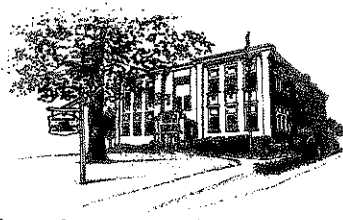


Andrea Veilleux
Chairman
Board of Education



Dr. Janet M. Robinson
Superintendent
of Schools

Stratford Board of Education

1000 East Broadway • Stratford, Connecticut 06615 • Phone (203) 385-4210 • Fax (203) 381-6900 • E-mail: robinsonj@stratfordk12.org

February 19, 2015

Dear Parent or Guardian:

In our continuing efforts to ensure that your child – and all children/students – in Stratford Public Schools are prepared for success, I'm excited to share our efforts to set challenging academic goals and to put in place improved assessments.

In June 2010, Connecticut adopted the Common Core State Standards. In Connecticut, we refer to the standards as the Connecticut Core Standards. Developed with input by teachers, parents, and education experts, they provide clear and consistent expectations in English language arts (ELA)/literacy and mathematics of the knowledge, skills, and abilities students need to be successful beyond high school. In order to ensure students are on track for success, new assessments have been developed to measure where students are succeeding and where they need help.

The Smarter Balanced assessments will replace the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) and Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) in reading, writing and mathematics. The new assessments are a key part of implementing the Connecticut Core Standards and preparing all students for success in college and careers.

The Smarter Balanced Assessments offers significant improvements over paper-based tests of the past; including new question types, and performance tasks that ask students to demonstrate an array of research, writing, and problem solving skills. Online universal tools are available for all students. Additional supports and accommodations are also available for students as needed. Depending upon the support, these determinations are made by educators who are familiar with the student's needs or via an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan.

Since the new assessments measure higher standards, the definition of grade-level performance is also more rigorous than it was with old tests. For the first few years, fewer students may meet grade-level standards. It is important to note that this does not mean that students are doing worse than previous years, but rather, that students are being assessed by more challenging academic standards than before. Results should improve as students have additional years of instruction aligned to the new standards and become better equipped to meet the challenges they present. We are committed to working with teachers and parents to provide support for all students to succeed.

As we look forward to a new school year, we're excited about implementing new assessments that will better prepare students for success beyond high school.

For more information about the Smarter Balanced Assessments, please visit <http://www.smarterbalanced.org> or the Students and Families page of the Connecticut Smarter Balanced Assessment Portal at <http://ct.portal.airast.org>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Janet Robinson".

Dr. Janet Robinson
Superintendent of Schools

"Tantum eruditi sunt liberi" - Only The Educated Are Free