

**Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE)
Assessment and Accountability in the Fifty States: 1999-2000**

CONNECTICUT

*This profile was verified by the staff of the Connecticut Department of Education
in June of 2000. All information is current as of that date.*

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State Assessment System (1999-2000 school year)

1. *Provide a brief overview and history of the assessment system as the context.*

Introduced in 1984 the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) measures the achievement and progress of Connecticut students in grades 4, 6 and 8. A second generation of the CMT was introduced in 1993 and a third generation will be administered for the first time in the fall of 2000.

In 1995, the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) was instituted for all of Connecticut's tenth grade students as the logical extension of the CMT in the high school. Together, the CMT and CAPT provide a system of monitoring and reporting on the academic progress of Connecticut students. The second generation of CAPT, which will be administered in the spring of 2001, assesses and reports on student performance in four areas: mathematics, language arts (Reading for Information and Response to Literature), writing (Interdisciplinary Writing and Editing and Revising) and science.

2. *What are the characteristics of the state assessment system, including:*

- *Name of Assessment Instrument(s) or Program(s)*

The Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT)

The Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT)

- *Grade Levels and Subjects Tested*

The Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT): grades 4, 6, and 8 are tested in the following:

- Degrees of Reading Power,
- Reading Comprehension,
- Direct Assessment of Writing,
- Mathematics, and
- Editing and Revising.

The Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) extends state testing to the high school level . It assesses and reports on student performance in four areas:

- Math
- Language Arts
- Science
- Interdisciplinary.
- *Norm or Criterion Referenced*

CMT: criterion-referenced

CAPT: criterion-referenced

- *Matrix or Census Testing: Census*
- *Item Types (including proportions if available via Internet or interview) such as: traditional or enhanced multiple choice, performance tasks, open-ended questions, portfolios, essays, etc.*

CMT: Math - multiple choice, grid-in and open ended (proportions vary by grade)
Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) – multiple choice
Reading Comprehension – multiple choice and open ended (proportions vary by grade)
Writing – respond to prompt (score range 2 to 12)
Written Communication – multiple choice measure reflecting the writing process

CAPT: Multiple choice (33% of assessment time allotment) and short and long
Constructed response items (33% of assessment time allotment)

- *Time of Testing (specific month(s) or testing window)*

CMT: October

CAPT: May

- *High School Exit Exam:* None; the CAPT is not an exit exam.

- *Other Assessments:* None

- *Transitional or Final Assessment System:*

The system is final, although changes are coming for 2000-2001 and beyond (see changes below).

3. *Who designed and produced the assessment(s) used by the state?*

The state designed the assessments through the use of multiple advisory committees including members of the state's teaching staff and school and district administrators. Harcourt-Brace Education Measurement provides logistical support, distributes and scores the assessments. However, the state stressed that these are not "off the shelf" assessment and have not been customized using a model; they were designed by the state.

4. *What are the state requirements for local assessment, including the types of assessments and their use in areas such as reporting and accountability, as well as Title I adequate yearly progress? What grade levels and subjects are tested?*

1999-2000 is the first year for a new state initiative requiring that reading inventories such as running records be administered at the local level in grades K-3. The LEA instead of the state is responsible for data collection and reporting. Consequences for students who do not make the state standard in reading for their particular grade range from receiving additional assistance in reading to being held back in their grade. This determination is made on a case-by-case basis at the school level.

5. *Is the state assessment system aligned with the state standards? Are there plans for alignment, and if so, how will the assessment and standards become aligned?*

The content of the criterion referenced CMT and CAPT represent skills at each of the grade levels tested and are consistent with *The Connecticut Framework: K-12 Curricular Goals and Standards*, the state's individual content area curriculum guides.

6. *What is the state's approach for ensuring alignment and what evidence of that alignment is provided?*

The Content Advisory Committees are charged with operationalizing The Connecticut Framework for testing purposes. Connecticut also just completed a statewide content validation survey that asked teachers to assess whether or not the state standards were covered on the state tests and in turn whether or not the skills outlined by the standards were being taught in the classroom.

7. *How is the data included in the state assessment system used?*

Data is included in the state reporting system and is used as criteria in the accountability system.

8. *Are there changes planned for the state assessment system (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline? Are there implications for the state reporting or accountability systems (Title I or in general)?*

In 1997, the education department drafted the third generation of its Connecticut Mastery Test to include more open-ended questions. The new tests are to debut in 2000.

The **second generation of CAPT** will be administered beginning in the spring of 2001. During the past year, staff have been engaged in discussions with advisory committees and Harcourt Brace Educational Measurement to make decisions toward the development of the test. New test items will be field tested during the final two administrations of the original CAPT in 1999 and 2000.

Standards will be established for the CAPT in four areas: reading, writing, mathematics and science. In science, the content will be restricted to the most essential skills and knowledge. In reading, two sections: response to literature and reading for information will be altered in the following ways:

- Response to Literature: four questions instead of six
control length of story
 - Reading for Information: add this section
- In writing, there will be revisions of the editing test under the section, mechanics and usage. Interdisciplinary writing will have modified interdisciplinary tasks (two shorter tasks replacing the longer task) and the informative mode will replace the persuasive.

The decision with regard to how many levels of standards has not yet been made, but will take place after test items have been piloted and test forms have been constructed.

- **Reading and Writing across Disciplines:** This will include 4 tests:
Reading – (1) response to literature and (2) reading for information
Writing – (3) interdisciplinary writing and (4) editing: applying grammar and revising
Test format will include extended tasks, short answers to open-ended items and multiple-choice test items.
- **Mathematics:** Test items will include open-ended, grid-in and multiple-choice questions
Each of the four content domains will be reported as well as the overall math score – currently only the overall score is reported.
- **Science:** Test items will include performance tasks, multiple choice and open-ended items.

9. *What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of state assessment? Explain.*

Three issues were raised by the state respondent:

1. the backlash caused by raising the stakes associated with assessment results
2. the development of new inclusion policies and accommodations for LEP students and those with disabilities, and
3. how to use the technology available to communicate those results to the public.

Inclusion Policies for Assessment

Source: Connecticut Department of Education Assessment Guidelines, 7th Edition: 2000

1. *What exclusions are made in the current state assessment for students with disabilities? LEP? Who makes the decision about exclusion of a particular child? Does the state collect*

data or in other ways monitor the number and types of students excluded? Does that vary by test?

Participation in the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) and the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) is required by state statute, establishing that each student in grade four, six, eight or ten enrolled in public school in Connecticut must be tested annually on the statewide mastery exam. While all students must be tested, Section 10-14q of the Connecticut General Statutes provides that students may be exempted if they:

- have been enrolled for three years or less in a bilingual program pursuant to Section 10-17e;
- have been enrolled for three years or less in an English as a Second Language (ESL) program; or
- are identified as special education students and have been individually and specifically exempted from the CMT or CAPT by the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team.

2. *What accommodations and/or modifications are made on the current state assessment for students with disabilities? LEP?*

Accommodations are allowed for students receiving special education services and those identified as disabled under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. For both groups of students, the IEP and the written 504 Plan, respectively, must outline which accommodations will be used during testing. The decisions regarding accommodations are made by the PPT or 504 Team and should not be individual teacher decisions made immediately prior to or during test administration. Additionally, limited accommodations are available for bilingual and ESL students.

Allowable accommodations for special education and 504 students include:

Braille, Large Print and Closed Circuit TV: A Braille version and enlarged test booklets and answer documents are available for students who are blind or visually impaired. Visually impaired students may also use the “closed circuit TV” equipment (e.g., Optelec, Visualtec) available to them to enlarge the test booklet for viewing.

Sign Language Interpreters: Deaf or hearing-impaired students may have the CMT/CAPT, including out-of-level tests administered individually.

Word Processors: Students may use a word processor (without using a spell check or grammar check function) or a typewriter to complete the written portions of the test (i.e. the Direct Writing Assessments, Interdisciplinary Writing, Response to Literature and in responses to open-ended questions.)

Test Booklets: If necessary, students may circle multiple choice answers in the test booklet.

Time Extensions: Time extensions beyond those stated in the Test Examiner’s Manual may be granted to students whose disability makes completion of the test within prescribed time limits unreasonable.

Test Setting: Students may be tested in small groups or individually, as necessary, for teacher supervision and support and/or for the provision of other accommodations.

Readers: The Test Examiner may read and clarify, as appropriate, all test directions to students who have been identified as needing this accommodation. Special education and 504 students may also have CMT and CAPT mathematics and CAPT science test items read to them because these items are not designed to measure reading.

Scribes: School personnel may record student verbal responses to multiple choice or griddable items ONLY.

Dragon Dictate or other Voice-Recognition Software: In exceptional circumstances, a student may be cognitively capable but have such severe physical disabilities that handwriting and typing/word processing are impossible.

ACCOMMODATION	CMT/Alternate Assessment Option #1	CAPT
Readers:		
Mathematics	Yes	Yes
Reading Comp. /DRP	No	N/A
Science	N/A	Yes
Interdisciplinary/Editing Response to Literature	N/A	No

ACCOMMODATION	CMT/Alternate Assessment Option #1	CAPT
Written communication	No	No
Scribes:		
Multiple-choice/ griddable	Yes	Yes
Open-ended/ Extended response	No	No

Allowable accommodations for students enrolled in Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Programs include:

Readers: The Test Examiner may read and clarify, in English or the student’s native language, as appropriate, all test directions to the students.

Time Extensions: Time extensions beyond those stated in the Test Examiner’s Manual may be granted to student whose limited English proficiency makes completion of the test within the prescribed time limits unreasonable.

Test Setting: Special care should be taken to NOT unnecessarily disrupt any student during test administration. If a particular student is easily distracted, highly disruptive or in need of any of the accommodations previously described, the test may be administered to this student individually (e.g. in a carrel or in a separate room) to avoid disrupting other students.

3. *Does the state provide assessments in languages other than English? If so, describe. In what grades and subjects?*

No such assessments are provided by the state at this time.

4. *Does the state provide alternative assessments for students with disabilities? If so, describe. For which students and in which subjects and at what ages?*

The Department has developed two alternate assessments for those special education students for whom taking the standard state tests is inappropriate.

Alternate Assessment #1 is the use of out-of-grade-level CMT tests, (grades 2, 4, 6, 8 available), designed for those special education students who have not as yet received instruction on the curriculum/content/skills assessed with the standard grade level version of the CMT/CAPT. The expectation is that only 15 percent or less of the special education students in any district would need to take Alternate #1. Therefore, for example, a small number of 6th grade special education students may be assessed using a grade 2 or 4 CMT based on the PPT decision as to the test most closely representing the most recent instruction of that student. A grade ten special education student could be recommended for any level CMT, in place of CAPT.

Alternate Assessment #2 is a new standardized developmental checklist which is designed for severely impaired students who do not participate in a general education curriculum, but receive a “functional” program. The expectation is that less than 5 percent of the special education population in any district would need to take Alternate #2.

These percentage rates of 15 percent and 5 percent, per grade level tested, represent the maximum parameters for participation in each alternate assessment. Districts unable to stay within these parameters will be identified for on-site audit by the Department, will be required to provide an analysis of all exemptions, and will be provided direct state assistance where necessary.

5. *Does the state have a goal for the inclusion of students with disabilities and/or LEP students on the statewide tests? Does the state use any strategies to encourage the inclusion of students with disabilities? LEP students?*

Beginning with the fall 2000 CMT testing, it is the Department’s expectation, consistent with the federal expectations, that approximately 80 percent or more of all special education students should participate in the standard versions of statewide tests.

6. *Are changes planned in the for the inclusion of SWD and LEP students in the state assessment system (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline? Are there implications for the state reporting or accountability systems (Title I or in general)?*

The policies outlined above have just been adopted and no additional changes are planned at this time for 2000-2001.

Performance Standards

1. *How many and what performance levels has the state established for its assessments?*

The state uses an indexing system to rate the performance of schools on the state tests. The index takes into account how far a school's students have to go to meet the state's goal on the exams.

CMT

Goal Standards for Mathematics:

	Gr 4	Gr 6	Gr 8
• These scores are at or above the statewide goal	≥103	≥122	≥130
• These scores are slightly below the statewide goal	91-102	99-121	107-29
• These scores are below the statewide goals	77-90	80-98	84-106
• These scores are well below the statewide goal	≤76	≤79	≤83

Goal Standards for Reading (DRP):

• These scores are at or above the statewide goal	≥50	≥59	≥64
• These scores are below the statewide goals	41-49	50-58	55-63
• These scores are well below the statewide goal	≤40	≤49	≤54

Goal Standards for Writing:

• These scores are at or above the statewide goal	8-12	same in grades 6 & 8
• These scores are slightly below the statewide goal	6-7	
• These scores are below the statewide goals	2-5	

CAPT

Goal Standards for Mathematics:

• At or above the goal	266-400
• Somewhat below the goal	227-265
• Below the goal	201-226
• Well below the goal	100-200

Goal Standards for Response to Literature:

• At or above the standard	83-120
• Somewhat below the standard	65-82
• Below the standard	50-64
• Well below the standard	20-49

Goal Standards for Editing:

• At or above the standard	217-400
• Below the standard	100-216

Goal Standards for Science:

• At or above the goal	270-400
• Somewhat below the goal	213-269
• Below the goal	188-212
• Well below the goal	100-187

Goal Standards for Interdisciplinary:

• At or above the goal	80-120
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- Somewhat below the goal 61-79
- Below the goal 47-60
- Well below the goal 20-46.

2. *Has the state set acceptable levels or targets for schools, districts or the state on tests, drop-out rates or other measures (e.g. 70% of students in Maryland pass the MSPAP)?*

For the 1999-2000 school year, one year ahead of the requirement outlined in Connecticut Public Act 99-288, the state commissioner of education determined that a school performance index of 40 would be the “cut-score” for identifying “priority schools” or those schools that are low performing.

3. *How are these performance standards calculated? What data are included in the calculations, and at what proportions (e.g. assessment results 60%, dropout and attendance rates 40%). How are the calculations made? What is the final unit of analysis for reporting school and district achievement levels (e.g. performance index, grade, category)?*

A school’s performance index of 40 is based on student performance on the CMT in 3 subject areas and up to 3 grades in one year and translates to an average distribution of:

- 40% of students scoring below the remedial level
- 40% of students scoring above the remedial level but below the goal level
- 20% of students reaching the goal level or above.

The Commissioner and SDE members concluded that the state would:

1. use the overall index for each school (includes an aggregate of reading, writing and math scores for up to three grade levels)
2. measure student performance based on an average of two years of CMT data – 1998 and 1997 and weight the most current year 2/3 and the other 1/3
3. identify a list of schools with an index score of less than 40
4. calculate performance trend based on the change in CMT scores from 1997 to 1998 divided by the state average (2.3 index points), and
5. exclude from the list those schools for which the sum of the performance trend and the student performance index equaled 40 or more.

4. *Are all students, schools and districts included in these performance calculations? If not, who is excluded?*

For 1999-2000, current Connecticut General Statutes provides that students may be exempted if they have been enrolled for three years or less in a bilingual program, have been enrolled for three years or less in an ESL program, or are identified as special education students and have been individually and specifically exempted IEP Team.

5. *Are changes planned for the state performance standards (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and*

what is the timeline? Are there implications for the state reporting or accountability systems (Title I or in general)?

The SDE is also designing an accountability model that responds to the 1999 Connecticut Public Act 99-288 (*see accountability section*) as well as the implementation of the new generations of CMT/CAPT for 2000-01. This will replace the system just described.

6. *What proportion of schools and/or districts fail to meet acceptable levels on performance targets?*

Using the state's system of identifying "priority schools," 28 have been so identified. 27 of these are Title I schools, and so have been identified as in need of improvement under Title I as well.

Reporting Performance Data

1. *Describe the characteristics of the state performance data reporting system (by whom, what data, who is the audience) for each of the following levels:*

- *Student reports*

Each student receives an individual report, starting with the 4th grade. The material assessed is broken down into skill clusters so that students and parents can see where students are doing well and where students need to improve within a subject area.

- *School and District reports*

The Connecticut General Assembly passed Section 10-220(c) of the Connecticut General Statutes, an act concerning the reporting of school and district strategic profile reports, in May 1990. The law provides that "each local and regional board of education shall submit to the commissioner of education a strategic school profile report for each school under its jurisdiction and for the school district as a whole. Each profile report will contain information on measures of student needs, school resources, and student and school performance."

The broad areas of the report include:

- student needs -- factors which may place a student at risk educationally;
- school resources -- those which have been purchased and are available for use in a school;
- school performance -- school programs and activities which translate resources into outcomes; and
- student performance -- the results of the instructional process.

The primary goal of the Strategic School Profiles is to improve schools through informed decision making. The Strategic School Profiles have two basic purposes:

1. to serve as an accountability system which informs the public about what is happening in Connecticut schools; and
2. to stimulate school improvement through shared information.

- *State reports*

The state also reports summary assessment data on the state as a whole and how students have scored on the assessments. Comparisons are made across grades and subjects with previous years.

- *Title I reports*

Each school year, the Connecticut State Department of Education reports CMT and CAPT Title I indices and yearly progress results to each school district with at least one school that receives Title I funds. These reports are provided for each Title I school individually and for all Title I schools in the district. In addition, school- and district-level reports that include both Title I and non-Title I schools are provided to districts upon request.

2. *How are the data distributed? When during the year (month or time period after assessment)? To whom (students, teachers, parents, the media, the community)?*

The CMT student results were delivered to school districts during the week of January 3, 2000. The statewide results were released at the February 2, 2000, State Board of Education (SBE) meeting. The CAPT results from the 1999-2000 May administration will be available in September and will also be sent to districts for distribution to schools and parents.

3. *At what level(s) are data disaggregated (state, district and school levels)? For what groups are disaggregated data reported (see Internet sites for state, district and school level report cards)?*

The state disaggregates and reports data at the school, district and state levels by the following:

- Gender
- Race
- LEP status
- Migrant Status
- SWD
- SES.

4. *Does trend data exist from the state assessments (example: Texas State Assessment data is available from “1996-97 on”)?*

The CMT has been in place since 1984 in multiple forms. The most recent state report on student assessment made comparisons between 1999 and 1993. The CAPT has been in place since 1995.

5. *How are the results of students with disabilities and limited English proficiency reported? Are they included in the aggregate scores reported to the public, or disaggregated by group?*

At the time of the release of state scores in 2001 (early February), district scores will be provided separately for non-special education students, special education students taking the

standard assessment, and then together for all students assessed - which the state currently reports. Where necessary, districts not meeting the target special education participation rate, and without other acceptable justification, will be flagged (as not comparable) in the reporting formats. District progress from 1998 and 1999 to 2000, in significantly increasing the participation of special education students, will be noted. State reports (by district) for Alternate Assessments #1 and #2 will not be by score but only by the number of students.

6. *What are the state's requirements for the use of data in school and district improvement planning?*

Specific requirements in this area do not exist in the state.

7. *Are changes planned for performance reporting (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline? Are there implications for the accountability system (Title I or in general)?*

ACT 99-288 removes data on the number of students who are substantially deficient in reading and are promoted from 3rd to 4th grade from the strategic school profile report (SSP) to a separate report to be published by the State Board. Although more significant changes are also being planned as a result of new assessment and accountability policies, the specifics are not yet available.

8. *What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of performance standards and reporting? Explain.*

Again, the inclusion of students has been an issue in the state in the reporting of student data.

State Accountability System (1999-2000 school year)

1. *Provide a brief overview and history of the accountability system as the context.*

An accountability system outside of the state reporting structure is new to the state. **Connecticut Public Act 99-288** (1999) requires the SBE, for the 2000-2001 schools year, to prepare a list of schools, by school district, that are “*in need of improvement*” based on “student performance and performance trends on statewide mastery examinations.” The intent of the Act 99-288 is to ensure that a process is implemented to improve student achievement in those specific schools in which students have not been demonstrating adequate academic achievement and growth, as demonstrated on the CMT.

However, for the 1999-2000 year, the SDE has prepared a list of 28 elementary and middle schools based on “relative need and practical considerations.” These schools were identified based on a formula which considered student performance on the CMT across three subject areas and grade levels and reflected test score improvement (growth) as compared to the state average.

2. *What are the characteristics of the state accountability system? Organize the response into the following subsections:*

- *Student Accountability/Rewards and Sanctions*

CAPT: While this is not a graduation test, students are awarded Certificates of Mastery for each subject area in which they score at or above the state goals. Students who have not achieved mastery in one or more subject areas in tenth grade may voluntarily retake all or part of the test in grades 11 and 12. Student results from grades 10, 11 and 12 become part of the students' permanent school records and are reported on their official school transcripts.

K-3 Reading Inventory: Consequences for students who do not make the state standard in reading for their particular grade range from receiving additional assistance in reading to being held back in their grade. This determination is made on a case-by-case basis at the school level.

However, Act 99-288:

1. Requires priority school districts (*see question 6 on subgroups below*) to provide additional instruction to students who fail to meet the statewide standard for remedial assistance on the 4th grade mastery examination beginning with the 2000-01 school year and on the 6th grade mastery examination beginning with the 2001-02 school year.
2. Requires that students attend school the summer following the examination on which they failed to meet the standard, unless exempted by the superintendent based on the student's progress with the additional instruction.
3. Provides that priority school districts shall not promote to the next grade students who are required to attend summer school and do not attend summer school.

- *School and District Accountability/Rewards and Sanctions*

For the 1999-2000 year, one year ahead of the requirement outlined in Connecticut Public Act 99-288, the state commissioner of education determined that a school performance index of 40 would be the "cut-score" for identifying "priority schools" or those schools that are low performing. The SDE prepared a list of 28 elementary and middle schools based on a formula which considered student performance on the CMT across three subject areas and grade levels and reflected test score improvement (growth) as compared to the state average.

A school's performance index of 40 is based on student performance on the CMT in 3 subject areas and up to 3 grades in one year and translates to an average distribution of:

- 40% of students scoring below the remedial level
- 40% of students scoring above the remedial level but below the goal level
- 20% of students reaching the goal level or above.

The Commissioner and SDE members concluded that the state would:

1. use the overall index for each school (includes an aggregate of reading, writing and math scores for up to three grade levels)

2. measure student performance based on an average of two years of CMT data – 1998 and 1997 and weight the most current year 2/3 and the other 1/3
3. identify a list of schools with an index score of less than 40
4. calculate performance trend based on the change in CMT scores from 1997 to 1998 divided by the state average (2.3 index points), and
5. exclude from the list those schools for which the sum of the performance trend and the student performance index equaled 40 or more.

Multiple criteria were used to identify priority schools:

1. 1998 Connecticut Mastery Test scores,
2. the weighted average of 1997 and 1998 CMT scores; and
3. the sum of the weighted average and the 1997 to 1998 growth (adjusted by state average growth) to those schools below indices of 40.

The legislation upon which these decisions were based (Connecticut Public Act 99-288), specifically:

1. Requires that by January 1, 2000, and biennially thereafter, superintendents of districts with listed schools are to meet with the Commissioner of Education to discuss the process for improving school performance.
2. Provides that boards of education with listed schools are to require the listed school to develop and implement an improvement plan and take steps to have the school accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges.
3. Requires boards of education:
 - (1) to monitor progress made by a school under an improvement plan and
 - (2) if a school has not made sufficient progress two years after a plan was approved, to develop a plan to take one or more of the following actions, which may involve the transfer of employees, to improve student achievement:
 - close and reconstitute the school;
 - restructure the school in terms of grades included or the programs offered, or both;
 - provide for site-based management; and
 - allow students to attend other public schools in the district.
 Such plans would be implemented upon its approval by the Commissioner. This law also allows a school district with more than one school on the list to prioritize these schools and develop an implementation timetable for each school – the plan must be approved by the Commissioner.
4. Establishes a state grant program for priority school districts for summer school and weekend school programs beginning in 2000-01.

3. *What methods of measuring progress are used in the state accountability system?*

The system in place for 1999-2000 sets an absolute target of 40 on the state performance index as the cut score for being listed as a priority school.

4. *Are all students included in calculating the measures of progress? If not, who is excluded (probe on inclusion of SWD and LEP students)?*

Participation in the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) and the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) is required by state statute, establishing that each student in grade four, six, eight or ten enrolled in public school in Connecticut must be tested annually on the statewide mastery exam. While all students must be tested, Section 10-14q of the Connecticut General Statutes provides that students may be exempted if they:

- have been enrolled for three years or less in a bilingual program pursuant to Section 10-17e;
- have been enrolled for three years or less in an English as a Second Language (ESL) program; or
- are identified as special education students and have been individually and specifically exempted from the CMT or CAPT by the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team.

Those students included in the state assessment system are included in the performance index as well.

5. *How do the general state accountability system and the system of accountability for Title I schools compare? Are they the same, or different? How?*

Although there has not been alignment in the past, the Title I Office has aligned its policies with the “priority schools” process designed by the commissioner, and will align its practice with the new state accountability system for next year.

6. *Are subgroup performance results used as an indicator in the calculation of state accountability measures? If so, how? To identify schools or districts in need of improvement? For recognition and rewards?*

Although not included in the performance index, the state has developed a classification system called Educational Reference Groups (ERGs) in which districts with similar socio-economic status and need are grouped together. The ERG with the lowest variables, including median family income, percent with Bachelor’s degree, percent Non-English home language, ect. and the lowest assessment scores are in ERG I. Seven districts are included in this group, and are considered to be “**priority districts.**” The state tracks the progress of this group against the state average, and compares their rate of improvement with the of the state as a whole.

7. *Are charter and/or non-public schools included in the accountability system? If so, how?*

Charters schools in the state are included in the assessment and accountability system, while non-public schools are excluded.

8. *Are changes planned for the state accountability system (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline?*

The SDE is designing an accountability model that responds to the new requirements as well as the implementation of the new generations of CMT/CAPT for 2000-01.

9. *What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of accountability? Explain.*

The 1999-2000 year has been transitional in the state and the challenge at this point is to prepare for the new accountability and assessment changes to come in 2000-2001.

Identifying and Assisting Low Performing Schools and Districts

1. *How are schools and districts identified as low performing? Using what criteria? Do the identification processes and/or criteria differ for Title I and non-Title I schools?*

As stated previously, priority schools are identified as those scoring below the performance index cut point of 40. Priority districts are those in ERG I with the lowest assessment scores and socio-economic conditions.

2. *Does the district or the state decide whether a school is low performing? If the district is involved in the process, how much discretion do they have?*

The state identifies priority schools. Districts are not identified in this way, and accountability is focused at the school level.

3. *What types of assistance are provided to these schools and districts by the state?*

Although districts provide assistance, no state systems of assistance have been developed or implemented at this point as the accountability system will not be formally implemented until 2000-2001. For example, Act 99-288 establishes a state grant program for priority school districts for summer school and weekend school programs beginning next year.

4. *Who provides the state assistance?*

Although districts provide assistance, no state systems of assistance have been developed or implemented at this point as the accountability system will not be formally implemented until 2000-2001.

5. *Does support to Title I and all low performing schools and districts differ? Is support generally provided for all schools and districts, or are services specifically designed to help those that are low performing?*

No, there is no difference in the level of assistance for Title I vs. non-Title I school and districts that are low performing.

6. *Has the state established a set of criteria and/or a process for getting schools and districts out of low performing status? If so, what do they include?*

The process for identifying priority schools has been new this year and will transition to a new system for next year, so the state has not developed the process for getting out of priority status.

7. *Once a school or district is identified as low performing, what types of plans must it prepare? Who are they submitted to once completed? How do they differ from other planning documents?*

Once the requirements in Connecticut Public Act 99-288 are implemented, districts with listed schools will work with the listed school to develop and implement an improvement plan. Districts will also monitor progress made by a school under an improvement plan and if a school has not made sufficient progress two years after a plan was approved, they must develop a plan to take one or more of the following actions, which may involve the transfer of employees, to improve student achievement: 1) close and reconstitute the school; 2) restructure the school in terms of grades included or the programs offered, or both; 3) provide for site-based management; and 4) allow students to attend other public schools in the district.

8. *Are changes planned for the state system of identifying and assisting low performing schools or districts (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline?*

The state is in the process of developing a new accountability system for next year (see descriptions above).

Title I and Adequate Yearly Progress

1. *What criteria are included in the definition of adequate yearly progress for schools and districts under Title I?*

Title I schools and districts have been accountable for their students' performance on the CMT and CAPT, but the accountability models differ slightly for CMT and CAPT. CMT results are attributed to the school that each student attended during the previous school year because the CMT is administered at the beginning of each school year. However, schools where students take the CAPT are considered accountable for their current students' performance because the CAPT is administered during the spring. For Title I schools that only serve students prior to grade three (e.g., PK, K-1, or K-2 schools), school-level assessment information is provided based upon where students in these sending schools generally attend third grade.

2. *What are the definitions of adequate yearly progress for the following:*

- *Title I schools and non-Title I schools*
- *Targeted vs. schoolwide programs, charter, non-public and small schools*
- *Districts*

Are these transitional or final definitions? If transitional, when will the final definitions be in place and what criteria and processes will they include?

In Connecticut, the definition of adequate yearly progress has two components:

1. achievement level, and
2. year-to-year growth.

The achievement level for each school and district is based on an overall achievement index (*see next question*). Both the academic performance of students and the characteristics of schools and school districts were considered in setting these achievement levels. The relationships between the index and the school and district achievement levels for the CMT and for the CAPT are provided below:

Testing Program	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
CMT	0-38	39-76	77-100
CAPT	0-40	41-75	76-100

For all schools and districts, the ultimate goal is to reach level 3. Therefore, all level 3 schools and districts are considered to have met the Title I adequate yearly progress target and are not considered to be in need of improvement. To determine whether schools and districts in levels 1 and 2 have achieved adequate yearly progress gains, and whether these school are in need of improvement, requires consideration of additional information.

For level 2 schools and districts, two additional steps are necessary. First, the current year-to-year growth for each level 2 school and district must be calculated. This is done by subtracting the index for one year (e.g., 1995) from the index for the subsequent year (e.g., 1996). Level 2 schools and districts that achieve growth of at least +1.0 have met the adequate yearly progress gain for that school year. Levels 2 schools and districts that achieve growth of less than +1.0 have not met the adequate yearly progress gain for that school year.

The second step for level 2 schools and districts is to compare year-to-year growth across two consecutive years (e.g., 1994-95 and 1995-96). Level 2 schools and districts that do not achieve the +1.0 target growth gain in either of two consecutive years are considered to be in need of improvement.

For level 1 schools and districts, the adequate yearly progress target is to reach level 2 status. Schools and districts that remain in level 1 for two consecutive years (e.g., 1994-95 and 1995-96) are considered to be in need of improvement.

Achievement Level	Adequate Yearly Progress Target
3	maintain level 3 status
2	achieve yearly growth of at least 1.0
1	reach level 2 status

3. *What is the process for identifying those schools and districts that are not making adequate yearly progress under Title I? Does the district or the state make this determination for schools? If the districts plays a role, does the state provide guidance on local criteria?*

State, district and school achievement progress on the CMT and the CAPT is monitored using a specialized index. This index is a statistical measure that ranges from 0 to 100 and is designed to capture the progress of students at different achievement levels across subjects and grade levels. The index provides a way for educators to gauge overall growth in

achievement over time for schools and districts. An example of how to calculate an index for a school district is provided below.

It is important to note that the CMT and CAPT indexes are computed based on the performance of all students taking these tests who attend schools that receive Title I funding. For example, the index for a Title I elementary school reflects the performance of all students who took the CMT, not just the students who are eligible for Title I.

The first step in calculating a district index is to calculate an index for a single subject area. This index is calculated by averaging the percentage of students scoring at or above goal and the percentages scoring at or above additional progress points that have been established at points below the state goals. These progress points correspond to the parental messages that appear on the CMT and CAPT score reports.

A similar process is used to calculate indices in CMT reading and writing, although there is only one progress point below the state goal for the reading and writing areas on the CMT. For CAPT, there are two progress points below the goal for each of the four subject areas, so the index is computed exactly as in the example above.

The next step in calculating an overall district index is to average the indices for each subject. That is, if a district has a CMT mathematics index of 60, a CMT reading index of 80, and a CMT writing index of 70, the overall district index is $(60+80+70)/3 = 70$. Likewise, the four CAPT subject indices would be averaged to obtain the overall CAPT index.

4. *What are the criteria and processes for identifying schools and districts in need of improvement under Title I? What plans must be prepared? How can a school or district get out of Program Improvement? Does the district or the state make this determination for schools?*

See above. For a school to be in need of improvement, the conditions are as follows for each achievement level:

Level 3: none

Level 2: achieve less than 1.0 growth for 2 consecutive years

Level 1: remain in Level 1 status for 2 consecutive years.

However, for the 1999-2000 school year, the state Title I Office has recognized the state's general identification of "priority schools" as schools in need of improvement under Title I, in an effort to avoid confusion between Title I and the commissioner's process for 1999-2000. Therefore, although the system officially recognized for Title I has been described above, the 27 out of 28 Title I priority schools are, for 1999-2000, the schools in the state that are in need of improvement under Title I.

5. *What types of assistance are provided to those in need of improvement under Title I?*

Although districts provide assistance, no state systems of assistance have been developed or implemented at this point as the accountability system will not be formally implemented until 2000-2001.

6. *Who provides the assistance?*

Although districts provide assistance, no state systems of assistance have been developed or implemented at this point as the accountability system will not be formally implemented until 2000-2001.

7. *Have waivers played a role in this process?*

Waivers have not played a role in this process.

8. *Are there future plans for the state system for schools or districts receiving Title I funding (proposed or enacted and to be implemented) or for the definition of adequate yearly progress? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline?*

The state indexing system to be implemented for the 2000-2001 school year will become the system under which adequate yearly progress is defined and schools in need of improvement are identified.

9. *Is there alignment between Title I and non-Title I systems for adequate yearly progress?*

Although there has not been alignment in the past, the Title I Office has aligned its policies with the “priority schools” process designed by the commissioner, and will align its practice with the new state accountability system for next year.

10. *What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of Title I? Explain.*

The transition this year with the commissioner’s system of accountability and the further changes for next year have put the Title I Office in a state of flux; this has been the most significant issue in the state.

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