



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

FAQ: Vermont's New NGSS-Aligned Science Assessment

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. Additional details around the implementation of this assessment will be determined when the assessment contract has been finalized and signed. At that time, this document will be revised accordingly and reissued.

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, New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP), 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 released a Request for Proposals (RFP) to identify our partner in this work, and is in the process of negotiating a contract with a vendor. The NGSS-aligned assessment will be field-tested in May 2018 to ensure it meets standards of technical quality.

What is the likely format of the NGSS-aligned assessment?

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.

What grade levels will be assessed?

The NGSS-aligned assessment will be administered to students in grades 5, 8, and 11. This represents a minor 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 NGSS-aligned assessment?

The NGSS-aligned science assessment will take place during the last three weeks of May 2018.

How long will it take to administer the NGSS-aligned assessment?

While still in development, the RFP stipulates that the NGSS-aligned assessment can be completed during two one-hour sessions.

When will the NGSS-aligned assessment factor into school accountability determinations?

In 2017-18, the assessment will be introduced into the state, and it is the AOE's intention to count the assessment 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 new science assessment?

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.

Where and when will assessment updates be released?

Updates will 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.
- For information about assessment development and administration, contact Gabriel McGann, Statewide Assessment Coordinator, at gabriel.mcgann@vermont.gov.