



Resolution No 16-037 Directing the District to Deemphasize the Science CST

WHEREAS, in 2013, the California Department of Education (CDE) adopted the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) as the new state science standards;

WHEREAS, the NGSS are a radical change from the previous California Science Standards, requiring a different set of practices, skills, and pedagogical strategies;

WHEREAS, the NGSS reflect a “knowledge in practice” view of science, which is not only closer to what actual scientists do, but also better prepares students for the rigor of upper-level science courses, college success, and career skills;

WHEREAS, the Berkeley Unified School District (BUSD) has started a transition to NGSS, invested significant resources in professional development for teachers to teach the new standards, and begun to develop course sequencing that is consistent with the new standards, with a goal of full implementation of the NGSS by the 2018-19 school year;

WHEREAS, the NGSS-based science classes in BUSD will be less discipline-specific and more integrated across disciplines, which will better enable students to study interdisciplinary science topics such as Earth history, marine science, climate change, and astrobiology, all of which are highly relevant today;

WHEREAS, once the NGSS are fully implemented in BUSD, our science curriculum throughout K-12 will be more integrated, emphasize science and engineering practices, insist on a more inquiry-based brand of teacher facilitation, and provide for new opportunities to use demonstration or practice/project-oriented modes of assessing student growth;

WHEREAS, new California state science assessments that are aligned with the NGSS are in development but will not be operational until the 2018-19 school year;

WHEREAS, the Science California Standards Test (CST) is a pencil-and-paper, multiple-choice test based on California's old science content standards, which were adopted in 1998;

WHEREAS, the Science CST is not aligned with the NGSS, nor is it based on Common Core Standards;

WHEREAS, the CDE has stated that "because the current science tests are not aligned with the [NGSS], the results will not be used in any accountability reports; however, the scores will be publicly available";

WHEREAS, the CDE has confirmed that "Science is not included in AYP calculations";

WHEREAS, due to federal regulations, California public school districts are nevertheless mandated to administer the CST test in science for students in grades 5, 8 and 10.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that teachers, principals, and District administrators in the Berkeley Unified School District are directed to deemphasize the current Science CST assessments and refrain from spending class time, or using homework, to prepare for the content of the Science CST.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, to avoid any misinterpretation of the test results, messaging consistent with this resolution be provided publicly to families and the community both before the test is administered and when the results are sent home.

APPROVED AND ADOPTED, this 20th day of April, 2016.

Judy Appel, Clerk
Board of Education