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NGSS-NECAP Frequently Asked Questions

This is an exciting time of transition in science education, as Vermont science instructional programs progressively move forward with the implementation of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS).

Science instruction and assessment in Vermont are moving forward with implementation that addresses the three-dimensional learning (Content, Practices and Crosscutting Concepts) embodied in NGSS. The following are responses to some frequently asked questions regarding this transition.

1. *What is the plan for science assessment in Vermont?*

- At this time Vermont's plan is to extend the NECAP Science assessment for two more years—through May 2016 and May 2017. The 2016 testing window is May 2-May 26, 2016. The date for UPS materials pick-up will be May 27. The 2017 window has not yet been determined.

2. *When will Vermont begin testing NGSS?*

- According to federal mandate under No Child Left Behind, Vermont is required to administer a test in science annually in at least one grade in elementary, middle and high school. In Vermont, we will continue NECAP science testing in grades 4, 8 and 11. Our plan is for the first administration of an NGSS assessment to be in 2018.

3. *Why don't we have an NGSS-aligned test now?*

- It takes several years to design and develop a new assessment, especially if it employs new techniques and technologies, as the NGSS represents.
- In Vermont we value the practice of scientific inquiry as an integral part of science learning. At this time an NGSS assessment model that meets this expectation does not exist. The nationally recognized NECAP Inquiry Task is the best available tool to measure student performance and application of scientific principles right now.
- There are a number of states that share our vision of what an NGSS-aligned assessment might look like, and we are in discussion with these potential partner states to develop a more affordable, high quality, and innovative assessment for 2018.

4. *Will it hurt our NECAP Science scores if we align our instruction with NGSS?*

- This is very unlikely. There are many similarities between the NECAP Science Guidelines and NGSS, but where they differ, NGSS is typically more rigorous. Therefore, a student who develops a deep understanding of NGSS principles will know more than necessary to do well on the NECAP Science assessment.
- Examples of similarities between the NECAP Science Inquiry Guidelines and the NGSS Science and Engineering Practices can be found in the [NECAP Inquiry/NGSS Practices](#).
- Analysis of samples of Grade 4, Grade 8 and Grade 11 NECAP science release items can be found in the [Three-Dimensional Analysis of Selected NECAP Science Assessments](#).
- NGSS Implementation support resources are also available on the [AOE website](#).

If you have further questions, please contact Michael Hock (Director of Assessment) (michael.hock@vermont.gov), Gail Hall (6-12) (gail.hall@vermont.gov) or Kathy Renfrew (K-5) (kathy.renfrew@vermont.gov).

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