



North Haven Public Schools
North Haven, Connecticut 06473



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March 2017

Dear Parents,

The month of March marks the beginning of **The Connecticut State Department of Education's State Wide Summative Student Assessment Program**. In December 2015, then-President Obama signed into law The Every Child Succeeds Act, which replaces The No Child Left Behind Act. Like No Child Left Behind, the Every Child Succeeds Act requires each state to administer statewide assessments in math and language arts annually in grades 3 through 8, and at least once in high school. School districts must test at least once in grades 3-5, once in grades 6-9, and again at least once in grades 10-12 in science. In Connecticut, to comply with this expectation, all schools throughout the state administer the Smarter Balanced Assessment in grades 3-8, and the SAT in grade 11. Furthermore, we administer the science portion of the Connecticut Mastery Test in grades 5 and 8, and the science portion of the Connecticut Academic Performance Test to all 10th graders. This year, the SAT will be administered to 11th grade students in Connecticut on April 5, 2017. There is no flexibility concerning that date. If a student is absent, makeup dates will be held on April 25th and 26th. The science portion of the Connecticut Mastery Test and the science portion of the Connecticut Academic Performance Test must be administered sometime between March 27th and April 28th. The scheduling of the test date(s) in science is left to the district to determine. Parents will be notified about the science testing date(s) in North Haven well in advance of when the test is administered. For the first time, the entire science test will be

administered on-line at each grade level. The Smarter Balanced Assessment must be administered to all students in grades 3-8 some time between March 27th and May 26th. Again, in North Haven, we will communicate testing dates well in advance of the actual administration of the test. Like science, the entire Smarter Balanced Assessment will be completed on-line.

The Smarter Balanced testing administered in grades 3-8 is considered a **summative assessment**. It measures a student's overall performance in math and language arts. It provides reliable information about every student. Specifically, it determines a reliable estimate of each student's overall achievement in math and language arts measured against grade-appropriate standards. The Smarter Balanced Assessments are closely aligned to the Connecticut Core Standards. Day to day instruction in classrooms throughout the district, and all of the district's curriculum materials, are driven by the state standards. As a result, the test is actually measuring progress on material presented in class. The Smarter Balanced Assessments are designed for purposes of district accountability, reporting purposes, and program evaluation. Even more importantly, it affords us the opportunity to measure a student's academic growth over time. The most important benefit of this assessment is that it allows us to measure the progress of every student from one year to the next.

While the statewide assessment is an important indicator of academic achievement, it's certainly not the only one. At the elementary level, other indicators include physical fitness as measured by *The Connecticut Fitness Assessment* and the rates of chronic absenteeism. Attendance information is submitted to the State Department of Education annually. At the middle school, aside from student performance on the Smarter Balanced Assessment, physical fitness, chronic absenteeism, on the percentage of students at the middle school level on track to graduate on time from high school is taken into consideration. At the high school, everything already mentioned is considered. Added to the high school's accountability criteria is also the percentage of students in the graduating class who have enrolled in a 2 or 4-year postsecondary institution any time during the year following graduation. The high school is also evaluated on student access to arts programs. Finally, every school must have a minimum student participation rate of **95%** on the test, or it will be ranked one category lower in Connecticut's Next Generation Accountability System that assigns each school in the state a rating between 1 (High) and 5 (Low).

Teachers work extremely hard in North Haven providing every student with a comprehensive curriculum and, in doing so, prepare them with the skills and knowledge they need to confidently and successfully take part in either the Smarter Balanced or SAT testing. The results we receive are invaluable to the school system. It tells us where we're strong, and where we need improvement. Most important of all, it allows us to compare every student to himself from one year to the next so we know how well we're preparing them for the next level of academic content.

If you have any questions concerning the upcoming assessments, please don't hesitate to contact your child's teacher or principal.

Sincerely,

Robert D. Cronin, Ph.D.

Superintendent

