



NEW TEST. NEW RESULTS.

What do families need to know?

(Insert School Name) (Insert Date)

Overview of Discussion

- 1. What the new state test means for your child
- 2. What your child can expect
- 3. Ways to support your child
- 4. How to interpret test results
- 5. Additional resources for families

- Nationally, our education system was falling short in developing the communication, critical-thinking and problem-solving skills students need to succeed after high school, as compared to other countries.
- In 2010, Connecticut adopted higher, more focused standards—Connecticut Core Standards to better prepare students for college and careers.
- New standards require new state tests that better measure the knowledge and skills found in these standards.

Smarter Balanced Assessment

English language arts/literacy and mathematics assessments administered to students in Grades 3–8

CMT/CAPT Science

Science assessments administered to students in Grades 5, 8, and 10

CONNECTICUT ALTERNATE ASSESSMENTS:

Connecticut Alternative Assessment

English language arts and mathematics assessments available to students with significant cognitive disabilities in Grades 3–8 and 11

CMT/CAPT Science Skills Checklist

Available to students with significant cognitive disabilities in Grades 3–8 and 10

- Students in Grades 3–8 take Smarter Balanced English language arts/literacy (ELA) and mathematics tests.
- These tests replaced the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) and Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) for English and Mathematics.
- The new tests include two sections that are each taken online:
 - 1. Computer Adaptive Test
 - Short-answer, multiple-choice questions and interactive test items
 - Questions adjust to each student's ability
 - 2. Performance Task
 - Longer multi-step questions, including essays
 - Students solve real-world problems

The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium

- A group of states, including Connecticut, worked together to develop high-quality tests in English language arts/literacy and mathematics that are aligned to the new standards.
- Connecticut educators participated in the development of the Smarter Balanced assessments.
- The tests were field-tested in spring 2014 by more than 4 million students in 21 states, including Connecticut.

What Do the English Language Arts/Literacy Tests Measure?

- Can students read closely to understand different types of texts?
- Can students write effectively for multiple purposes and audiences?
- Can students listen effectively for different purposes?
- Can students use research skills to investigate topics, and analyze, integrate, and present information?

What Do the Mathematics Tests Measure?

- Can students explain and use math concepts to solve problems?
- Can students solve math problems using their knowledge of concepts and problem solving strategies?
- Can students explain, justify, illustrate, or defend their reasoning about a solution to a problem and be able to look at other solutions to do the same?
- Can students solve problems by using math models to represent a situation and interpret information from the problem to solve the problem?





What Your Child Can Expect

What's Different About These Tests?

- 1. The new tests go beyond a paper-and-pencil test.
- 2. Computer-Based Tests have:
 - Interactive test items: i.e., matching, complete a table with missing information, click and drag
 - Accessibility features and supports: built-in accommodations aligned to the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP)
 - Computer Adaptive Test: Questions adjust to each student's ability

How long will the tests take?

- Smarter Balanced tests are untimed. Students can take as much time as they need to finish. This allows students to think critically, explore, read carefully, and write a well-thought response.
- Total Estimated Testing Time: 6-7½ hours total, administered in periods over several weeks (similar in many grades to the CMT and CAPT given previously)

When will the tests be given?

 Administered sometime during the last 12 weeks of the school year (eight weeks for high school)

What Is Expected on the ELA Test?

Students will:

- Show they can read and understand a variety of complex, grade appropriate informational and literary texts.
- Use evidence from source materials to support their ideas in written responses at every grade level.
- Interpret and use information delivered orally to determine main ideas, summarize or analyze.
- Research a topic and use the findings to take a position and defend it or to evaluate information.

Example of Connecticut Mastery Test Grade 7 ELA

Under a new plan, your local shopping mall will require that anyone who is under the age of 18 must be accompanied by an adult when in the mall. Decide whether you support the new plan. Write to convince the editor of the newspaper to support your opinion.

Example of Smarter Balanced Assessment Grade 7 ELA

You have read several sources about the production of pennies in the United States. Using your sources, write a multi-paragraph argumentative essay either for or against the continued production of the penny in the United States. Make sure you establish a claim, address counterarguments, and support your claim with evidence from the sources you have read. Develop your ideas clearly and use your own words, except when quoting directly from the sources. Be sure to reference the sources by title or number when using details or facts directly from the sources.

What Is Expected on the Mathematics Test? Students will:

- Explain and use mathematics to solve problems.
- Complete math problems quickly and accurately.
- Understand how math concepts link together.
- Apply their mathematical knowledge to solve real-world problems. $(x-y)(x+y) = x^2-y^2$
- Communicate their mathematical reasoning

Example from the Connecticut Mastery TestGrade 5 Math

Which equation is true?

$$2\frac{1}{6}$$
 + $3\frac{4}{6}$

A.
$$6\frac{5}{6}$$

B.
$$5\frac{5}{6}$$

C.
$$5\frac{5}{12}$$

D.
$$1\frac{1}{2}$$

Example from Smarter Balanced Assessment Grade 5 Math

17

Drag one number into each box to create a fraction that correctly completes each statement.

0	© Delete X
1	
2	
3	4 × 🗔 < 4
4	
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	
6	4 × = 4
7	
8	
9	4 × 🗔 > 4
	J



Ways to Support Your Child

How Can I Help My Child at Home?

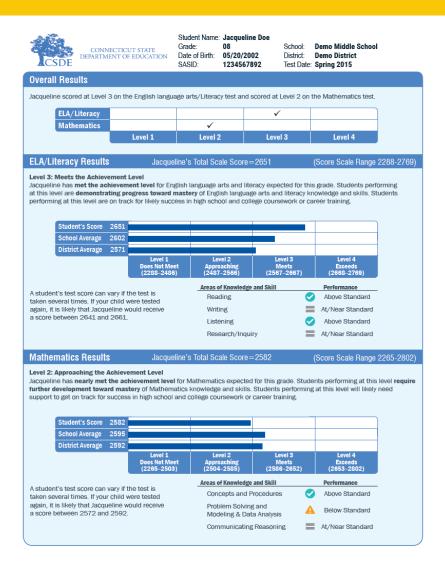
- Have your child read a variety of materials at home, including fiction and informational texts.
- Involve learning in everyday activities, such as cooking or shopping. Ask children to express opinions and to back their views.
- Encourage your child to do his/her best.
- Assure your child that he/she will have enough time to finish.
- Review a practice test with your child: http://www.smarterbalanced.org/practice-test/



How to Interpret Test Results

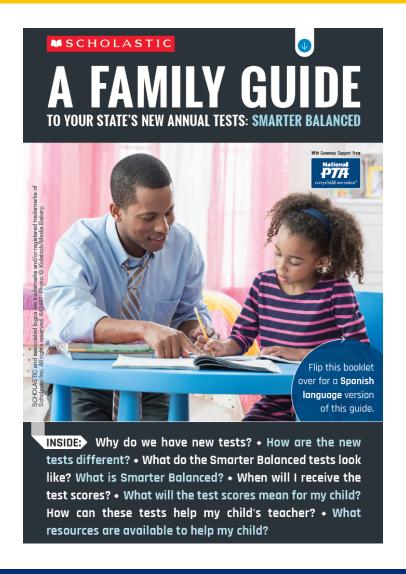
- With the new tests, students will receive new scores.
- Results will be different.
 - In many cases, performance may look lower on the Smarter Balanced tests than what we are used to seeing on the CMT/CAPT because the standards are more rigorous.
- This is to be expected because we are using a different measure.
- This does not mean that students are learning less.
 Rather, it reflects that we set a new, higher bar and
 this year's test is a baseline from which our students
 will grow.

This is certainly a big shift for our students and teachers—but one that holds great promise for our children. By making this transition, we are better preparing our kids to meet the demands of college and the 21st-century workforce.



This guide will answer questions about what the Smarter Balanced test means for your child and provides tips to support your child at home.

www.bealearninghero.org



How Will Scores Be Used to Help Your Child?

- 1. Test results will allow parents, teachers, and students to know whether students are on track each year.
- 2. Results provide an annual snapshot of student achievement that should be used along with other information, such as class work and other tests, when making educational decisions.
- 3. Results are not a sole measure of student achievement, program evaluation or school, district, and state accountability systems.



Additional Resources for Families

Where Can I Learn More?

- PTA Parent Guides to Student Success
 http://www.pta.org/parents/content.cfm?ltemNumber=2583
- Bealearninghero.org/
 http://bealearninghero.org/
- Connecticut State Department of Education, CT Core Standards website, family page
 http://ctcorestandards.org/?page_id=32
- Connecticut State Department of Education, Student Assessment http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2748&q=335456
- Smarter Balanced Website, family page http://www.smarterbalanced.org/parents-students/
- Smarter Balanced Practice Tests
 http://www.smarterbalanced.org/practice-test/

Questions?

