



VERNON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Office of Teaching and Learning
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Dear Parents and Guardians:

Your children and all Vernon School District students deserve an education that prepares them to thrive in a global economy and civic life. Connecticut holds schools accountable for delivering on this promise in two ways: (1) by defining challenging content that students must learn; and (2) annual testing to see if students learn that content.

This is why Connecticut adopted the Connecticut Core Standards several years ago. These standards set challenging expectations for all students in English language arts (ELA) and math. They demand critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. Our students need these real-world skills to succeed.

This is also why Connecticut recently adopted the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). Like the Core Standards in English and math, the science standards emphasize critical thinking more than memorizing facts or terminology. In an NGSS classroom, students investigate natural phenomena and real-world problems like scientists and engineers do.

To see how well students are learning, Connecticut uses the following tests:

- Grades 3-8—ELA and Mathematics: Smarter Balanced
- Grade 11—ELA and Mathematics: SAT (also usable for college)
- Grades 5 and 8—Science: Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT)*
- Grade 10—Science: Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT)*

Think of assessments like academic checkups. They help teachers and parents see where students are compared with where they need to be. The results can reveal areas where students excel and where they need help.

Except for the SAT, all other tests (including science for the first year) are taken on computers. Computer testing enables assessment of more complex skills in less time. It also provides more supports for students with disabilities.

To find resources for parents and guardians, including ways to help your child at home, please visit CTCoreStandards.org.

Measuring student success against new standards is a major shift for our students and teachers. However, it is vital for preparing our children to meet the demands of college and work. Our teachers and administrators are committed to supporting students with great instruction and resources to meet these new expectations.

Sincerely,

Jason D. Magao
Director of Teaching and Learning

* The CMT and CAPT Science tests align to Connecticut's old science standards from 2004. Over the next two years, Connecticut will be developing a new science test aligned to the NGSS.