

Mandated Standardized Testing, Performance and Accountability in Connecticut K-12 Education

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Issue

This report discusses current statewide standardized testing in Connecticut as well as education-based performance and accountability measures.

Summary

State law requires that students participating in Connecticut's public school system complete a series of standardized tests throughout the duration of their schooling. These assessments measure students' skills principally in reading and writing (also known as English Language Arts, or ELA), mathematics, and science, and must be taken at statutorily set grade levels.

The State Department of Education (SDE) collects and publishes data from these standardized tests to provide insight into students' academic performance levels across the state. In addition to performance data, it also compiles data for the [Next Generation Accountability System](#), which is intended to provide a more comprehensive picture of school and district performance. SDE makes this information available on EdSight, its education data portal on its website.

Mandated Statewide Standardized Testing

Table 1 below describes the subject areas that are required by law to be tested for proficiency through standardized testing, as well as the corresponding statute that mandates the testing, the grade levels when the tests must be administered, and the current test programs the state uses.

Table 1: Mandated Standardized Testing in Connecticut by Subject and Grade

Subject	Statute	Grade(s)	Test
Reading/writing (also known as English Language Arts, or “ELA”)	CGS § 10-14t	K-3rd	School boards can select an assessment from the Approved Menu of Research-based Grades K-3 Universal Screening Reading Assessments .
	CGS § 10-14n	3rd-8th	Smarter Balanced Assessments (SBAC)
Mathematics	CGS § 10-14n	3rd-8th	SBAC
Science	CGS § 10-14n	5th, 8th, 11th	Next Generation Science Standards Assessment (NGSS)
Reading, writing, and mathematics	CGS § 10-14n	11th	Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)

The tests listed in Table 1 above are considered summative tests, except for the K-3rd grade reading assessments, and are given at the end of each school year. The K-3rd grade reading assessments are considered a formative assessment, which is an ongoing process throughout the school year where teachers administer learning activities to consistently monitor a student’s learning and understanding of a given subject.

Furthermore, each year, SDE publishes an Assessment Policy Overview [report](#) that provides information on all state summative assessments that are administered to Connecticut public school students. Summative assessments include the subject proficiency testing discussed above, as well as other assessments including the Physical Fitness Assessment and the English Language Proficiency Assessment.

Alternative Statewide Standardized Testing

Connecticut also offers [alternative statewide standardized assessments](#) for students with significant cognitive disabilities. These tests include the Connecticut Alternate Assessment (CTAA), which tests skills in ELA and mathematics, and the Connecticut Alternate Science (CTAS) Assessment, which tests skills in science.

To be eligible to take alternative testing, students must be identified by their Planning and Placement Team, (PPT) which is a group consisting of parents, educators, and other school professionals who make decisions on a student’s special education needs and develops their Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Performance and Accountability Measures: EdSight

Performance

EdSight's [Performance Index](#), which is updated annually with new data, provides information on students' academic performance on statewide standardized tests. This index analyzes performance data from the SBAC and NGSS tests and indicates proficiency in ELA, mathematics, and science.

Performance results can be viewed for individual districts and schools, and these results can be further sorted by demographic categories, such as race, gender, high-needs, and special education status.

Accountability

Connecticut's "[Next Generation Accountability System](#)" is intended to give a more holistic picture of a school or district's success by incorporating a broad range of different measures. This system measures 12 separate indicators:

1. academic achievement status measured by state assessments,
2. academic growth,
3. assessment participation rate,
4. chronic absenteeism,
5. postsecondary preparation – coursework,
6. postsecondary readiness – exams and college credit,
7. graduation – on track in ninth grade,
8. graduation – four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate – all students,
9. graduation – six-year adjusted cohort graduation rate – high needs,
10. postsecondary entrance rate – all students (college enrollment),
11. physical fitness, and
12. arts access.

Each year, EdSight updates their "[Next Generation Accountability Dashboard](#)." This data table provides scores for individual schools and districts in each of the 12 different indicators, and each

indicator is measured through a point system. The number of points a school or district has for each of the indicators is compared to a “target” number to determine areas of strength and weakness. Districts and schools can use this system to identify specific areas that need improvement, and the state can use this system to recognize which districts may need additional support.

“Profile and Performance” Reports

EdSight annually publishes “[Profile and Performance](#)” reports for each school district that includes data on both performance and accountability measures. This report also provides additional data for each district, including information on demographics, expenditures, faculty numbers and special education.

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