

NEWS: Science Strategic Plan is ADOPTED at NYS Regents Meeting on January 12th!

Question: What happened and why does it matter?

Answer: At the NYS Regents' meeting in Albany on Jan. 12th, the Regents adopted the proposed Strategic Plan for Science. This plan serves as a guide for New York State to transition to new Science Standards. The Regents adopted a plan to develop standards. They did not adopt Standards.

<http://www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/2015Meetings/January/115p12a1.pdf>

Question: Does this mean we are going to be adopting the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS)?

Answer: Not necessarily. On page 6 of the document that includes the Strategic Plan for Science (pdf), the NYS Education Department states that various groups agree that it is a good idea to make a NYS version of the NGSS. We won't know exactly how that will look until stakeholders are convened and are given direction. The pdf goes on to describe the first timeline (for 2015-16) to develop and propose new science standards to the Board of Regents. Though the timeline can be altered by the Regents, this is what it says:

"In accordance with the Statewide Strategic Plan for Science, Department staff would like to convene stakeholders to begin a process focused on developing new New York State Science Learning Standards. The following proposed timeline will guide the process:

- Winter 2015
 - Determine core science content, conceptual understandings, and practices required of all students.
 - Benchmark student expectations.
 - Determine architecture of standards document.
- Spring 2015
 - Write draft standards.
- Summer 2015
 - Post draft standards for stakeholder review and comment.
- Fall 2015
 - Revise standards, based on review and comment.
- Winter 2016
 - Propose science learning standards for Board of Regents' adoption."

Question: Does this mean that the NGSS are no longer relevant?

Answer: Absolutely not. The NGSS are extremely relevant and a thorough understanding of both the NGSS and the Framework for K-12 Science Education will be integral to the development of new Science Standards.

Question: Other than the NYS Education Department, who else authored the plan? Was it the Science Consortium? Other science teachers?

Answer: The beginning of the pdf document provides background information regarding the history of the Strategic Plan and which groups had an opportunity to look at it. Three distinct groups are listed in Appendix A, which appears beginning on page 8. All of those people had eyes on the document as well as an opportunity for revision. On page 22, you'll see a position paper from the NYS Science Education Consortium providing support for the Strategic Plan. The folks who signed the Consortium position paper include quite a few of the Science Teachers Association for New York State (STANYS) Directors at Large and other STANYS members – who are largely teachers. The Consortium members all worked together to provide significant edits to the document.

Question: **What exactly does the plan do?**

Answer: It provides an organized plan for action over the course of the next five years. The Strategic Plan is divided into six topic areas which each have goals and objectives. The topic areas are: Standards, Curriculum, Professional Development to Enhance Instruction, Assessment, Materials and Resource Support, and Administrative and Community Support.

Question: **Won't this just be "business as usual" in science?**

Answer: It shouldn't be. There are many shifts from current practice to future practice described in the NGSS. If it is used as a guidance document, there should be quite a few changes to the professional practice of teachers of science.

Question: **What are the next steps we should take to prepare for this change?**

Answer: It is time for teachers and for school districts to become more informed about the NYS Strategic Plan for Science as well as the NGSS and the Framework for K-12 Science Education. At this point, we do not know the specifics of content to be taught in New York State, however, the NGSS three strands of core science content, conceptual understandings and practices required of all students are directly mentioned in the pdf document.

Just recently, a great resource was published by the National Research Council and is available for a free download. It is the "Guide to Implementing the Next Generation Science Standards." Regardless of the type of changes that occur in New York State Science Standards, there is some terrific guidance here: http://www.nap.edu/openbook.php?record_id=18802

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1/13/2015