

North Branford High School

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Dear Parents,

As you may know, the State of Connecticut is one of over 40 states in the United States that has adopted the Common Core State Standards. The North Branford School District including NBHS, has been preparing for the full implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) during the last several school years.

The Connecticut State Department of Education has planned for full implementation of the CCSS during the 2014-15 school year including the use of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium assessment (SBAC). Upon this occurring, the Connecticut State Department of Education will phase out the CMT (grades 3 -8) and CAPT (grade 10) assessments and move to the SBAC assessment aligned with the CCSS. The SBAC measures students' mastery of the CCSS that are directly connected to college and career readiness. The SBAC assessments are completed on-line during grade 11 at the high school level. The CCSS are more rigorous than the standards associated with the CMT and CAPT tests. For more information, www.corestandards.org

The Connecticut State Department of Education has required school districts this year (2013-14) to determine their preference in continuing with the tests that are being phased out CMT/CAPT or to begin to implement SBAC assessment. The North Branford School District has determined that the implementation of the SBAC field testing for Mathematics and Language Arts is the prudent and logical next step. Thus, NBHS will implement SBAC field testing this spring for grade 11 for Language Arts and Mathematics. The Connecticut State Department of Education has required all school districts to continue to administer the Science portion of the CAPT Test during the 2013-14 school year. Thus, all grade 10 students will complete only the CAPT Science Test during March 2014.

As you may know, the grade 10 CAPT test has been a graduation requirement (Public Act 166) for a number of years in all public high schools in the state of Connecticut. It includes Writing Across the Disciplines, Reading Across the Disciplines, Science, and Mathematics. Thus, present NBHS grade 11 students who scored at level 3 (proficiency) or above on the CAPT tests last year as grade 10 students, have fulfilled their graduation requirement. For any grade 11 student who did not score at level 3 (proficiency) on any of the CAPT tests last year, they will complete an alternative assessment aligned to the CAPT standards to fulfill their graduation requirement. In alignment with the State CAPT regulations, NBHS has had an alternative assessment for students who have not scored above proficiency for a number of years. Parents of the students who need to complete the CAPT alternative assessments have already been contacted by our Guidance Department via a mailer.

Our staff has worked diligently during the past two school years preparing for the full implementation of the Common Core State Standards including the use of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium. We have been mindful of this rigorous shift in education when planning professional development days during the last several years. I am confident that the updates and modifications to our curriculum are in alignment with the CCSS will be evident over time in the SBAC test data. It is important to note that our students will be experiencing a different testing format and delivery that they are accustomed to as well as the increased rigor of the CCSS therefore, as in all school districts; student achievement in this area will continue to be a work in progress. In addition, our present grade 11 students, as in all high schools, will not have had the benefit of experiencing the rigors of the CCSS during earlier grades. Our technology staff has determined that our computer labs and library contain the hardware and capacity required for the SBAC online assessments. Due to the nature of the test and the use of computer labs, schools will be provided testing windows over several weeks this spring rather than specific testing dates. Upon this information becoming available to us, we will communicate this information to the parents of grade 11 students.

Please feel free to contact me if you should have any questions – tstoeffler@northbranfordschools.org

Sincerely,

Todd Stoeffler, NBHS Principal

The mission of North Branford High School is to foster a strong learning community focused on excellence in academic rigor, school climate, and civic and social responsibility.