

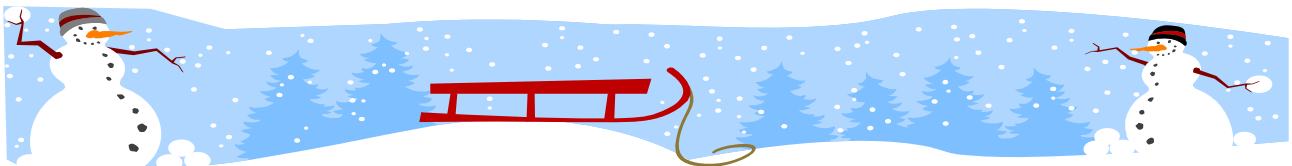


NEXT STEPS UPDATE

JANUARY 2008

Dear Parent Advisors,

We've made it to 2008! Our focus for this Update is the upcoming CAPT/CMT testing and what this means to your family. NCLB is still our primary education law and this testing is currently a fact of life. Why not decide to use the information to benefit your child? Below you will find information on how to do that. For some students who suffer from severe anxiety this is not an easy time. If this is your child, talk to their counselor or therapist and see if there are ways they can begin to prepare emotionally or psychologically so as to reduce their anxiety as much as possible. - *Jane*



Next STEPs Advanced Hands on Training

The first step in our advanced technical assistance training is coming this spring to two locations. This training will provide participants with specific tools for helping parents answer these questions: How do I determine my child's educational needs? What data do I have to show this? What information is missing? Additionally, we will discuss how to effectively share this information with your child's school, work with them to answer any remaining questions, and use this information to create and monitor a successful program for your child.

TWO LOCATIONS TO CHOOSE FROM:

**March 13th from 7-9pm
in the Waterbury area**

**March 18th from 7-9pm
in the New London area**

This training is specifically designed for those who have already taken the Next STEPs training. Please call to register or for more information: 1-800-445-2722 ask for Jane Hampton-Smith.

Using CMT and CAPT Results as a Data Source

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 requires that all states have quality assessments in place in reading, and math (and science by 2008) to determine the extent to which students have mastered the material outlined in the state's content standards. In Connecticut these assessments are the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) and the Connecticut Achievement Performance Test (CAPT).

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Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center
338 Main Street, Niantic, CT 06357 * 800-445-2722 * www.cpacinc.org
New Haven—203-776-3211

..... Using CMT and CAPT Results as a Data Source

According to our Commissioner of Education, Mark McQuillan:

“Connecticut’s entire educational system needs to focus greater attention on the acquisition of basic academic skills, and we should use information provided on CMT performance to improve instruction, particularly for our lowest-performing students.”

In other words, there is information in these results that we can use to guide our children's Individualized Education Program (IEP). When you look at your child's test results you will see very specific information on what your child can do in each area of reading, writing and math.

In Reading, there are two subtests - the Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) and the Reading Comprehension test - both assess your child's ability to understand what he or she has read.

Under the Reading Comprehension test there are four content strands that are reported on separately.

In Math, 25 specific content strands are tested and information on your child's performance in each area is provided.

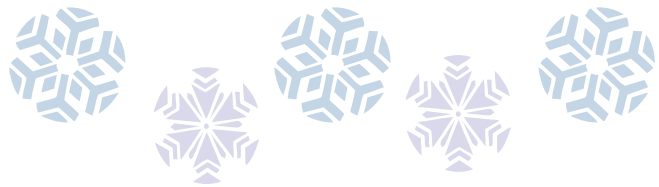
Lastly, in Writing there are two subtests: the Direct Assessment of Writing, and Editing and Revising. Two specific content strands are separated out under Editing and Revising. All of these specific areas that are being tested are explained in the CMT brochure that accompanies the test results.

Additional CMT & CAPT Resources

**CT State Department of Education -
www.csde.ct.gov**

Student Assessment Office - 860-617-6860

CT Parent Advocacy Center - 1-800-445-2722



If Your Child Does NOT Perform Well on The CMT or CAPT test, What Can You Do?

Some Questions Parents Can Ask:

1. What accommodations are available?

Perhaps your child is eligible for an accommodation that wasn't utilized- this might enhance his/her future performance. To explore your options, go to the Assessment Guidelines on the CT State Department of Education website or look at the IEP and Manual regarding page 9.

2. What will change in his current level of support and/or instruction to help improve his performance?

Work with your child's team to determine what changes need to be made to ensure an improvement in his/her performance in the future. Base your decisions on the data provided in the results that indicated a low performance.

3. What alternative assessments are available to my child?

Currently the only approved alternative to the standard administration of the CMT or CAPT is the same test using approved accommodations. For some cognitively impaired students, there is a Skills Checklist (information on this is available on the CT State Department of Education's website). The state is currently developing another alternative assessment. Look for more information coming soon.

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