

Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and PARCC Draft Performance Level Descriptors are Released

PARCC Grade and Subject Specific DRAFT Performance Level Descriptors released for feedback

The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) today released the draft grade- and subject-specific performance level descriptors (PLDs) in English language arts/literacy (ELA) and mathematics for public comment. The new draft grade- and subject-specific PLDs further articulate the knowledge, skills, and practices that students performing at a given level should be able to demonstrate in each content area at each grade level and to be on-track for college and career readiness. From April 10 until May 8, 2013, the draft grade- and subject-specific PLDs are posted on the PARCC website. Interested parties can provide feedback through a [survey posted on the PARCC website](#), answering questions specific to the PLDs for both ELA/literacy and mathematics.

The policy-level PLDs describe the educational implications for students who attain a particular performance level on the PARCC assessment. They also present general content claims, which describe in broad terms the knowledge, skills, and practices students performing at a given performance level are able to demonstrate at any grade level. Performance levels, sometimes referred to as "achievement levels," are the broad, categorical levels used to report student performance on an assessment. The PLDs will look different than from those in the past in order to accurately reflect the innovations in the Common Core State Standards. Like the standards, the ELA/Literacy PLDs place emphasis on a student's ability to find text-based evidence for generalizations, conclusions or inferences drawn. The Mathematics PLDs emphasize the integration of mathematics content and practices.

For more information, FAQs or to view the PLDs, visit <http://www.parcconline.org/plds>.

Next Generation Science Standards The new Science Common Core State Standards were released on Tuesday. These standards are the K-12 science standards created through a collaborative, state-led process and Arkansas was one of the twenty-six states providing leadership to the writing teams and had input into the drafts.

You can access the NGSS at: <http://www.nextgenscience.org/>

The 7 Conceptual shifts include what is new and different about the NGSS:

1. K-12 Science Education Should Reflect the Interconnected Nature of Science as it is practiced and experienced in the Real World. The vision represented in the Framework is new in that students must be engaged at the nexus of the three dimensions:

- Science and Engineering Practice,
- Crosscutting Concepts, and
- Disciplinary Core Ideas.

Student performance expectations have to include a student's ability to apply a practice to content knowledge, thereby focusing on understanding and application as opposed to memorization of facts devoid of context.

2. The Next Generation Science Standards are student performance expectations – NOT curriculum. Even though within each performance expectation Science and Engineering Practices (SEP) are partnered with a particular Disciplinary Core Idea (DCI) and Crosscutting Concept (CC) in the NGSS, these intersections do not predetermine how the three are linked in the curriculum, units, or lessons.

3. The Science Concepts in the NGSS Build Coherently from K-12. The focus on a few Disciplinary Core Ideas is a key aspect to a coherent science education. The Framework identified a basic set of core ideas that are meant to be understood by the time a student completes high school. There are two key points that are important to understand:

- First, focus and coherence must be a priority. What this means to teachers and curriculum developers is that the same ideas or details are not covered each year. Rather, a progression of knowledge occurs from grade band to grade band that gives students the opportunity to

learn more complex material, leading to an overall understanding of science by the end of high school.

- Second, the progressions in the NGSS automatically assume that previous material has been learned by the student.

4. The NGSS Focus on Deeper Understanding of Content as well as Application of Content. The Framework identified a smaller set of Disciplinary Core Ideas that students should know by the time they graduate from high school and the NGSS are written to focus on the same.

5. Science and Engineering are Integrated in the NGSS, from K–12. A significant difference in the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) is the integration of engineering and technology into the structure of science education by raising engineering design to the same level as scientific inquiry in classroom instruction when teaching science disciplines at all levels, and by giving core ideas of engineering and technology the same status as those in other major science disciplines.

6. The NGSS are designed to prepare students for college, career, and citizenship. All students no matter what their future education and career path must have a solid K–12 science education in order to be prepared for college, careers and citizenship.

7. The NGSS and Common Core State Standards (English Language Arts and Mathematics) are Aligned. The NGSS are aligned with the CCSS to ensure a symbiotic pace of learning in all content areas. The three sets of standards overlap in meaningful and substantive ways and offer an opportunity to give all students equitable access to learning standards.

If you would like more information, please contact:

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