



THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF MANSFIELD, CONNECTICUT

KELLY M. LYMAN, SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

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April 1, 2016

Dear Parents/Guardians:

For nearly 30 years public schools in Connecticut have administered state developed assessments to evaluate student learning and support continuous improvement in local schools. These required assessments include the Connecticut Mastery Test and the Smarter Balanced Assessments. There have been many changes to these assessments in the past few years, and some even in the past few months. The current assessments include:

Connecticut Mastery Test in Science for students in grades 5, 8 and 10

- This assessment measures student knowledge expected by CT State Standards in life, physical, and earth sciences and includes science process as well as content knowledge.
- Assessments are administered in a traditional paper and pencil format.
- The Connecticut State Board of Education recently adopted new standards in science and expects districts to gradually implement these new standards. The State assessment will not change until districts have had the opportunity to revise curriculum.

Smarter Balanced Assessments in Language Arts and Mathematics for students in grades 3-8

- These assessments measure skills and application of skills in language arts and mathematics expected by Connecticut Core Standards.
- Assessments are administered in a computer format allowing for questions to be adapted to student responses and are untimed.
- The computer format allows for more accommodations than paper and pencil tests for students with identified learning or language needs.
- Results from Smarter Balanced Assessments allow for growth reporting allowing parents and schools to monitor annual growth by individual student.
- The language arts assessment was significantly reduced for 2015-16 resulting in less time necessary for the assessment and even less time than was needed by the previous Connecticut Mastery Test in Language Arts.
- Schools develop their own testing schedules with multiple, short testing sessions designed to address the developmental needs of students.
- Connecticut eleventh graders now take the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) in lieu of other state assessments. The SAT has been redesigned to more closely assess what is learned and experienced in high school classrooms. This creates greater alignment between the grade 3-8 assessments (Smarter Balanced Assessments) and the SAT. Experience with Smarter Balanced Assessment questions may breed familiarity with the new SAT questions.
- Mansfield children performed very well on the Smarter Balanced Assessments in 2014-15. Two of our schools were recognized as among the top ten percent of schools in the state. Our two other schools performed as well or better but were not eligible for recognition because the participation rate in those schools was below the required 95 percent.

The elementary school testing schedule for grades three and four is:

- Tuesday, May 3rd: 9:30 to 10:30am
- Wednesday, May 4th: 9:30 to 10:30am
- Friday, May 6th: 9:30 to 10:50am
- Tuesday, May 10th: 9:30 to 10:30am
- Wednesday, May 11th: 9:30 to 10:30am

The middle school testing schedule is May 2nd – 10th:

- Grades 5 & 6: 9:00 – 10:30am
- Grades 7 & 8: 10:30am – 12:00pm

Please know that we will do our best to reduce anxiety about these assessments while also providing students some practice experience to create familiarity with the test and the computer format. Should you have any questions about the assessments, please contact your building principal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kelly M. Lyman".

Kelly M. Lyman