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## MEMORANDUM

TO: Superintendents, Principals, and Assessment Directors  
FROM: Amy Fowler, Deputy  
SUBJECT: New Next Generation Science Standards-Aligned Assessment  
DATE: November 7, 2017

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The [Vermont ESSA State Plan](#), developed by the Vermont Agency of Education (AOE) with significant stakeholder feedback, received official approval from the US Department of Education in September. As Vermont works to implement an accountability system that better reflects the state's education priorities as stated in Education Quality Standards, changes will need to be made at the state and local level.

One such change is the development of a new science test that will be fully aligned with the [Next Generation Science Standards](#) (NGSS). The NGSS-aligned assessment will be field-tested in May 2018 to ensure it meets standards of technical quality.

The NGSS-aligned assessment 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.

We intend for this test to be administered via computer, and to 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.

At this time, the best way for schools to prepare for the new assessment is to ensure that local curriculum and instruction are fully aligned with NGSS.

To answer additional questions regarding the NGSS-aligned assessment, the agency developed a list of [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

For additional information on the new science test, please contact Gabriel McGann, Statewide Assessment Coordinator, at [gabriel.mcgann@vermont.gov](mailto:gabriel.mcgann@vermont.gov).

Other important State Plan changes requiring local-level action are identified on the [State Plan Readiness Checklist](#). As the details of these other changes emerge, the Agency of Education will release additional information regarding implementation.