

DUBLIN  
UNIFIED



School District

All Dublin Students Will  
Become Lifelong Learners

# DUBLIN SCHOOLS

## DUBLIN UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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May 25, 2017

Dear Parents:

Dublin Unified School District science courses 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 do the NGSS compare to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS)?**

NGSS 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.

### **How do the NGSS affect the courses my student will take in middle school?**

Science curriculum at each grade level will now include physical, life, and earth sciences and engineering. This enables classroom instruction to better reflect science in the real world. These courses will prepare your student for the course sequences they will take in high school. If you are interested in information about the NCSS high school courses, please go to this link at the our district website: [High School NGSS Information](#).

**Where is Dublin Unified in the transition to the NGSS?** In the 2015-2016 school year, Dublin Unified began implementing a multi-year K-12 plan to support transition to the NGSS. Dublin has been working with state experts and early implementers to support our teachers for the last two years for this transition. Teachers have begun and will continue to redesign both the curriculum and the classroom environment.

### SUPERINTENDENT

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**How will students be assessed on these new standards?** These assessments will be similar in structure to the Smarter Balance assessments in mathematics and language arts. Like the Smarter Balance tests, these tests do not impact student grades. Students will be assessed near the end of 8th grade on the middle school standards.

**What is the timeline for NGSS assessments?** See testing dates below for the California Science Test (CAST).

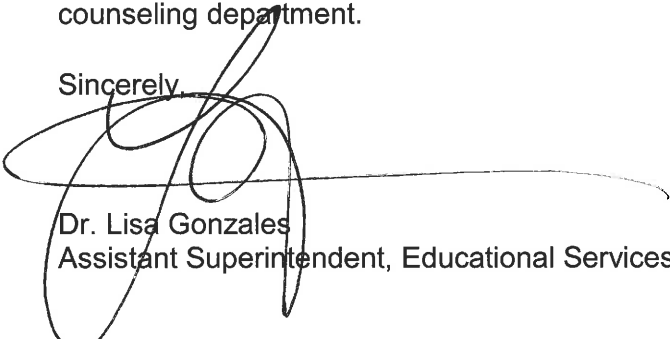
Spring 2018	Field Test	No results released
Spring 2019	First Operational Test	Individual and school-specific scores released.

**How can you help your student?** Ask about what topics and material were explored in class, and what was observed and discussed and what questions your student still has. Go to museums and parks and seek other opportunities to do tours or attend events where science and engineering professionals will be able to interact with your student. Participate in community environmental projects, such as environmental clean-up days or repairing hiking trails and actively access resources like those that are listed below.

- [Careers in the Biological Sciences](#)
- [Science Pioneers STEM careers](#)
- [Masters in Data Science: STEM Websites Guide for Kids](#)

If you have additional questions, please contact your students' counselors in the your school's counseling department.

Sincerely,



Dr. Lisa Gonzales  
Assistant Superintendent, Educational Services

Attachment: [A NEW VISION FOR SCIENCE EDUCATION](#)