

SERIES 2000-2001

CIRCULAR LETTER: C-16

TO: Superintendents of Schools

FROM: Theodore S. Sergi
Commissioner of Education

SUBJECT: CMT Updates

DATE: February 6, 2001

1. As of this date, all districts have received their CMT district, school and class reports.

While several districts have reported their scores to their Board, staff and/or the media, we hope you have carefully reviewed your CMT materials and called us or our contractor with any questions or concerns before you use the information. Once we release the statewide and district data in mid-February, it will be very difficult to correct any problems.

Please remember that how and when you release your scores is a local decision.

2. Disaggregated Data Reports

This week (February 5-9) you will receive district test reports by gender, race/ethnicity, poverty, English language learners and students with disabilities – as well as a bridge study of the old CMT generation to the new generation.

As we have noted to you in Abigail Hughes' memo of January 11, 2001, a bridge research study was conducted to determine how the students assessed in September 2000 would have performed had they taken the CMT-2. This does not allow for a direct comparison of 1999 (2nd generation) and 2000 (3rd generation) scores.

In my C-14 letter of January 30th, the issue of closing the achievement gaps was identified as one of our key statewide priorities of this generation CMT. We hope each district will design its own analyses and strategies for reducing the gaps.

3. Additional Reports

By February 9th, you should receive the out-of-level reports. Districts offering bilingual education will also receive the 4, 6, 8 results of bilingual students exempted from the state test but taking CMT as a part of their annual evaluation of achievement.

4. State Report Release

At the present time, based on very tight printing and delivery schedule, we expect to release the statewide results – including district data and the disaggregated data on February 14th at 1:00 pm.

These “embargoed” reports will be available to you or your representative between 9 and 12 noon on Tuesday at the State Department of Education Middletown office. Please make arrangements for someone to pick-up your set of Grades 4, 6, and 8 reports at this time. They will be embargoed until 1:00 pm on Wednesday, February 14th – when we will hold a state press conference in Hartford.

5. Assessment of Special Education Students

As you are aware, the goal for each district was to include 80% of their special education population in the standard CMT (not the off-level CMT). While many districts came close to or exceeded the 80% goal, others did not. Therefore, there is a variation in the participation rate across districts. Therefore, it is not valid to compare test results (particularly percent above goal) across districts with large discrepancies in their special education participation rates or in their percent of students with no valid scores. The non-special education students’ (regular education students) mean scale score for each of the nine tests would provide a more reliable, and yet still not necessarily comparable, basis for comparison.

It appears that some districts will need to participate in a full audit of student enrollment, special education and CMT testing or a district/Department meeting to further reconcile student data. We will be in touch with these districts before the state release date.

We want to commend all those districts who made a concerted effort to report accurate data, to include special education students in the standard state tests and to assess all students.

TSS:fm

cc: Test Coordinators