



## EAST LYME PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Dear Parents and Guardians,

The Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) have been adopted by the State of Connecticut. East Lyme Public Schools has been working through transitioning to the new standards over the last three years. *The NGSS "enables teachers the ability to offer all students interactive science instruction that promotes analysis and interpretation of data, critical thinking, problem solving, and connections across science disciplines".*

**Effective for Fall 2019:** The East Lyme Schools Science curriculum will meet the expectations of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). We know there will be questions about this new requirement and the transition to the NGSS and we want to address them here:

**Why the NGSS?** Students are facing a changing world that demands the application of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) skills. Jobs requiring significant STEM skills are growing three times faster than non-STEM jobs (Langdon et al., 2011). We need to prepare our next generation of innovators, scientists, artists, engineers, entrepreneurs, doctors, explorers, and leaders. NGSS will prepare students with 21st Century Skills required to compete and lead in a changing world.

**What are the NGSS?** NGSS encourages students to learn about science processes in a deep, meaningful way through first-hand investigative processes rather than memorization of facts. You'll see engaging activities with students asking more questions, exploring and discussing possible solutions, investigating science concepts, using argumentation, and being fully active in the learning process. Class activities will emphasize data analysis and constructing models to explain scientific phenomena. The NGSS focus includes four subject areas: earth science, biology, physical science (chemistry and physics), engineering. The engineering component exposes students to using science to solve design problems.

**How does the NGSS compare to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS)?** Next Generation Science Standards were developed independently of Common Core State Standards for mathematics and language arts. The NGSS align closely with the CCSS to ensure the science standards connect to the mathematics content and make important literacy connections.

**Will students be assessed on these new standards?** Yes. Throughout units of instruction, students will be assessed formatively and summatively. Statewide, assessments will be similar in structure to the Smarter Balanced assessments in mathematics and language arts. Like the Smarter Balanced tests, these tests do not impact student grades.

**What is the timeline for Statewide NGSS assessments?** The NGSS Science Assessment is administered in Grades 5, 8 and 11 during the spring of the academic year. *NOTE: A spring 2018 pilot test was completed and no results were released. A spring 2019 First Operational Test was completed with individual and school-specific scores anticipated to be released during the summer of 2019.*

East Lyme School District will be implementing modernized units aligned to NGSS in fall 2019. We have spent the last three years developing awareness of the standards and transitioning our current units of study. For more information on Next Generation Science Standards, please visit our website <https://www.eastlymeschools.org/offices/office-of-curriculum-instruction-and-assessment#fs-panel-14415>.

Sincerely,

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*East Lyme Public Schools will inspire, engage and educate each student to be a contributing citizen and a responsible, independent, and critical thinker.*