

Series 2002-03

**Circular Letter: C-32**

**TO:** Superintendents, Bilingual and English as a Second Language (ESL) Directors,  
Principals, Test Coordinators

**FROM:** Theodore S. Sergi  
Commissioner of Education

**DATE:** June 19, 2003

**SUBJECT:** **Testing of English Language Learners (ELL) and Accommodations for ELL Students on the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) and Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT)**

I am writing to inform you that, due to the necessity to comply with the *No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001* assessment requirements, all English Language Learners (ELLs) must participate, or at least attempt to participate, in the Connecticut standardized tests, regardless of how much language instruction they have received. This new requirement will be implemented with the fall 2003 CMT and spring 2004 CAPT. However; there are two options that will help to meet the needs of these ELL students.

1. The following testing **accommodations** may be used for ELL students:
  - Additional time (not to exceed a full day per subtest).
  - Individual or small group administration.
  - Test directions read in the native language.
  - Use of dictionaries with word-to-word translations – but **not** definitions<sup>1</sup> (see attached list of acceptable dictionaries) compiled by the Massachusetts State Department of Education.
2. We are aware that for ELL students who have received little or no instruction in English, attempting to take a test written in English could be extremely frustrating. **Therefore, although the ELL student must be given the opportunity to answer test questions in each of the subtests, if it is obvious that the student cannot respond, then the test should be removed; and these students should be given something meaningful to do for the balance of the testing period(s). The ELL student will be counted as a test participant and will be counted as *below basic* on the tests.**

We realize the difficulty of balancing the requirement to provide an opportunity for each child to be assessed, and the unique needs of each English language learner; and, we appreciate your help in this matter.

If you have questions, please contact Abigail L. Hughes, Associate Commissioner, Division of Evaluation and Research, at (860) 713-6800 or via email at [abigail.hughes@po.state.ct.us](mailto:abigail.hughes@po.state.ct.us).

TSS:ahe