PREPARING STUDENTS FOR SUCCESS:

NEW TESTS. NEW RESULTS.

CSDE

CONNECTICUT STATE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

PREPARING STUDENTS FOR SUCCESS

NEW TEST. NEW RESULTS

We owe it to our kids to make sure that they receive an education that prepares them to thrive in a global economy and civic life.

That’s why Connecticut raised the bar and issued a new instructional roadmap that will prepare our kids for college and careers.

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New standards.

- Our new roadmap, the Connecticut Core Standards, sets learning expectations for what students should learn and be able to do at each grade level so that by the time they graduate from high school, they are prepared to succeed in college and careers.
- The Tolland Public Schools have spent years preparing for the new academic standards. Today, teachers across the district are using it in their classrooms.

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NEW TEST. NEW RESULTS

New standards.

New tests.

New scores.

New tests.

- With these new learning expectations, Connecticut needs new ways to measure student progress.
- This year, the Smarter Balanced assessments will replace our old statewide tests, the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) and Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT), in English language arts and math.

Smarter Balanced assessments

The Connecticut Core Standards focus on critical thinking and problem-solving—the skills students need to be successful in college and careers.

The Smarter Balanced assessments will be administered on computers and are designed to measure these skills through reading comprehension, writing, and math questions that require students to demonstrate that they truly understand the content.

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- **90% of Connecticut districts already have one successful administration of the Smarter Balanced test completed.**
  - It helped familiarize students and staff with the new types of questions and with taking the tests on the computer-based testing system.
  - The feedback was generally positive and most schools' technology proved ready.

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- Assessments are like academic checkups.
- It helps teachers and parents see how on-track students are to where they need to be.
- Results help inform decisions around classroom instruction.

New scores.

- With the new tests, students will receive new scores.
- **Results will be different.**
  - In many cases, the scores will look lower on the Smarter Balanced tests than what we are used to seeing on the CMT/CAPT exams.
- This is to be expected because **we are using a different ruler**.

New scores.

- The shift is like going from centimeters on the CMT/CAPT to inches on the new exams.

CMT/CAPT:

(4 centimeters)

Smarter Balanced:

(4 inches)

- **This analogy has limitations.** Whereas we can convert centimeters to inches, we cannot convert CMT/CAPT scores to Smarter Balanced scores.

New scores.

- **Comparing scores on CMT/CAPT to SBAC is like comparing apples to oranges.**
- Given that the ruler is changing, and that the exams are testing different content and skills, we won't be able to compare scores.

New scores.

- In the beginning, fewer students may score at higher levels than we are used to seeing.
- This does not mean that students are learning less. Rather, it reflects that we setting a new baseline from which our students will grow.

Early adoption states

Based on the example of states that transitioned to new tests early, we anticipate that scores will steadily improve in the coming years as students and teachers gain more classroom experience with the standards.

For example, in Kentucky the percentage of high school graduates ready for college and careers has increased from 38 percent to 62 percent in just four years.

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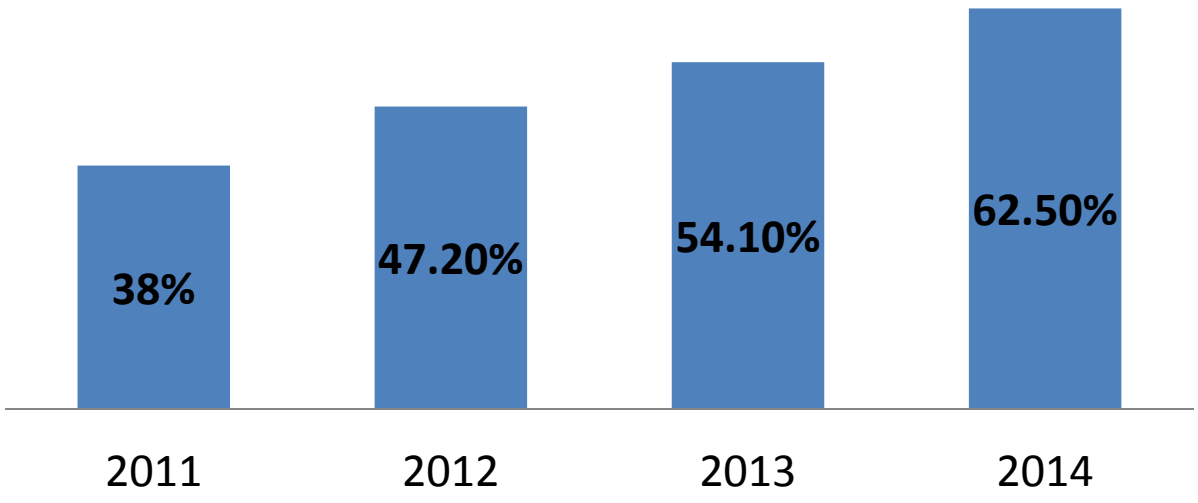
Kentucky College- and Career-Readiness Rates



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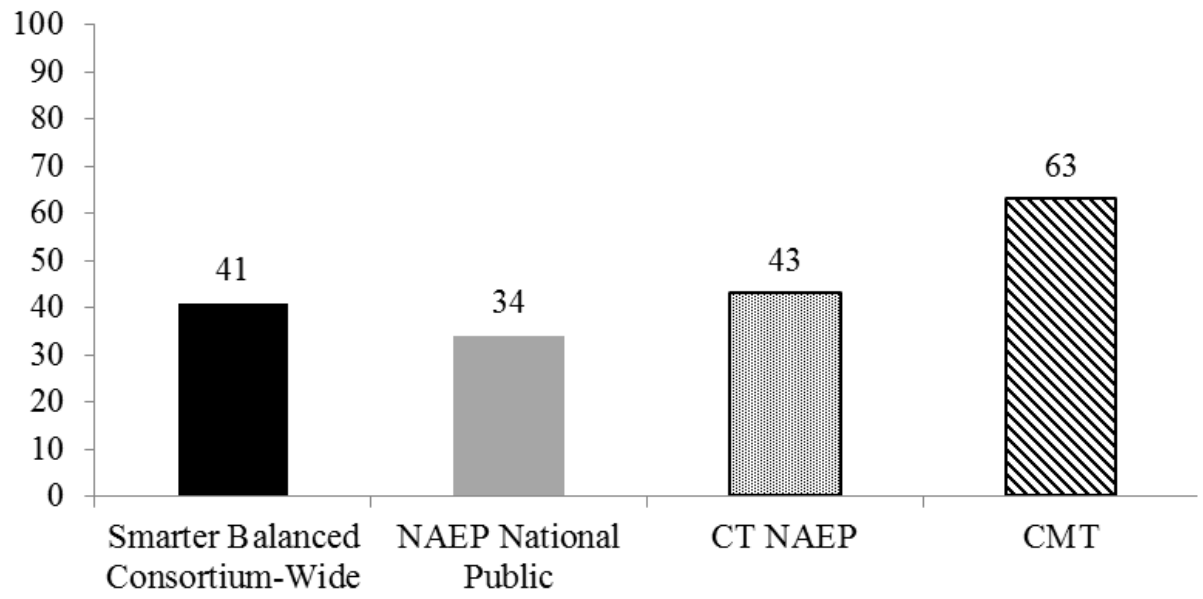
New scores.

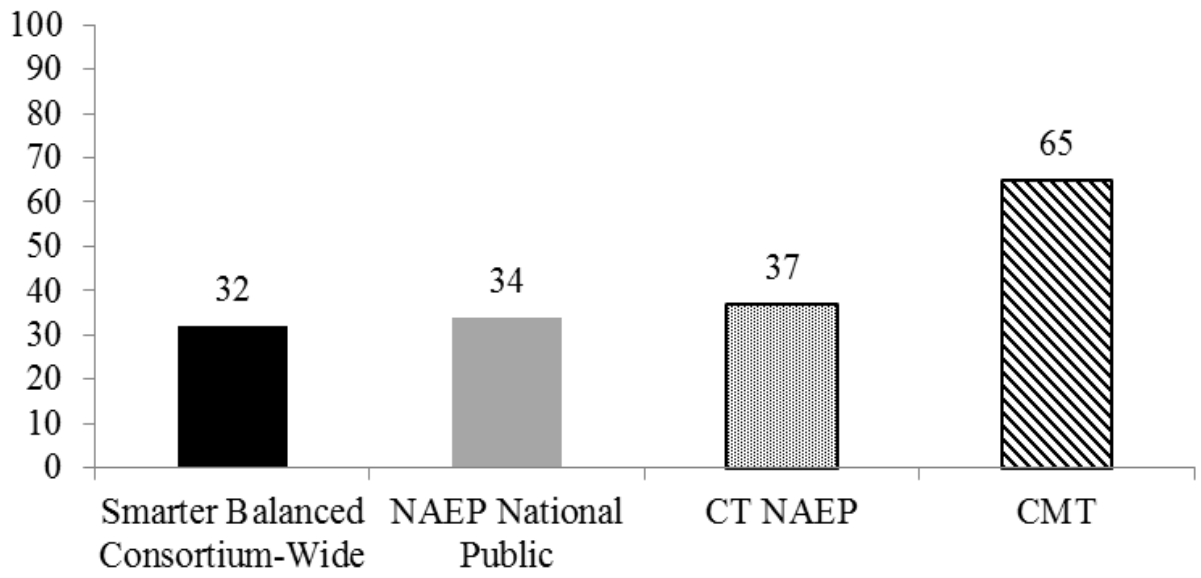
Grade 4 Reading



This graph illustrates the similarities between the Smarter Balanced and NAEP performance at or above level 3 in Grade 4 reading.

New scores.

Grade 8 Mathematics



This graph illustrates the similarities between the Smarter Balanced and NAEP performance at or above level 3 in Grade 8 mathematics.

New standards. New tests. New scores.

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.

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- We will continue to work together with teachers and parents to provide all our students with the support they need to succeed.
- In addition, the Connecticut State Department of Education has many resources available online at CTCoreStandards.org. There is a page devoted for resources for parents and guardians, including ways to help with the new standards at home.

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Change is difficult. In the beginning, it might seem that students have a long way to go to reach the new expectations. **But Tolland teachers and administrators are committed to working together to support students with great instruction and resources to meet these new expectations.**

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