



ARKANSAS K-12 SCIENCE STANDARDS

EDUCATION FOR A NEW GENERATION



Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is the process for creating new science content standards in Arkansas?

- The periodic review and revision of science content standards as outlined in law and rule for the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) is being completed in 2015-2016.
- The State Board of Education has endorsed the [Next Generation Science Standards](#) (NGSS) and the research behind these standards to guide the development of new science standards called the Arkansas K-12 Science Standards.
- Committees of K-12 teachers and instructional facilitators, assisted by higher education content experts, have completed [Grades K-8](#) and are currently creating new high school courses.
- More information about the work is available on the [Arkansas K-12 Science Standards page](#) on the [ADE website](#).

Q: What science standards are required to be taught?

[Arkansas Science Curriculum Frameworks](#), revised in 2005, will be taught until implementation of the new standards. A [timeline](#) is available on the [ADE website](#).

Q: When will the new standards be implemented?

Arkansas schools will implement Grades K-4 in 2016, Grades 5-8 in 2017, and new high school courses in 2018. Time is needed to allow Arkansas educators the opportunity to transition to the new standards. A [timeline](#) spells out the projected dates for implementation.

Q: What are the Next Generation Science Standards?

NGSS are K-12 science standards that are rich in content and practice and designed to provide all students an internationally-benchmarked science education. The NGSS are based on *A Framework for K-12 Science Education*, which was published by the National Research Council, and is available as a free download ([Click here](#)). The National Research Council is a private, nonprofit institution that provides expert advice on some of the most pressing issues pertaining to science, engineering, and medicine. The final version of [NGSS](#) was released in April, 2013 and is available on the Web.

Q: Who was involved in the development process?

Arkansas was one of the 26 [lead states](#) that actively engaged in the development and review of the NGSS. Writing and review teams consisted of K-12 teachers, higher education faculty, scientists, engineers, and business leaders. These teams were joined by several partner organizations, including the [National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine](#), the [National Science Teachers Association](#) (NSTA), and the [American Association for the Advancement of Science](#) (AAAS).

Q: What are some of the strengths of the NGSS that are translated in the Arkansas K-12 Science Standards?

The new standards make connections across curriculum and provide a clear vision of rigorous science instruction across K-12. These standards offer all students 21st century learning opportunities and challenges to become more scientifically literate and to be prepared for high-paying jobs available today and in the future.

Q: What science assessments are being administered in the 2015 – 2016 academic year?

The ADE Science Benchmark assessments for Grades 5 and 7 and the Biology EOC have been replaced by The ACT Aspire assessment. The ACT Aspire assesses science for grades 3-10. In addition, The ACT for Grade 11 also has a science test. The ADE Alternate Portfolio Assessments continue for Grades 5, 7, and 10. Information about these [assessments](#) is available on the [ADE website](#).



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Q: Will science content be assessed on The ACT Aspire and The ACT assessments?

The ACT Aspire will focus on student understanding of how science works and less about recall of science facts. The ACT Aspire tests for grades 3-10 assess science in three categories:

- Interpretation of Data
- Scientific Investigation
- Evaluation of Models, Inferences and Experimental results.

Link to ACT Aspire is <http://actaspire.pearson.com>, and the link to The ACT is www.act.org

Q: What can educators do to prepare for the transition to new science standards?

- Ensure that sufficient time is allotted in the school day for hands-on science instruction.
- Evaluate and inventory the science resources currently available to the school/district.
- Incorporate the practices and crosscutting concepts from the Arkansas K-12 Science Standards in current units of study. [Resources](#) are available from the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA). [Implementation resources](#) are available from the NGSS website.
- Increase collaboration within the science department and across disciplines in school/district.
- Participate in [Professional Development](#) titled “Transitioning to New Science Standards”.
- Utilize the science specialists at local [educational cooperatives](#) and/or [university STEM centers](#) for professional development offerings and school support.

Q. What is the best method for staying up-to-date with Arkansas’ progress toward new science standards?

Information is available at

<http://www.arkansased.org/divisions/learning-services/curriculum-and-instruction/arkansas-k-12-science-standards>. In addition, information about the development of and transition to new science standards will be sent out through ADE’s Curriculum and Instruction Listserv. To be added to the ADE CCSS ListServ, please send your name, e-mail address, and district name to ADE.CandI@arkansas.gov.

Q. When is the best time to purchase new science instructional materials?

There is currently a lack of high-quality NGSS-aligned instructional materials because the standards are so new. School districts are encouraged to access the free [resources](#) available from [NGSS @ NSTA](#). Check with local educational cooperatives and/or university STEM centers for instructional materials (including lab equipment and kits) that schools can check out.

For more information, please contact Michele Snyder, Science Specialist for Curriculum and Instruction

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