal on behalf of the applicant agency, attest to the appropriateness and accuracy of the information contained herein, and certify that this proposal, if funded, will comply with all relevant requirements of the state and federal laws and regulations.

In addition, funds obtained through this source will be used solely to support the purpose, goals and objectives as stated herein.

Signature of Authorized
Administrative Official

Name (typed) _____ (Name, Title) _____ (Date)

Agency: _____

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Executive Summary

Please provide a one-page summary that contains an overview of the process of reviewing assessments and the potential outcomes of the review.

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Program Narrative

LEAs should address the following areas in the Program Narrative. The Program Narrative is limited to a maximum of five pages, double-spaced, using font size 12, one-inch margins, with each page clearly and consecutively numbered and in the order and format required (not including attachments).

1. **Assessment Review:** Districts should describe in detail how they will review districtwide assessments. Applicants for the funding can use an inventory system such as the Achieve Student Assessment Inventory for School Districts (<http://www.achieve.org/assessmentinventory>), or another assessment inventory tool similar to the Achieve Student Assessment Inventory for School Districts. Once the tool is chosen, LEAs should describe in detail how they will engage in the inventory process.
2. **Action Plan:** LEAs should create an Action Plan to implement the results of the assessment review made in part one of the narrative.
Components of the Action Plan include:
 - a. Specific actions that will occur to implement the recommendations of the assessment review committee (such as to modify or augment, eliminate, or replace assessments that are redundant, ineffective, or out of alignment). A timeline should be included.
 - b. An engagement plan should be presented that is targeted for parents and the community that reviews the inventory process which includes the Assessment Review, specific actions and recommendations, and Professional Development plan.
3. **Professional Development:** LEAs should outline a professional development plan to assist educators in understanding the characteristics of high-quality assessments and how to use assessments effectively to inform instruction, possibly incorporating the use of the Smarter Balanced Digital Library and the CSDE Assessment Literacy Support. The goal of this activity would be to limit the inclusion of unnecessary assessments.

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Budget and Budget Narrative

Enter the amount of funds to be utilized in the categories below. Give a brief description explaining how the funds will be used.

Category	Description	Amount
100 Personal Services - Salaries		
322 In-service		
330 Employee Training and Development Services		
530 Communication/Facilitation		
800 Other		
TOTAL		

Budget Codes

100 Personal Services - Salaries

Amounts paid to both permanent and temporary grantee employees, including personnel substituting for those in permanent positions. This includes gross salary for personal services rendered while on the payroll of the grantees.

322 In-service (Instructional Program Improvement Services)

Payments for services performed by persons qualified to assist teachers and supervisors to enhance the quality of the teaching process. This category includes curriculum consultants, in-service training specialists, etc., who are not on the grantee payroll.

330 Employee Training and Development Services

Services supporting the professional and technical development of school district personnel, including instructional, administrative, and service employees. Included are course registration fees (that are not tuition reimbursement), charges from external vendors to conduct training courses (at either school district facilities or off-site), and other expenditures associated with training or professional development by third-party vendors.

530 Communication

Services provided by persons or businesses to assist in transmitting and receiving messages or information. This category includes telephone and voice communication services; data communication services to establish or maintain computer-based communications, networking, and Internet services; video communications services to establish or maintain one-way or two-way video communications via satellite, cable, or other devices; postal communications services to establish or maintain postage machine rentals, postage, express delivery services, and couriers.

800 Other

Amounts paid for goods and services not otherwise classified above.

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Sustainability Plan

Briefly describe below how the LEA plans to sustain the efforts implemented in this proposal. This may include information about how the goals of the Action Plan and Professional Development section of the Program Narrative will be sustained beyond the original inventory and reduction process.

The Sustainability Plan is limited to a maximum of two pages, double-spaced using font size 12, one-inch margins, with each page clearly and consecutively numbered (not including attachments) and in the order and format required.

Assessment Reduction Grant Rubric – Appendix A

	0	1	2	Point Value
Completeness and Clarity of the Application	The application is incomplete.	The application is complete; however, lacks clarity.	The application is complete and shows excellent clarity.	
Executive Summary	No executive summary is presented.	Executive summary presents an adequate summary of the project.	Executive summary presents an excellent summary of the project.	
Assessment Review	No assessment review plan is presented.	The proposal has an adequate explanation of the assessment review process identified.	The proposal has an excellent assessment review process identified.	
Action Plan	No action plan is presented.	The action plan or engagement plans is not effectively outlined.	The action plan and engagement plan are outlined effectively.	
Professional Development	No professional development plan is presented.	An adequate professional development plan is presented.	A superior professional development plan is presented.	
Budget	No budget plan is presented.	Somewhat detailed budget plan is presented.	Detailed budget plan is presented.	
Sustainability	No sustainability plan is presented.	An adequately detailed sustainability plan is presented.	A superior sustainability plan is presented.	

Total Point Value /14

Statement of Assurances – Appendix B

CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
STANDARD STATEMENT OF ASSURANCES
GRANT PROGRAMS

PROJECT TITLE: Assessment Reduction Grant Opportunity

THE APPLICANT: _____ **HEREBY ASSURES THAT:**

(insert Agency/School/CBO Name)

- A. The applicant has the necessary legal authority to apply for and receive the proposed grant;
- B. The activities and services for which assistance is sought under this grant will be administered by or under the supervision and control of the applicant;
- C. The project will be operated in compliance with all applicable state and federal laws and in compliance with regulations and other policies and administrative directives of the State Board of Education and the CSDE;
- D. Grant funds shall not be used to supplant funds normally budgeted by the agency;
- E. Fiscal control and accounting procedures will be used to ensure proper disbursement of all funds awarded;
- F. The applicant will submit a final project report (within 60 days of the project completion) and such other reports, as specified, to the CSDE, including information relating to the project records and access thereto as the CSDE may find necessary;
- G. The CSDE reserves the exclusive right to use and grant the right to use and/or publish any part or parts of any summary, abstract, reports, publications, records and materials resulting from this project and this grant;
- H. If the project achieves the specified objectives, every reasonable effort will be made to continue the project and/or implement the results after the termination of state/federal funding;
- I. The applicant will protect and save harmless the State Board of Education from financial loss and expense, including legal fees and costs, if any, arising out of any breach of the duties, in whole or part, described in the application for the grant;
- J. At the conclusion of each grant period, the applicant will provide for an independent audit report acceptable to the grantor in accordance with Sections 7-394a and 7-396a of the Connecticut General Statutes, and the applicant shall return to the CSDE any moneys not expended in accordance with the approved program/operation budget as determined by the audit;

K. REQUIRED LANGUAGE (NON-DISCRIMINATION)

- 1) References in this section to "contract" shall mean this grant agreement and references to "contractor" shall mean the Grantee.
 - (a) For purposes of this Section, the following terms are defined as follows:
 - i. "Commission" means the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities;
 - ii. "Contract" and "contract" include any extension or modification of the Contract or contract;
 - iii. "Contractor" and "contractor" include any successors or assigns of the Contractor or contractor;
 - iv. "Gender identity or expression" means a person's gender-related identity, appearance or behavior, whether or not that gender-related identity, appearance or behavior is different from that traditionally associated with the person's physiology or assigned sex at birth, which gender-related identity can be shown by providing evidence including, but not limited to, medical history, care or treatment of the gender-related identity, consistent and uniform assertion of the gender-related identity or any other evidence that the gender-related identity is sincerely held, part of a person's core identity or not being asserted for an improper purpose;
 - v. "good faith" means that degree of diligence which a reasonable person would exercise in the performance of legal duties and obligations;
 - vi. "good faith efforts" shall include, but not be limited to, those reasonable initial efforts necessary to comply with statutory or regulatory requirements and additional or substituted efforts when it is determined that such initial efforts will not be sufficient to comply with such requirements;
 - vii. "marital status" means being single, married as recognized by the state of Connecticut, widowed, separated or divorced;
 - viii. "mental disability" means one or more mental disorders, as defined in the most recent edition of the American Psychiatric Association's "Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders", or a record of or regarding a person as having one or more such disorders;
 - ix. "minority business enterprise" means any small contractor or supplier of materials fifty-one percent or more of the capital stock, if any, or assets of which is owned by a person or persons: (1) who are active in the daily affairs of the enterprise, (2) who have the power to direct the management and policies of the enterprise, and (3) who are members of a minority, as such term is defined in subsection (a) of Connecticut General Statutes § 32-9n; and
 - x. "public works contract" means any agreement between any individual, firm or corporation and the State or any political subdivision of the State other than a municipality for construction, rehabilitation, conversion, extension, demolition or repair of a public building, highway or other changes or improvements in real property, or which is financed in whole or in part by the State, including, but not limited to, matching expenditures, grants, loans, insurance or guarantees.

For purposes of this Section, the terms "Contract" and "contract" do not include a contract where each contractor is (1) a political subdivision of the state, including, but not limited to, a municipality, (2) a quasi-public agency, as defined in Conn. Gen. Stat. Section 1-120, (3) any other state, including but not limited to any federally recognized Indian tribal governments, as defined in Conn. Gen. Stat. Section 1-267, (4) the federal government, (5) a foreign government, or (6) an agency of a subdivision, agency, state or government described in the immediately preceding enumerated items (1), (2), (3), (4) or (5).

- (b) (1) The Contractor agrees and warrants that in the performance of the Contract such Contractor will not discriminate or permit discrimination against any person or group of persons on the grounds of race, color, religious creed, age, marital status, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender identity or expression, mental retardation, mental disability or physical disability, including, but not limited to, blindness, unless it is shown by such Contractor that such disability prevents performance of the work involved, in any manner prohibited by the laws of the United States or of the State of Connecticut; and the Contractor further agrees to take affirmative action to insure that applicants with job-related qualifications are employed and that employees are treated when employed without regard to their race, color, religious creed, age, marital status, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender identity or expression, mental retardation, mental disability or physical disability, including, but not limited to, blindness, unless it is shown by the Contractor that such disability prevents performance of the work involved; (2) the Contractor agrees, in all solicitations or advertisements for employees placed by or on behalf of the Contractor, to state that it is an "affirmative action-equal opportunity employer" in accordance with regulations adopted by the Commission; (3) the Contractor agrees to provide each labor union or representative of workers with which the Contractor has a collective bargaining Agreement or other contract or understanding and each vendor with which the Contractor has a contract or understanding, a notice to be provided by the Commission, advising the labor union or workers' representative of the Contractor's commitments under this section and to post copies of the notice in conspicuous places available to employees and applicants for employment; (4) the Contractor agrees to comply with each provision of this Section and Connecticut General Statutes §§ 46a-68e and 46a-68f and with each regulation or relevant order issued by said Commission pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes §§ 46a-56, 46a-68e and 46a-68f; and (5) the Contractor agrees to provide the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities with such information requested by the Commission, and permit access to pertinent books, records and accounts, concerning the employment practices and procedures of the Contractor as relate to the provisions of this Section and Connecticut General Statutes § 46a-56. If the contract is a public works contract, the Contractor agrees and warrants that he will make good faith efforts to employ minority business enterprises as subcontractors and suppliers of materials on such public works projects.
- (c) Determination of the Contractor's good faith efforts shall include, but shall not be limited to, the following factors: The Contractor's employment and subcontracting policies, patterns and practices; affirmative advertising, recruitment and training; technical assistance activities and such other reasonable activities or efforts as the Commission may prescribe that are designed to ensure the participation of minority business enterprises in public works projects.
- (d) The Contractor shall develop and maintain adequate documentation, in a manner prescribed by the Commission, of its good faith efforts.
- (e) The Contractor shall include the provisions of subsection (b) of this Section in every subcontract or purchase order entered into in order to fulfill any obligation of a contract with the State and such provisions shall be binding on a subcontractor, vendor or manufacturer unless exempted by regulations or orders of the Commission. The Contractor shall take such action with respect to any such subcontract or purchase order as the Commission may direct as a means of enforcing such provisions including sanctions for noncompliance in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes §46a-56; provided if such Contractor becomes involved in, or is threatened with, litigation with a subcontractor or vendor as a result of such direction by the Commission, the Contractor may request the State of Connecticut to enter into any such litigation or negotiation prior thereto to protect the interests of the State and the State may so enter.
- (f) The Contractor agrees to comply with the regulations referred to in this Section as they exist on the date of this Contract and as they may be adopted or amended from time to time during the term of this Contract and any amendments thereto.

- (g) (1) The Contractor agrees and warrants that in the performance of the Contract such Contractor will not discriminate or permit discrimination against any person or group of persons on the grounds of sexual orientation, in any manner prohibited by the laws of the United States or the State of Connecticut, and that employees are treated when employed without regard to their sexual orientation; (2) the Contractor agrees to provide each labor union or representative of workers with which such Contractor has a collective bargaining Agreement or other contract or understanding and each vendor with which such Contractor has a contract or understanding, a notice to be provided by the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities advising the labor union or workers' representative of the Contractor's commitments under this section, and to post copies of the notice in conspicuous places available to employees and applicants for employment; (3) the Contractor agrees to comply with each provision of this section and with each regulation or relevant order issued by said Commission pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes § 46a-56; and (4) the Contractor agrees to provide the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities with such information requested by the Commission, and permit access to pertinent books, records and accounts, concerning the employment practices and procedures of the Contractor which relate to the provisions of this Section and Connecticut General Statutes § 46a-56.
- (h) The Contractor shall include the provisions of the foregoing paragraph in every subcontract or purchase order entered into in order to fulfill any obligation of a contract with the State and such provisions shall be binding on a subcontractor, vendor or manufacturer unless exempted by regulations or orders of the Commission. The Contractor shall take such action with respect to any such subcontract or purchase order as the Commission may direct as a means of enforcing such provisions including sanctions for noncompliance in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes § 46a-56; provided, if such Contractor becomes involved in, or is threatened with, litigation with a subcontractor or vendor as a result of such direction by the Commission, the Contractor may request the State of Connecticut to enter into any such litigation or negotiation prior thereto to protect the interests of the State and the State may so enter.

L. The grant award is subject to approval of the CSDE and availability of state or federal funds.

M. The applicant agrees and warrants that Sections 4-190 to 4-197, inclusive, of the Connecticut General Statutes concerning the Personal Data Act and Sections 10-4-8 to 10-4-10, inclusive, of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies promulgated there under are hereby incorporated by reference.

I, the undersigned authorized official, hereby certify that these assurances shall be fully implemented.

Signature: _____
 Name: *(typed)* _____
 Title: *(typed)* _____
 Date: _____