

**Alignment:** The degree to which assessments, curriculum, instruction, instructional materials, professional development, and accountability systems reflect and reinforce the educational program's objectives and standards.

**Assessment:** The measurement of knowledge, skills, and beliefs to determine the level of student achievement in a particular content area (e.g., performance-based assessments, written exams, quizzes).

**AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress):** The state is required to determine annually if every district is making adequate yearly progress toward reaching the goal, by 2014, of having 100 percent of its student population scoring at or above proficient level. What determines proficiency is constantly increasing. If a school/district does not make AYP for two years in a row, it is considered "in need of improvement." A district does not make AYP if the criteria are not met on BOTH the CMT and CAPT.

**Big idea:** Key generalization or enduring understanding that students will take with them after the completion of a learning unit.

**CALI (Connecticut Accountability for Learning Initiative):** Offers a model of state support to districts and schools in the process of school and district improvement and to accelerate the closing of Connecticut's achievement gaps.

**CAPT (Connecticut Academic Performance Test)** This criterion reference test is given to 10<sup>th</sup> grade students in the areas of math, reading across the disciplines, science, and writing across the disciplines.

**CMT (Connecticut Mastery Test)** This criterion reference test is given to students in grades 3 -8 in the areas of math, reading, and writing and in science for grades 5 and 8.

**CMT/CAPT levels:** They include advanced goal, goal, proficiency, basic, and below basic.

**Common assessments:** A broad term for assessments that are given routinely to all students in a grade and/or content area and that are the same for all students in a grade or a course. Common assessments may be summative or formative.

**Common formative assessments (CFA's):** They are used as assessments FOR learning, as opposed to summative assessments OF learning. Common formative assessments are aligned to large-scale assessments, collaboratively designed by grade level and/or content area teachers and are administered prior to beginning a unit to inform instruction.

**Content specific technology:** Instruments that are specific to a discipline (e.g., graphing calculators for math or science).

**Content Standards:** They specify what students should know and be able to do by the end of Grade 12. These statements define content areas that are important for students to learn and for teachers to teach.

**Criterion-referenced assessments:** Students are scored according to how well they do against a set standard. The test results are interpreted by what the student can do without reference to what others of the same age can do. Simply put, criterion-referenced test challenge all students to meet the same standard.

**Culturally responsive text:** Texts that positively reinforce cultural identity and have affirming views of individuals of diverse backgrounds, including African Americans, Asian Americans, American Indians, and Hispanic Americans. Historically, literature written by and for these groups of people generally lies outside of the literary canon, recommended book lists, and the school curriculum.

**Curriculum:** Guaranteed course of study and learning objectives that integrates standards, instructional strategies, materials, and assessments to ensure that all students are able to achieve standards.

**Curriculum mapping:** To gain insight into gaps, absences, and repetitions in a school or district's K-12 curriculum, it is critical to create quality maps. During the initial learning-to-map-phase the most commonly recorded data includes content, skills, assessments, resources, and their alignment to one another other and state standards.

**Data-driven:** Using data to determine strengths and prioritize areas in need of improvement to inform instruction, curriculum, and policy decisions to positively affect student achievement.

**Data Teams:** They are formed when teachers collaboratively analyze data from common formative assessments, identify strengths and weaknesses in student learning, and determine which instructional strategies will best address students and learning objectives. Teachers reconvene to analyze the effectiveness of the instructional strategies selected and implemented at the previous data team meeting.

**Differentiation:** The process teachers use to enhance learning by matching various curriculum components to characteristics shared by subgroups of learners in the classroom. These characteristics might include learning style preferences, interests, prior knowledge, or learning rate. Successful differentiation requires continuous assessment and frequent grouping and regrouping of students.

**ECE:** Early childhood education inclusive of birth to PK programs.

**ELL:** English language learners.

**Formative assessment:** Process used by teachers to determine how to adjust instruction in response to student needs and by students to adjust learning strategies. Formative assessments are used to inform and adjust instruction and are not used to evaluate student progress for a grade.

**Grade-level expectations (GLE):** A description of what students should know and be able to do at the end of a grade level.

**Heterogeneous grouping:** This is a type of distribution of students that creates a relatively even distribution of students of different abilities as well as different educational and emotional needs.

**Higher order thinking:** Based on the idea that some types of thinking require more cognitive processing than others and also have more generalized benefits. In Bloom's taxonomy, for example, skills involving analysis, evaluation, and synthesis (creation of new knowledge) are thought to be of a higher order—involving more complex judgmental skills—than the learning of facts and concepts, which require rote memory and recall. Higher order thinking is more difficult to learn or teach but also more valuable because such skills are more likely to be useable in novel situations (i.e., situations other than those in which the skill was learned).

**“In need of improvement”:** Districts that do not make AYP for two consecutive years *in the same subject and in all grade spans*. For example, if a district did not make AYP for two years in a row in reading on the CMT and CAPT, then it would be “in need of improvement.” If, however, the CMT did not make AYP in reading for two years and the CAPT did not make AYP in math for two years, the district would not be identified because the targets were not missed across all grade spans in the same subject for two years.

**Literary canon:** The term "literary canon" refers to a classification of literature. It is a term used widely to refer to a group of literary works that are considered the most important of a particular time period or place. When a work is entered into the canon, thus canonized, it gains status as an official inclusion into a group of literary works that are widely studied and respected.

**Long-term next steps:** Actions that require the further development of the curriculum or improvement of the curriculum development plan and training to implement the curricular changes.

**Mission statement:** A short, written passage that clarifies the beliefs of a school district about the nature of learning and the need for educational services to meet student learning needs.

**Norm-referenced assessments:** Students are ranked in percentiles according to how they score in comparison to other test takers. Simply put, norm-referenced tests pit one child against another.

**Performance-Based Assessment:** Performance-based assessments represent a set of strategies for the application of knowledge, skills, and work habits through the performance of tasks that are meaningful and engaging to students (Hibbard et al 1996).

**Philosophy:** A common belief system that guides policy and practice (i.e., *All students can learn*).

**Priority Standards:** They can be thought of as the posts in a fence. Other standards are still needed to keep the fence standing, but may not be as critical.

**Readability levels:** The measurement of the textual difficulty or reading difficulty level of a book determined by a readability formula (e.g., calculated by the average number of sentences and syllables per hundred words). Some commonly used readability formulas used to determine readability levels include Fry Readability Formula, Spache Readability Formula, Dale-Chall, and the Lexile Framework for Reading.

**Rubric:** Scoring guide composed of set criteria and related levels of proficiency that is used to evaluate a student's performance, product, or project. It assures that all teachers are using the same measure of proficiency.

**SAT:** The Scholastic Assessment Test is a standardized test for college admissions in the United States. The SAT is owned, published, and developed by the College Board.

**Scope and sequence:** Defines what should be taught, to what depth, and when it should be taught.

**Short-term next steps:** Actions that can be taken immediately or within this school year with minimal adjustments to the existing curriculum or curriculum development plan.

**Scientific research-based interventions (SRBI):** The use of educational practices, which have been validated through research as effective for improved student outcomes. (also known as Response to Intervention). They are ways to provide support and instruction to children who are struggling to learn. SRBI is a systematic and data-based method for identifying, defining, and resolving students' academic and/or behavioral difficulties. A child's progress is studied and findings are used to make decisions about teaching and other learning supports. The SRBI framework has three "tiers." Each tier provides differing kinds and degrees of support:

- **Tier I** (all students) Research-based instructional practices for all.
- **Tier II** (some students) Additional support for children who need more support than they are receiving from the general curriculum.
- **Tier III** (a few students) Sustained and intensive scientifically-based intervention

**Stakeholders:** A person, group, organization, or system that affects or can be affected by an organization's actions (e.g., business, families, board members, etc.).

**Summative assessment:** Assessments that are employed mainly to assess cumulative student learning at a particular point in time (e.g., unit tests, finals, the Connecticut Mastery Test, the Connecticut Academic Performance Test).

**Targeted instructional strategies:** Purposefully selecting and employing specific processes that maximize learning opportunities

**Technological literacy:** Computer skills and the ability to use computers and other technology to improve learning, productivity, and performance.

**Technology application:** Any program, whether software or online-based, that aids in the completion of a task.

**Title I:** A federal grant that is determined by the number of students on free and reduced lunch. Hill and Plain, John Pettibone, and Sarah Noble are designated as Title I schools in New Milford.

**Vertical alignment:** Specific learner expectations that are built upon one another to ensure that fundamental knowledge is established, skills are mastered, gaps are eliminated, and that there is increasing sophistication and rigor across grade levels. When curriculum is vertically aligned, teachers have a clear understanding of what students should have already learned, what they currently have to teach, and what students will learn in future courses or years.