

NEXT GEN SCIENCE STANDARDS

NEXT GEN SCIENCE STANDARDS REPRESENT A TRANSFORMATIVE APPROACH TO SCIENCE EDUCATION DESIGNED TO ENHANCE STUDENT UNDERSTANDING AND ENGAGEMENT THROUGH THREE-DIMENSIONAL LEARNING. THESE STANDARDS EMPHASIZE NOT ONLY THE ACQUISITION OF SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE BUT ALSO THE DEVELOPMENT OF CRITICAL THINKING, PROBLEM-SOLVING, AND INQUIRY SKILLS. BY INTEGRATING DISCIPLINARY CORE IDEAS, SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING PRACTICES, AND CROSSCUTTING CONCEPTS, THE NEXT GENERATION SCIENCE STANDARDS (NGSS) AIM TO PREPARE STUDENTS FOR COLLEGE, CAREERS, AND INFORMED CITIZENSHIP IN A RAPIDLY EVOLVING SCIENTIFIC LANDSCAPE. THIS ARTICLE EXPLORES THE ORIGINS, STRUCTURE, AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THESE STANDARDS, HIGHLIGHTING THEIR IMPACT ON EDUCATORS AND LEARNERS ALIKE. ADDITIONALLY, IT EXAMINES HOW NGSS ALIGNS WITH CURRENT EDUCATIONAL GOALS AND THE CHALLENGES FACED DURING ADOPTION. THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS PROVIDE A COMPREHENSIVE OVERVIEW OF NEXT GEN SCIENCE STANDARDS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE IN MODERN EDUCATION.

- UNDERSTANDING NEXT GEN SCIENCE STANDARDS
- CORE COMPONENTS OF NGSS
- BENEFITS OF IMPLEMENTING NEXT GEN SCIENCE STANDARDS
- CHALLENGES AND CONSIDERATIONS IN NGSS ADOPTION
- IMPACT ON TEACHING AND LEARNING
- FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR NEXT GEN SCIENCE STANDARDS

UNDERSTANDING NEXT GEN SCIENCE STANDARDS

THE NEXT GENERATION SCIENCE STANDARDS (NGSS) WERE DEVELOPED TO UPDATE AND IMPROVE SCIENCE EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES BY PROVIDING A UNIFIED FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHING SCIENCE ACROSS GRADE LEVELS. CREATED THROUGH A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT AMONG STATES, EDUCATORS, SCIENTISTS, AND POLICYMAKERS, NGSS REFLECT CONTEMPORARY RESEARCH ON HOW STUDENTS LEARN SCIENCE MOST EFFECTIVELY. THE STANDARDS EMPHASIZE A THREE-DIMENSIONAL LEARNING MODEL THAT INTEGRATES KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND CONCEPTS TO PROMOTE DEEPER UNDERSTANDING.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF NGSS

NGSS ORIGINATED FROM THE NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL'S FRAMEWORK FOR K-12 SCIENCE EDUCATION, WHICH LAID THE GROUNDWORK FOR A NEW VISION IN SCIENCE EDUCATION REFORM. RELEASED IN 2013, THE NGSS WERE DESIGNED TO REPLACE PREVIOUS STATE STANDARDS WITH A MORE COHERENT AND RESEARCH-BASED APPROACH. THIS PROCESS INVOLVED EXTENSIVE INPUT FROM VARIOUS STAKEHOLDERS TO ENSURE THE STANDARDS ADDRESS BOTH CURRENT SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE AND EDUCATIONAL BEST PRACTICES.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

THE PRIMARY GOAL OF NEXT GEN SCIENCE STANDARDS IS TO FOSTER SCIENTIFIC LITERACY THAT ENABLES STUDENTS TO APPLY SCIENTIFIC PRINCIPLES IN REAL-WORLD CONTEXTS. NGSS AIMS TO EQUIP STUDENTS WITH THE ABILITY TO THINK CRITICALLY, ENGAGE IN SCIENTIFIC INQUIRY, AND UNDERSTAND THE INTERCONNECTEDNESS OF SCIENTIFIC DISCIPLINES. BY FOCUSING ON CORE IDEAS AND PRACTICES, NGSS PREPARES STUDENTS TO NAVIGATE AND CONTRIBUTE TO A SCIENCE-DRIVEN SOCIETY.

CORE COMPONENTS OF NGSS

THE STRUCTURE OF NEXT GEN SCIENCE STANDARDS IS BUILT AROUND THREE ESSENTIAL DIMENSIONS THAT WORK TOGETHER TO CREATE A COMPREHENSIVE SCIENCE EDUCATION EXPERIENCE. THESE DIMENSIONS GUIDE CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT, INSTRUCTION, AND ASSESSMENT PRACTICES.

DISCIPLINARY CORE IDEAS (DCIs)

DISCIPLINARY CORE IDEAS REPRESENT THE FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS IN PHYSICAL SCIENCES, LIFE SCIENCES, EARTH AND SPACE SCIENCES, AND ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY, AND APPLICATIONS OF SCIENCE. THESE CORE IDEAS ARE DESIGNED TO BE REVISITED AND EXPANDED UPON AS STUDENTS PROGRESS THROUGH GRADES, ALLOWING FOR INCREASING COMPLEXITY AND DEPTH OF UNDERSTANDING.

SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING PRACTICES

NGSS EMPHASIZES ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT IN PRACTICES SUCH AS ASKING QUESTIONS, DEVELOPING MODELS, PLANNING AND CARRYING OUT INVESTIGATIONS, ANALYZING DATA, AND CONSTRUCTING EXPLANATIONS. THESE PRACTICES MIRROR THE WORK OF SCIENTISTS AND ENGINEERS, HELPING STUDENTS DEVELOP SKILLS NECESSARY FOR SCIENTIFIC INQUIRY AND PROBLEM-SOLVING.

CROSSCUTTING CONCEPTS

CROSSCUTTING CONCEPTS PROVIDE A FRAMEWORK FOR CONNECTING KNOWLEDGE ACROSS DIFFERENT SCIENTIFIC DISCIPLINES. EXAMPLES INCLUDE PATTERNS, CAUSE AND EFFECT, SYSTEMS AND SYSTEM MODELS, AND ENERGY AND MATTER. THESE CONCEPTS HELP STUDENTS RECOGNIZE THE INTERCONNECTED NATURE OF SCIENCE AND APPLY THEIR LEARNING IN VARIOUS CONTEXTS.

INTEGRATION OF THE THREE DIMENSIONS

THE INNOVATIVE ASPECT OF NGSS LIES IN THE INTEGRATION OF THESE THREE DIMENSIONS WITHIN LEARNING STANDARDS AND ASSESSMENTS. THIS APPROACH ENCOURAGES STUDENTS TO SIMULTANEOUSLY APPLY DISCIPLINARY KNOWLEDGE, ENGAGE IN SCIENTIFIC PRACTICES, AND RELATE CONCEPTS ACROSS DOMAINS.

BENEFITS OF IMPLEMENTING NEXT GEN SCIENCE STANDARDS

ADOPTION OF NEXT GEN SCIENCE STANDARDS OFFERS NUMEROUS ADVANTAGES FOR STUDENTS, EDUCATORS, AND THE BROADER EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM. THESE BENEFITS ALIGN WITH THE GOALS OF IMPROVING SCIENCE LITERACY AND PREPARING STUDENTS FOR FUTURE CHALLENGES.

ENHANCED STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

NGSS PROMOTES HANDS-ON, INQUIRY-BASED LEARNING THAT INCREASES STUDENT INTEREST AND MOTIVATION IN SCIENCE SUBJECTS. THE EMPHASIS ON REAL-WORLD APPLICATIONS AND PROBLEM-SOLVING MAKES SCIENCE MORE RELEVANT AND ACCESSIBLE.

IMPROVED CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

BY FOCUSING ON SCIENTIFIC PRACTICES AND CROSSCUTTING CONCEPTS, NGSS ENCOURAGES STUDENTS TO THINK ANALYTICALLY AND DEVELOP REASONING SKILLS ESSENTIAL FOR UNDERSTANDING COMPLEX SCIENTIFIC PHENOMENA AND MAKING EVIDENCE-BASED DECISIONS.

ALIGNMENT WITH COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS

THE STANDARDS ARE DESIGNED TO PREPARE STUDENTS FOR POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION AND CAREERS IN STEM FIELDS. NGSS SUPPORTS THE DEVELOPMENT OF SKILLS VALUED IN THE WORKFORCE, SUCH AS COLLABORATION, COMMUNICATION, AND TECHNOLOGICAL LITERACY.

SUPPORT FOR EQUITY AND INCLUSION

NEXT GEN SCIENCE STANDARDS PROMOTE EQUITABLE SCIENCE EDUCATION BY PROVIDING CLEAR, CONSISTENT EXPECTATIONS AND ENCOURAGING INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES THAT SUPPORT DIVERSE LEARNERS. THIS APPROACH HELPS REDUCE ACHIEVEMENT GAPS AND FOSTERS INCLUSIVITY.

CHALLENGES AND CONSIDERATIONS IN NGSS ADOPTION

DESPITE THE ADVANTAGES, THE IMPLEMENTATION OF NEXT GEN SCIENCE STANDARDS POSES SEVERAL CHALLENGES THAT SCHOOLS AND EDUCATORS MUST ADDRESS TO ACHIEVE SUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES.

RESOURCE AND TRAINING NEEDS

EFFECTIVE NGSS IMPLEMENTATION REQUIRES SUBSTANTIAL INVESTMENT IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS, AND CLASSROOM RESOURCES. EDUCATORS NEED TRAINING TO ADAPT TO THE NEW INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACHES AND ASSESSMENTS.

CURRICULUM ALIGNMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

TRANSITIONING TO NGSS OFTEN INVOLVES REVISING EXISTING CURRICULA AND INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES TO ALIGN WITH THE THREE-DIMENSIONAL LEARNING MODEL. THIS PROCESS CAN BE TIME-CONSUMING AND REQUIRES COORDINATION AMONG CURRICULUM DEVELOPERS, TEACHERS, AND ADMINISTRATORS.

ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

DEVELOPING ASSESSMENTS THAT ACCURATELY MEASURE STUDENT PROFICIENCY IN THE INTEGRATED DIMENSIONS OF NGSS IS COMPLEX. SCHOOLS MUST BALANCE STANDARDIZED TESTING REQUIREMENTS WITH THE NEED FOR AUTHENTIC, PERFORMANCE-BASED EVALUATIONS.

VARIABILITY IN STATE ADOPTION

SINCE NGSS ADOPTION IS VOLUNTARY, STATES AND DISTRICTS VARY IN THEIR LEVEL OF COMMITMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES, LEADING TO INCONSISTENCIES IN SCIENCE EDUCATION QUALITY ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

IMPACT ON TEACHING AND LEARNING

THE INTRODUCTION OF NEXT GEN SCIENCE STANDARDS HAS TRANSFORMED BOTH TEACHING METHODOLOGIES AND STUDENT LEARNING EXPERIENCES IN SCIENCE CLASSROOMS NATIONWIDE.

SHIFT TOWARD INQUIRY-BASED INSTRUCTION

TEACHERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO FACILITATE INQUIRY AND EXPLORATION RATHER THAN RELYING SOLELY ON MEMORIZATION OF FACTS. THIS PEDAGOGICAL SHIFT SUPPORTS DEEPER CONCEPTUAL UNDERSTANDING AND STUDENT-DRIVEN DISCOVERY.

COLLABORATIVE AND INTERDISCIPLINARY LEARNING

NGSS FOSTERS COLLABORATION AMONG STUDENTS AND INTEGRATION OF SCIENCE WITH OTHER SUBJECTS SUCH AS MATHEMATICS AND ENGINEERING, PROMOTING A HOLISTIC EDUCATIONAL APPROACH.

ENHANCED USE OF TECHNOLOGY AND MODELING

INCORPORATING TECHNOLOGY TOOLS AND COMPUTER-BASED MODELS IS A KEY FEATURE OF NGSS-ALIGNED INSTRUCTION, ENABLING STUDENTS TO VISUALIZE COMPLEX PROCESSES AND ENGAGE WITH DATA MORE EFFECTIVELY.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR NEXT GEN SCIENCE STANDARDS

AS EDUCATIONAL NEEDS EVOLVE, NEXT GEN SCIENCE STANDARDS WILL CONTINUE TO ADAPT TO SUPPORT INNOVATION AND EXCELLENCE IN SCIENCE EDUCATION.

ONGOING REVISIONS AND UPDATES

REGULAR UPDATES TO NGSS WILL ENSURE ALIGNMENT WITH NEW SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERIES AND EMERGING EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH, MAINTAINING THE STANDARDS' RELEVANCE AND EFFECTIVENESS.

EXPANDED FOCUS ON ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIETAL ISSUES

FUTURE ITERATIONS OF NGSS ARE LIKELY TO PLACE GREATER EMPHASIS ON SUSTAINABILITY, CLIMATE CHANGE, AND THE SOCIETAL IMPLICATIONS OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, PREPARING STUDENTS TO ADDRESS GLOBAL CHALLENGES.

INTEGRATION WITH DIGITAL LEARNING PLATFORMS

THE ROLE OF DIGITAL AND REMOTE LEARNING RESOURCES WILL EXPAND, PROVIDING FLEXIBLE, PERSONALIZED SCIENCE EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES THAT ALIGN WITH NGSS GOALS.

STRENGTHENING EQUITY AND ACCESS

EFFORTS TO CLOSE OPPORTUNITY GAPS AND SUPPORT UNDERREPRESENTED STUDENTS IN SCIENCE WILL REMAIN A PRIORITY, WITH NGSS SERVING AS A FOUNDATION FOR INCLUSIVE SCIENCE EDUCATION INITIATIVES.

- COMPREHENSIVE TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAMS
- DEVELOPMENT OF NGSS-ALIGNED INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES
- INNOVATIVE ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES
- COLLABORATION AMONG EDUCATORS, SCIENTISTS, AND POLICYMAKERS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT ARE THE NEXT GENERATION SCIENCE STANDARDS (NGSS)?

THE NEXT GENERATION SCIENCE STANDARDS (NGSS) ARE A SET OF K-12 SCIENCE CONTENT STANDARDS DEVELOPED TO IMPROVE SCIENCE EDUCATION FOR ALL STUDENTS BY EMPHASIZING SCIENTIFIC PRACTICES, CROSSCUTTING CONCEPTS, AND CORE IDEAS.

HOW DO NGSS DIFFER FROM PREVIOUS SCIENCE EDUCATION STANDARDS?

NGSS FOCUS ON INTEGRATING THREE DIMENSIONS: SCIENTIFIC PRACTICES, CROSSCUTTING CONCEPTS, AND DISCIPLINARY CORE IDEAS, PROMOTING A MORE HOLISTIC AND INQUIRY-BASED APPROACH COMPARED TO TRADITIONAL CONTENT-FOCUSED STANDARDS.

WHY WERE THE NEXT GENERATION SCIENCE STANDARDS DEVELOPED?

NGSS WERE DEVELOPED TO ADDRESS GAPS IN SCIENCE EDUCATION, INCORPORATE ADVANCES IN SCIENTIFIC UNDERSTANDING AND PEDAGOGY, AND BETTER PREPARE STUDENTS FOR COLLEGE, CAREERS, AND CITIZENSHIP IN A SCIENCE-DRIVEN WORLD.

WHICH STATES HAVE ADOPTED THE NGSS?

AS OF NOW, OVER 20 STATES AND SEVERAL TERRITORIES HAVE ADOPTED THE NGSS OR STANDARDS BASED ON THEM, INCLUDING CALIFORNIA, NEW YORK, AND ILLINOIS, AMONG OTHERS.

HOW DO NGSS SUPPORT STEM EDUCATION?

NGSS SUPPORT STEM EDUCATION BY INTEGRATING SCIENCE WITH TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, AND MATHEMATICS PRACTICES, ENCOURAGING PROBLEM-SOLVING, CRITICAL THINKING, AND REAL-WORLD APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE.

WHAT AGE GROUPS DO THE NGSS COVER?

THE NGSS COVER SCIENCE EDUCATION STANDARDS FOR STUDENTS FROM KINDERGARTEN THROUGH 12TH GRADE (K-12).

HOW DO TEACHERS IMPLEMENT NGSS IN THE CLASSROOM?

TEACHERS IMPLEMENT NGSS BY DESIGNING LESSONS THAT INCORPORATE SCIENTIFIC INQUIRY, HANDS-ON EXPERIMENTS, CROSSCUTTING CONCEPTS, AND CONNECTING SCIENCE CONTENT TO REAL-WORLD PHENOMENA.

WHAT ROLE DO CROSSCUTTING CONCEPTS PLAY IN NGSS?

CROSSCUTTING CONCEPTS IN NGSS HELP STUDENTS SEE CONNECTIONS ACROSS DIFFERENT SCIENTIFIC DISCIPLINES, SUCH AS PATTERNS, CAUSE AND EFFECT, AND SYSTEMS, FOSTERING DEEPER UNDERSTANDING AND TRANSFER OF KNOWLEDGE.

HOW CAN PARENTS SUPPORT THEIR CHILDREN'S LEARNING UNDER NGSS?

PARENTS CAN SUPPORT NGSS LEARNING BY ENCOURAGING CURIOSITY, PROVIDING ACCESS TO SCIENCE RESOURCES AND EXPERIENCES, DISCUSSING SCIENTIFIC TOPICS AT HOME, AND COLLABORATING WITH TEACHERS TO REINFORCE SCIENCE PRACTICES.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

1. *NEXT GENERATION SCIENCE STANDARDS: FOR STATES, BY STATES*

THIS COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE PROVIDES AN IN-DEPTH LOOK AT THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEXT GENERATION SCIENCE STANDARDS (NGSS). IT EXPLAINS THE RATIONALE BEHIND THE STANDARDS AND OFFERS PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR EDUCATORS TO INTEGRATE THEM INTO THEIR CLASSROOMS. THE BOOK ALSO INCLUDES CASE STUDIES FROM STATES THAT HAVE ADOPTED NGSS, HIGHLIGHTING SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES.

2. *TEACHING SCIENCE WITH NGSS: A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR K-12 EDUCATORS*

DESIGNED FOR TEACHERS, THIS BOOK OFFERS ACTIONABLE METHODS TO ALIGN LESSON PLANS WITH NGSS. IT PROVIDES CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES, ASSESSMENT TOOLS, AND TIPS FOR FOSTERING STUDENT INQUIRY AND CRITICAL THINKING. THE BOOK EMPHASIZES HANDS-ON LEARNING AND THE INTEGRATION OF SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING PRACTICES.

3. *UNDERSTANDING THE NEXT GENERATION SCIENCE STANDARDS*

THIS BOOK BREAKS DOWN THE NGSS FRAMEWORK INTO UNDERSTANDABLE SEGMENTS FOR EDUCATORS AND ADMINISTRATORS. IT CLARIFIES THE THREE DIMENSIONS OF NGSS: DISCIPLINARY CORE IDEAS, SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING PRACTICES, AND CROSSCUTTING CONCEPTS. READERS GAIN INSIGHT INTO HOW THESE DIMENSIONS WORK TOGETHER TO IMPROVE SCIENCE EDUCATION.

4. *NGSS AND STEM INTEGRATION: ENHANCING SCIENCE EDUCATION*

FOCUSING ON THE INTERSECTION OF NGSS AND STEM EDUCATION, THIS TITLE EXPLORES STRATEGIES TO BLEND SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, AND MATH IN MEANINGFUL WAYS. IT OFFERS PROJECT-BASED LEARNING EXAMPLES THAT MEET NGSS CRITERIA WHILE PROMOTING COLLABORATION AND INNOVATION. THE BOOK IS IDEAL FOR EDUCATORS LOOKING TO CREATE INTERDISCIPLINARY STEM CURRICULA.

5. *ASSESSING STUDENT LEARNING IN THE ERA OF NGSS*

ASSESSMENT IS CRITICAL IN THE NGSS FRAMEWORK, AND THIS BOOK DELVES INTO DESIGNING EFFECTIVE EVALUATION TOOLS. IT DISCUSSES FORMATIVE AND SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENTS THAT ALIGN WITH NGSS PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS. EDUCATORS WILL FIND GUIDANCE ON USING ASSESSMENTS TO TRACK STUDENT PROGRESS AND INFORM INSTRUCTION.

6. *EQUITY AND ACCESS IN NGSS IMPLEMENTATION*

THIS BOOK ADDRESSES THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN ENSURING ALL STUDENTS BENEFIT FROM NGSS-ALIGNED EDUCATION. IT PROVIDES STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT DIVERSE LEARNERS, INCLUDING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES. THE FOCUS IS ON CREATING INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS THAT FOSTER EQUITY IN SCIENCE LEARNING.

7. *ENGINEERING IN THE NEXT GENERATION SCIENCE STANDARDS*

HIGHLIGHTING THE ROLE OF ENGINEERING PRACTICES WITHIN NGSS, THIS BOOK OFFERS APPROACHES TO INTEGRATE ENGINEERING CONCEPTS INTO SCIENCE INSTRUCTION. IT PRESENTS REAL-WORLD PROBLEMS AND ENGINEERING DESIGN CHALLENGES THAT ENGAGE STUDENTS IN CRITICAL THINKING AND CREATIVITY. TEACHERS WILL FIND RESOURCES TO HELP STUDENTS DEVELOP PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS.

8. *CURRICULUM DESIGN FOR NGSS: BUILDING COHERENT SCIENCE PROGRAMS*

THIS RESOURCE GUIDES EDUCATORS AND CURRICULUM DEVELOPERS IN CREATING SCIENCE PROGRAMS ALIGNED WITH NGSS. IT EMPHASIZES VERTICAL AND HORIZONTAL COHERENCE ACROSS GRADE LEVELS AND DISCIPLINES. THE BOOK INCLUDES TEMPLATES AND PLANNING TOOLS TO AID IN THE SYSTEMATIC DEVELOPMENT OF SCIENCE CURRICULA.

9. *PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR NGSS EDUCATORS*

FOCUSED ON TEACHER TRAINING, THIS BOOK OUTLINES EFFECTIVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT MODELS TO SUPPORT NGSS ADOPTION. IT HIGHLIGHTS COLLABORATIVE LEARNING COMMUNITIES, COACHING, AND REFLECTIVE PRACTICES. THE GOAL IS TO EQUIP EDUCATORS WITH THE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS NEEDED TO IMPLEMENT NGSS EFFECTIVELY IN THEIR CLASSROOMS.

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