

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS REGARDING SBAC TESTING 2014

Our goal in establishing dates for the SBAC testing has always been to minimize the impact on instructional time. When the initial dates were selected, the last day of school was June 11, and the last testing window was not feasible due to the end of year schedule.

The extension of the school year due to snow days has provided us with an opportunity to move the SBAC testing to late May, after the AP exams. The testing will now take place on May 20, 21, 22, 27, 28, and 29.

The following document can address a number of questions that have been raised by students and parents regarding the testing.

What is the content of the tests?

Every student will take four tests:

- a. English I
- b. English II, featuring performance tasks
- c. Math I
- d. Math II, featuring performance tasks

For each test, we have scheduled students into a two-hour block of time.

What is a performance task?

Performance tasks challenge students to apply their knowledge and skills to respond to real-world problems. They can best be described as collections of questions and activities that are coherently connected to a single theme or scenario. These activities are meant to measure capacities such as depth of understanding, research skills, and complex analysis, which cannot be adequately assessed with multiple choice questions.

How will my child's schedule be impacted?

The entire testing window takes place over six days, three days in the first week and three days in the second week, but each student will only be scheduled on four of those days, two sessions in each week. In a given week, one test will take place during a morning testing session (periods 1,2, and 4), and the other session will take place in the afternoon on a different day (the 5th, 6th, and 7th time blocks – the periods will be different depending on the period rotation of that day). This pattern will be repeated in week 2. The total testing time for a student is eight hours, and no period is affected more than two times.

Here is a visual example:

Each box below the dates represents a testing session with a list of periods that are impacted. Let's say your child is assigned to the testing sessions labeled with an "X."

	May 20	May 21	May 22
Week 1	AM Per 2,1,4 <input type="checkbox"/> X	AM Per 1,2,4	AM Per 2,1,4
	PM Per. 7,8,5	PM Per 6,5,7 <input type="checkbox"/> X	PM Per 8,7,5

	May 27	May 28	May 29
Week 2	AM Per 2,1,4 <input type="checkbox"/> X	AM Per 1,2,4	AM Per 2,1,4
	PM Per. 7,8,5	PM Per 6,5,7 <input type="checkbox"/> X	PM Per 8,7,5

In this example, over the two week time frame your child will only miss 2 classes of any period that is affected – in this case Periods 1,2,4,5,6,7. Periods 8 and 9 are not impacted at all. No one comes close to missing “six days of instruction” as has been misinterpreted by some. Out of a potential of 80 instructional periods over two weeks, your child will be testing for 12 of those periods.

What if my child needs more time?

Most students should finish the testing in the allotted time, however, if a student reaches the end of the testing session, and has not finished, he/she can log out of the test and then log in at a future time. However, the student will not be able to go back and change previous answers, only address the questions the student had not answered yet.

What will be happening in class while my child takes the test?

Since this is a computer-based test, we only have the resources to test one-third of the junior class at any given time. While this presents a challenge for our teachers, they have advance notice and are planning for this schedule. Students who miss class for a testing session can be assured that teachers will assist them in staying current with course material and class activities. Students will not be penalized for missing classroom activities or assignments while they were taking the test.

What about Advanced Placement test preparation?

Now that the testing window has changed to late May and after the AP tests, this is no longer an issue.

What if my child is scheduled for lunch during one of the testing periods?

We have created a schedule where every junior who is testing will be given the opportunity to go to lunch prior to the afternoon testing window. Students testing in the second session will go to their morning classes (Per 1,2,4) and then report to the cafeteria from 9:58-10:20. They will then report to their assigned computer lab to take the test. This means that even students who do not have lunch in their schedule will have an opportunity to have a break and refuel prior to the testing.

Why should I care about my child taking the SBAC?

It is true that this test will not impact the class of 2015’s fulfillment of graduation requirements. It is also true that the class of 2015 had to take the CAPT as sophomores and is now being asked to take the field test of SBAC as juniors. However, this whole endeavor is a necessary part of the process to ensure that future students will have a meaningful experience with valid and reliable questions. If you have children younger than 11th grade, they will be the beneficiaries. If you have no children younger than 11th grade, your child’s efforts will be helping others the same way he or she has benefitted from prior students taking pilot versions of CAPT, ACT, and SAT tests.

What if I want to “opt” my child out of the test?

The district’s position on opting out is expressed in the letter from Dr. Title, which is attached here. The State of CT is requiring full participation of all students in public schools.

What is my child’s testing schedule and how will they know?

Similar to how we inform sophomores about their CAPT room assignments, we will be posting all the relevant information in front of house offices and the main office. We have attached a copy of that information in this document as well, but for security reasons, we did not list specific room numbers. As long as you know your child’s house assignment, you can know when he/she is scheduled to test.

FAIRFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

David G. Title, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools



Phone (203) 255-8371
Fax (203) 255-8245

The Education Center

February 19, 2014

Dear Parents/Guardians:

This letter is in response to your request to have your child opt-out of mandated state testing, which will be administered this spring. Unfortunately, Fairfield Public Schools has no choice in the matter. Federal and state laws require that all public school students be tested.

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) does not allow parents to exempt their children from taking the state assessments. Although the State of Connecticut was granted ESEA flexibility, the U.S. Department of Education has not exempted the State of Connecticut from testing all students. The Connecticut General Statutes also require that "each student enrolled in grades three to eight inclusive, and grade ten or eleven in any public school shall, annually, in March or April take a mastery examination in reading, writing and mathematics." Like the federal statute, this state law also does not permit parents to exempt their children from taking the state assessment.

If a student has special needs due to a disability or medical condition, testing accommodations may be available. However, the school district must determine what accommodations, if any, would appropriately address the child's needs. Such determinations are made pursuant to the procedures available under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Both federal and state statutes are clear in their language — that all students enrolled in public schools must take the yearly state assessments. Until such legislation changes, each school district must comply with federal and state mandates.

If you have any questions, please contact Karen Parks, Deputy Superintendent, at (203) 255-8372.

Sincerely,

David G. Title

DGT/mb

	May 20 (Tue)	May 21 (Wed)	May 22 (Thu)
MORNING SESSION (7:30-9:53)			
	Per 2,1,4	Per 1,2,4	Per 2,1,4
	English I	English I	English II (Perf. Task)
Lab	<u>Warner Homerooms</u>	<u>Wright Homerooms</u>	<u>Webster Homerooms</u>
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
AFTERNOON SESSION -10:25-12:32 (Lunch 9:58-10:20)			
	Per 7,8,5	Per 6,5,7	Per 8,7,5
	English I	English II (Perf. Task)	English II (Perf. Task)
Lab	<u>Webster Homerooms</u>	<u>Warner Homerooms</u>	<u>Wright Homerooms</u>
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
MORNING SESSION (7:30-9:53)			
	Per 2,1,4	Per 1,2,4	Per 2,1,4
	Math I	Math I	Math II (Perf Task)
Lab	<u>Warner Homerooms</u>	<u>Wright Homerooms</u>	<u>Webster Homerooms</u>
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
AFTERNOON SESSION -10:25-12:32 (Lunch 9:58-10:20)			
	Per 7,8,5	Per 6,5,7	Per 8,7,5
	Math I	Math II (Perf. Task)	Math II (Perf Task)
Lab	<u>Webster Homerooms</u>	<u>Warner Homerooms</u>	<u>Wright Homerooms</u>
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
NO ACTIVITY PERIOD OR ADVISORY ON May 20 and 27			

2014 Schedule for SBAC Testing Days -				
NOTICE SWAP of Homeroom and Timeblock 4				
Timeblock:	Actual time:			
TB 1	7:30 – 8:15	<u>Morning Session</u>		
TB 2	8:20 – 9:04	Testing Time: 7:30 – 9:53		
TB 4	9:09 – 9:53	Testing House reports directly to assigned		
HR	9:58- 10:05		computer lab at 7:30	
TB 5	10:10-10:54	<u>Afternoon Session</u>		
TB 6	10:59-11:43	Testing House reports to lunch in CAFÉ at 9:58-10:20		
TB 7	11:48-12:32	Testing Time: 10:25 – 12:32		
TB 8	12:37-1:21			
TB 9	1:29-2:10			