

# New Mexico STEM Ready! Science Standards Implementation Guide

## Overview

*A Framework for K-12 Science Education* marks a leap forward in how we think about science education and captures the advancements made in understanding how students best learn science that have been made over the last 30 years. The New Mexico Public Education Department and New Mexico public school teachers worked together over the course of June 2021 to construct an Instructional Scope document for the New Mexico STEM Ready! Science Standards. There are many public schools where high quality instructional materials (HQIM) are present, and these should be used in the teaching of science. In public schools where HQIM may be absent, the New Mexico Instructional Scope for Science (NMIS Science) should be used in conjunction with the New Mexico STEM Ready! Science Standards to plan science instruction.

The following describes the layout of the NMIS Science document and how it has been designed to be implemented. New Mexico science teachers worked collaboratively to identify and construct sample phenomena, classroom assessment items, common misconceptions, multi-layered systems of supports (MLSS), and culturally and linguistically responsive (CLR) instructional strategies for each performance expectation in the New Mexico STEM Ready! Science Standards. The best practice of bundling related standards together to capture multiple aspects of a single phenomenon was not done, as local public schools should determine how best to bundle New Mexico STEM Ready! Science Standards based on their needs.

## The standards

**What:** Each performance expectation begins with links to the *Next Generation Science Standards* and a snapshot of the performance expectation with the relevant Science and Engineering Practices (SEP), Disciplinary Core Ideas (DCI), and Cross Cutting Concepts (CCC). Also captured are the connections across the grade level or band (horizontal), connections across grade levels or bands (vertical), and connections to the *Common Core State Standards* (CCSS) in math and English language arts.

The Performance Expectation describes what a student is expected to be able to do at the completion of instruction. They are intended to guide the development of assessments, but they are not the assessment as such. They are not instructional strategies or instructional objectives, but they should influence and guide instruction. Most performance expectations contain a clarification statement and an assessment boundary statement to provide clarity to the performance expectation and guidance to the scope of the expectation, respectively.<sup>1</sup>

The foundation box, which is located below the performance expectation, contains the learning goals that students should achieve and that will be assessed using the performance expectations. The three parts to the foundation box are the science and engineering practices, the disciplinary core ideas, and the crosscutting concepts. The information contained in the foundation box is taken directly from *A Framework for K-12 Science Education*. Also included in the foundation box, where appropriate, are connections to engineering, technology, and applications of science as well as connections to the nature of science. These supplemental goals are related to the other material in the foundation box and are intended to guide instructions, but the outcomes are not included in the performance expectation.

The connections box identifies connections to other disciplinary core ideas at this grade level that are relevant to the standard, identifies the articulation of disciplinary core ideas across grade levels, and identifies connections to

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<sup>1</sup> Pratt, Harold (2013) *The NSTA Reader's Guide to the Next Generation Science Standards*.

the *Common Core State Standards (CCSS)* in mathematics and in English language arts and literacy that align to this standard. The connections box helps support instruction and development of instructional materials.

Why: The first step of any teacher in planning instruction is to deeply understand the end result that is required. The standards section of the NMIS Science document is placed first so that teachers have quick access to these requirements. The *NGSS* describe the essential learning goals and how those goals will be assessed at each grade level or band.

How: It is generally accepted that planning for instruction begins with the selection of the endpoint, or desired results of the instruction, and working backward through an instructional sequence to the beginning knowledge students have coming into the instruction. The description of such a process has been documented by Wiggins and McTighe in *Understanding by Design* (1998).

For the purpose of the NMIS Science document, a process for moving from the New Mexico STEM Ready! Science Standards to classroom instruction should minimally include the following<sup>2</sup>:

- Read the performance expectation, clarification statement, and assessment boundary.
- Read the disciplinary core idea in the foundation box.
  - Read the applicable disciplinary core idea essay in *A Framework for K-12 Science Education*, located in chapters 5, 6, 7, and 8. As you read, consider the following questions:
    - What are some commonly held student ideas about this topic?
    - How could instruction build on helpful ideas and confront troublesome ideas?
    - What prior ideas or concepts do students need to learn to understand this core idea?
    - What level of abstractness is expected of students?
    - What are some phenomena and experiences that could provide observational or experimental evidence that the DCI is an accurate description of the natural world?
    - What representations or media would be helpful for students to use in making sense of the core idea?
- Read the science and engineering practices associated with the performance expectation.
  - Read the applicable SEP essay in *A Framework for K-12 Science Education* located in chapter 3, consider the following questions:
    - While the PE describes one SEP to be used, others will be needed in the instructional sequence, which ones and in what order will you use them?
    - How will each SEP be used to develop an understanding of the DCI?
    - What practices could students engage in to explore phenomena?
- Read the crosscutting concept associated with the performance expectation.
  - Read the applicable CCC essay in *A Framework for K-12 Science Education* located in chapter 4, consider the following questions:

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<sup>2</sup> Bybee, Rodger W. (2013) *Translating the NGSS for Classroom Instruction*.

- How will the CCC indicated in the PE support the understanding of the core idea?
- Are there other CCC that could also support learning the core idea?
- Read the connections box
  - When reading the connections to other DCI at this grade level that are relevant to the standard, consider the following question:
    - How can instruction be designed so that students note the connections between the core ideas?
  - When reading the articulation of DCI across grade levels that are relevant to the standard, consider the following questions:
    - Examine the standard at earlier grade levels, do they provide an adequate prior knowledge for the core ideas in the standard being reviewed?
    - Examine the standard at later grade levels, does the standard at this level provide adequate prior knowledge for the core ideas in the later standards?
  - When reading the CCSS in mathematics and English language arts (ELA), consider the following questions:
    - Should students have achieved these mathematics and ELA standards to engage in the learning of science, or could they be learned together?
    - In what ways do the referenced mathematics and ELA standards help clarify the science performance expectations?
    - Can any of the science core ideas be included as examples in the mathematics or ELA instruction?
- Create one or more descriptions of the desired results or learning goals for the instruction integrating the three dimensions in the foundation box.
- Determine the acceptable evidence for the assessment of the desired results.
- Create the learning sequence
  - The NMIS Science document includes sample phenomena, classroom assessment items, common misconceptions, general and targeted supports, and CLR considerations that can be used to assist with this process.
- Create the summative assessment and check its alignment with the performance expectation.

### Sample Phenomena

What: Natural phenomena are observable events that occur in the universe and that we can use our science knowledge to explain or predict. The goal of building knowledge in science is to develop general ideas, based on evidence, that can explain and predict phenomena. Engineering involves designing solutions to problems that arise from phenomena and using explanations of phenomena to design solutions. In this way, phenomena are the context for the work of both the scientist and the engineer.

Why: Despite their centrality in science and engineering, phenomena have traditionally been a missing piece in science education. Anchoring learning in explaining phenomena supports student agency for wanting to build

science and engineering knowledge. Students are able to identify an answer to “why do I need to learn this?” before they even know what “this” is. By centering science education on phenomena that students are motivated to explain, the focus of learning shifts from learning about a topic to figuring out why or how something happens. Explaining phenomena and designing solutions to problems allow students to build general science knowledge in the context of their application to understanding phenomena in the real world, leading to deeper and more transferable knowledge. Students who come to see how science ideas can help explain and model phenomena related to compelling real-world situations learn to appreciate the social relevance of science. They get interested in and identify with science as a way of understanding and improving real-world contexts.

Learning to explain phenomena and solve problems is the central reason students engage in the three dimensions of the *NGSS*. Students explain phenomena by developing and applying the DCI and CCC through use of the SEPs. Phenomena-centered classrooms also give students and teachers a context in which to monitor ongoing progress toward understanding all three dimensions. As students are working toward being able to explain phenomena, three-dimensional formative assessment becomes more easily embedded and coherent throughout instruction.

How: We use phenomena to drive instruction to help students engage in practices to develop the knowledge necessary to explain or predict the phenomena. Therefore, the focus is not just on the phenomenon itself. It is the phenomenon plus the student-generated questions about the phenomenon that guides the learning and teaching. The practice of asking questions or identifying problems becomes a critical part of trying to figure something out.

There could potentially be many different lines of inquiry about the same phenomenon. Teachers should help students identify different aspects of the same phenomenon as the focus of their questions. Students also might ask questions about a phenomenon that motivates a line of investigation that isn’t grade appropriate or might not be effective at using or building important disciplinary ideas. Teacher guidance may be needed to help students reformulate questions so they can lead to grade appropriate investigations of important science ideas.

It is important that all students – including English language learners and students from cultural groups underrepresented in STEM – are supported in working with phenomena that are engaging and meaningful to them. Not all students will have the same background or relate to a particular phenomenon in the same way. Educators should consider student perspectives when choosing phenomena and should prepare to support student engagement in different ways. When starting with one phenomenon in your classroom, it is always a good idea to help students identify related phenomena from their lives and their communities to expand the phenomena under consideration.

Not all phenomena need to be used for the same amount of instructional time. Teachers could use an anchoring phenomenon as the overall focus for a unit, along with other investigative phenomena along the way as the focus of an instructional sequence or lesson. They may also highlight everyday phenomena that relate investigative or anchoring phenomena to personally experienced situations. A single phenomenon doesn’t have to cover an entire unit, and different phenomena will take different amounts of time to figure out.

The most powerful phenomena are culturally or personally relevant or consequential to students. Such phenomena highlight how science ideas help us explain aspects of real-world contexts or design solutions to science-related problems that matter to students, their communities, and society. An appropriate phenomenon for instruction should help engage all students in working toward the learning goals of instruction as described by the DCIs, SEPs, and CCCs in the foundation box of the standard.

The process of developing an explanation for a phenomenon should advance students’ understanding. If students already need to know the target knowledge before they can inquire about the phenomenon, then the phenomenon is not appropriate for initial instruction. Students should be able to make sense of anchoring or investigative phenomena, but not immediately, and not without investigating it using sequences of the science and engineering practices. Phenomena do not need to be flashy or unexpected. Students might not be intrigued by an everyday phenomenon right away because they believe they already know how or why it happens. With careful

teacher facilitation, students can become dissatisfied with what they believe they already know and strive to understand it in the context of the DCI that the teacher is targeting.<sup>3</sup>

### Classroom Assessment Items

What: Classroom assessments (sometimes referred to as internal assessments) is used to refer to assessments designed or selected by teachers and given as an integral part of classroom instruction. This category of assessment may include teacher-student interactions in the classroom, observations of students, student products that result directly from ongoing instructional activities, quizzes tied to instructional activities, formal classroom exams that cover material from one or more instructional units, or assessments created by curriculum developers and embedded in instructional materials for teacher use.<sup>4</sup>

Classroom assessments can be designed to guide instruction (formative purposes) or to support decisions made beyond the classroom (summative purposes). Assessments used for formative purposes occur during the course of a unit of instruction and may involve both formal tests and informal activities conducted as part of a lesson. They may be used to identify students' strengths and weaknesses, assist students in guiding their own learning, and foster students' sense of autonomy and responsibility for their own learning. Assessments for summative purposes may be administered at the end of a unit of instruction. They are designed to provide evidence of achievement that can be used in decision making, such as assigning grades, making promotion or retention decisions, and classifying test takers according to defined performance categories. The results of all these assessments are evaluated by the teacher or sometimes by groups of teachers. These assessments play an integral role in students' learning experiences while also providing evidence of progress in that learning.

Why: In *Developing Assessments for the Next Generation Science Standards*, the National Research Council shared the following conclusions regarding assessing three-dimensional learning:<sup>5</sup>

- Measuring the three-dimensional science learning called for in the framework and the NGSS requires assessment tasks that examine students' performance of scientific and engineering practices in the context of crosscutting concepts and disciplinary core ideas. To adequately cover the three dimensions, assessment tasks will generally need to contain multiple components. It may be useful to focus on individual practices, core ideas, or crosscutting concepts in the various components of an assessment task, but, together, the components need to support inferences about students' three-dimensional science learning as described in a given performance expectation.
- The Next Generation Science Standards require that assessment tasks be designed so they can accurately locate students along a sequence of progressively more complex understandings of a core idea and successively more sophisticated applications of practices and crosscutting concepts.
- The NGSS places significant demands on science learning at every grade level. It will not be feasible to assess all the performance expectations for a given grade level with any one assessment. Students will

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<sup>3</sup> Penuel, W. R., Bell, P., Neill, T., Morrison, D., & Tesoriero, G. (2018). *Selecting Anchoring Phenomena for Equitable 3D Teaching*. [OER Professional Development Session from the ACESSE Project] Retrieved from <http://stemteachingtools.org/pd/sessione>

<sup>4</sup> National Resource Council. (2014). *Developing Assessments for the Next Generation Science Standards*. Committee on Developing Assessments of Science Proficiency in K-12. Board on Testing and Assessments and Board on Science Education, J.W. Pellegrino, M.R. Wilson, J.A. Koenig, and A.S. Beatty, *Editors*. Division of Social Sciences and Education. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

<sup>5</sup> National Research Council. (2014). *Developing Assessments for the Next Generation Science Standards*. Committee on Developing Assessments of Science Proficiency in K-12. Board on Testing and Assessment and Board on Science Education. J.W. Pellegrino, M.R. Wilson, J.A. Koenig, and A.S. Beatty, *Editors*. Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

need multiple – and varied – assessment opportunities to demonstrate their competence on the performance expectations for a given grade level.

- Effective evaluation of three-dimensional science learning requires more than a one-to-one mapping between the NGSS performance expectations and assessment tasks. More than one assessment task may be needed to adequately assess students’ mastery of some performance expectations, and any given assessment task may assess aspects of more than one performance expectations. In addition, to assess both understanding of core knowledge and facility with a practice, assessments may need to probe students’ use of a given practice in more than one disciplinary context. Assessment tasks that attempt to test practices in strict isolation from one another may not be meaningful as assessments of the three-dimensional science learning called for by the NGSS. (Developing assessments for NGSS, NRC, pp.44-46)

How: The amount of information that has been generated around designing and creating three-dimensional assessment tasks to meet the conclusions laid out above by the National Research Council has been overwhelming. The following free resources are available through STEM teaching tools to help you navigate this flood of information and translate it into your classroom. You should start by familiarizing yourself with the following STEM Teaching Tools<sup>6</sup>:

- Practice Brief 18 on how teachers can develop formative assessments that fit a three-dimensional view of science learning.
- Practice Brief 26 on how to design formative assessments that engage students in three-dimensional learning.
- Practice Brief 30 on integrating science practices into assessment tasks
- Practice Brief 41 on integrating cross cutting concepts into assessment and instruction
- Practice Brief 33 on designing assessments for emerging bilingual students

In general, one can use the following process to develop classroom assessment tasks:

1. Identify specific learning goals for the desired assessment
2. Brainstorm assessment scenarios that involve phenomena that clearly foreground the identified learning goals
3. Prioritize and select a scenario that best fits the following criteria:
  - a. it should allow students from non-dominant communities (e.g., ELLs, students from poverty-impacted communities) to fully engage with the task,
  - b. it should involve a compelling phenomenon related to one or more of the DCIs being assessed—and not feel like a test-like task,
  - c. it should be quickly understandable by students, and
  - d. it should lend itself to a broad range of science and engineering practices.
4. The task formats (practice briefs 30 and 41) provide detailed guidance on how to design assessment components that engage students in the science and engineering practices. Identify the practices that relate to the scenario and use the task formats to craft assessment components

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<sup>6</sup> STEM Teaching Tools (n.d.), <http://stemteachingtools.org/tools> accessed on July 7, 2021

5. Write hypothetical student responses for each prompt: some that reflect limited, partial, and full levels of understanding
6. Share tasks with colleagues and ask for feedback about the alignment of goals, scenarios, and hypothetical student responses

### Common Misconceptions

What: This planning support identifies some of the common misconceptions students develop about a scientific topic.

Why: Our brains are highly advanced cause and effect reasoning machines. From birth, we begin to analyze effects to determine causes and provide some sort of reasoning for the whole event. The more events that support our reasoning, the stronger that learning becomes. So, every student in your classroom brings their own unique background knowledge into your classroom. Some of this is aligned to scientific understanding and some of this is misaligned to scientific understanding but aligned to that student's personal experiences. As science educators, we must always create space for students to bring their current understanding about a topic into our classroom so that we can begin to address understandings that are misaligned to scientific understanding. Some of these misunderstandings are not unique to a single student; rather, they are common to many students.

How: When planning with your HQIM look for ways to directly address with students some common misconceptions. The planning supports in this document provide some possible misconceptions and your HQIM might include additional ones. The goal is not to avoid misconceptions, they are a natural part of the learning process, but we want to support students in exploring the misconception and modifying incorrect or partial understandings.

### Multi Layered System of Supports (MLSS)

What: The Multi-Layered Systems of Support (MLSS) is designed to support teachers in planning instruction for the needs of all students. Each section identifies general supports (layer 1) for supporting pedagogically sound whole class science instruction and targeted supports (layer 2) for supporting those scholars that teachers identify as not understanding the topic. We recognize there is a need for intensive support (layer 3) for those students needing longer duration or otherwise more intense support with a given topic; however, this was not part of the NM IS Science 1.0 work.

Why: MLSS is a holistic framework that guides educators, those closest to the student, to intervene quickly when students need additional support. The framework moves away from the "wait to fail" model and empowers teachers to use their professional judgement to make data-informed decisions regarding the students in their classroom to ensure academic success with grade level expectations of the New Mexico Science Standards.

How: When planning with your high-quality instructional materials (HQIM) use the suggested universal supports embedded in the sequence of instruction. If you do not have access to HQIM in your school, the universal (layer 1) support in this document can be used in planning your instruction.

### Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Instruction

What: Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Instruction (CLRI), or the practice of situational appropriateness, requires educators to contribute to a positive school climate by validating and affirming students' home languages and cultures. Validation is making the home culture and language legitimate, while affirmation is affirming or making clear that the home culture and language are positive assets. It is also the intentional effort to reverse negative stereotypes of non-dominant cultures and languages and must be intentional and purposeful, consistent and authentic, and proactive and reactive. Building and bridging is the extension of validation and affirmation. By building and bridging students learning to toggle between home culture and linguistic behaviors and expectations and the school culture and linguistic behaviors and expectations. The building component focuses on creating



connections between the home culture and language and the expectations of school culture and language for success in school. The bridging component focuses on creating opportunities to practice situational appropriateness or utilizing appropriate cultural and linguistic behaviors.

Why: Student understanding of science is shaped by their interactions with phenomena throughout their lives. Science educators must intentionally and purposefully legitimize the home culture and languages of students and validate their ways of knowing and understanding. In addition, create connections between the cultural and linguistic behaviors of the students' home culture and language and the culture and language of scientific understanding.

How: When planning instruction it is critical to consider ways to validate/affirm and build/bridge from your students' cultural and linguistic assets. There has been an overwhelming amount of guidance within STEM education about CLRI. The following STEM teaching tools can be a good place to start wrapping your mind around this topic.<sup>7</sup>

- Practice Brief 15: Promoting equity in science education
- Practice Brief 47: Promoting equitable sensemaking
- Practice Brief 54: Building equitable learning communities
- Practice Brief 11: Indigenous ways of knowing and STEM
- Practice Brief 27: Engaging English language learners in science and engineering practices
- Practice Brief 71: Advancing equity and justice in science education
- Practice Brief 53: Avoiding pitfalls associated with CLRI

The planning supports for each performance expectation provide an example of how to support equity-based teaching practices. Look for additional ways within your HQIM to ensure all students are included in the pursuit of scientific understanding in your classroom.

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<sup>7</sup> STEM Teaching Tools (n.d.), <http://stemteachingtools.org/tools> accessed on July 7, 2021