

Series: 2003-2004
Circular Letter: C-20

TO: Superintendents of Schools

FROM: Dr. Betty J. Sternberg
Commissioner of Education

DATE: March 1, 2004

SUBJECT: ***Important Updates*** on the Testing of English Language Learners under No Child Left Behind (NCLB) for School Year 2003-2004

On February 19, 2004, the United States Department of Education (USDE) announced new flexibility with respect to testing English language learners (ELLs) under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) for the 2003-2004 school year. For the upcoming CAPT, ELLs who are in ***their first year of enrollment in a U.S. school***:

1. May be exempted from the Reading Across the Disciplines and Writing Across the Disciplines Tests, which include Response to Literature, Reading for Information, Editing & Revising and both Interdisciplinary Writing Tests.
2. Must take the Language Assessment Scales (LAS) and that participation will be counted toward the reading AYP participation calculation.
3. May be exempted from the science test.
4. Must take the mathematics test with accommodations, if necessary, and that participation will be counted toward the mathematics AYP participation calculation.

CAPT reporting requirements for these students are as follows:

1. ELLs in their first academic year of enrollment in a U.S. school will not be included in the mathematics AYP proficiency calculation nor statewide CAPT mathematics reports.
2. ELLs in their first academic year of enrollment in a U.S. school will continue to be included in the AYP participation calculation; therefore, it is essential that these students participate in the CAPT math test and the LAS. Failure to do so will negatively impact your school/district participation rate.
3. If your district elects to test an ELL who is eligible for exemption in Reading Across the Disciplines, Writing Across the Disciplines and/or Science, the results will not be included in AYP proficiency calculation nor statewide CAPT reports.

District Test Coordinators will receive detailed instructions for completing answer booklets appropriately for ELLs in order to effectively exempt these students from specific subjects. If district personnel do not complete the necessary coding on the student answer booklets accurately, the students eligible for exemptions may be incorrectly reported. Therefore, districts must develop a system to verify that all CAPT answer booklets for ELLs are coded correctly.

After the CAPT administration, your District Test Coordinator will be provided a list of all ELL students for whom a Grade 10 CAPT answer booklet was submitted to the testing contractor. It will be necessary for your district to indicate which ELL students are in their first academic year of enrollment in a U.S. school. It will also be necessary for you as Superintendent of Schools to certify in writing that these students have participated in the spring 2004 administration of the LAS, the language proficiency testing. The CSDE will use this information in the AYP calculations for the 2003-2004 school year.

This same reporting flexibility will be applied to the Connecticut Mastery Tests taken by grade 4, 6 and 8 students in September, 2003. Details on the process, which will be used to exempt these students from the reading and writing subtests, will be forthcoming.

Thank you for your cooperation and flexibility in implementing this requirement within such a short timeline.

If you have questions, please call the CAPT Office at 860-713-6890.

BJS:fr

cc: District Test Coordinators
Directors of English Language Programs
Student Assessment Office
Frances Rabinowitz