



219 North Main Street, Suite 402  
Barre, VT 05641 (p) 802-479-1030 | (f) 802-479-1835

## **Vermont Science Assessment: FAQ**

The Vermont Agency of Education (AOE) is partnering with Rhode Island to develop a new statewide science assessment for state and federal accountability purposes. This FAQ provides introductory information about the assessment.

### **Why is Vermont introducing a new Science assessment into the state?**

Vermont's new science assessment will be fully aligned with the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), the academic content standards that Vermont adopted in 2013. The State's previous science assessment was from the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP). This assessment was not aligned with NGSS. A new, NGSS-aligned Science assessment will allow students to better represent their proficiency against the state's current expectations for learning.

### **Where is the assessment in the development process?**

The AOE has signed a contract with the American Institutes for Research (AIR) to deliver the new Vermont Science Assessment (VTSA). AIR also delivers the Smarter Balanced assessment for Vermont. The VTSA will be field-tested from May 1<sup>st</sup>- May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2018 to ensure it meets standards of technical quality. Its first official administration will be in May 2019.

### **What is the format of the Vermont Science Assessment?**

The VTSA will be administered via computer, and will make use of innovative item clusters that will make it possible to measure the full breadth of the NGSS standards. The assessment will include reports to parents and schools that clearly articulate student performance. Additionally, the assessment will include accommodations and accessibility features to provide access for a broad range of diverse student needs in Vermont.

### **What grade levels will be assessed?**

The VTSA will be administered to students in grades 5, 8, and 11. This represents a change from practice in 2016-17, when the NECAP assessment was administered to grades 4, 8, and 11.

### **What will the testing window be for the VTSA?**

The VTSA will take place during from May 1<sup>st</sup>-25<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

### **How long will it take to administer the VTSA?**

The VTSA was designed to be administered in two one-hour sessions, but may also be administered in four 30 minute sessions or one two hour session depending on students' needs and abilities.

### **When will the VTSA factor into school accountability determinations?**

In 2017-18, the assessment will be introduced into the state, and will count for up to 2% of a school's final accountability determination. Beginning in 2018-19, the assessment will count for

up to 12.5% of a school's determination, depending on the grades that the school serves and the size of its English learner population.

### **What should schools be doing now to prepare for the VTSA?**

The best way for schools to prepare for the new assessment is to ensure that local curriculum and instruction are fully aligned with NGSS and that students have appropriate learning opportunities to experience the full breadth of NGSS.

Additionally, students will need to be loaded into TIDE. The only new students that will need to be loaded into TIDE will be the 11<sup>th</sup> grade as they are not part of the Smarter Balanced assessment. Accommodations for will need to be added for all students with special needs taking the science assessment.

### **What accommodations will be offered on the VTSA?**

The VTSA will have the same suite of accommodations as the Smarter Balanced assessment in all areas except Braille. Only UEB will be offered on the VTSA.

### **Where and when will assessment updates be released?**

The primary source for information on VTSA is the [Vermont Comprehensive Assessment Portal](#). Updates will also be posted to the AOE website, announced through the AOE's Weekly Field Memo ([which you can sign up to receive electronically](#)) and educator listservs, and provided through the AOE's assessment newsletter.

### **Who should I contact with my questions about this assessment?**

- For information about the assessment's connection to content standards and instructional practice, contact Margaret Carrera-Bly, Science Content Specialist, at [margaret.carrera-bly@vermont.gov](mailto:margaret.carrera-bly@vermont.gov).
- For information about assessment development and administration, contact Gabriel McGann, Statewide Assessment Coordinator, at [gabriel.mcgann@vermont.gov](mailto:gabriel.mcgann@vermont.gov).