

# POLITICO

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## REGENTS SET TO ADOPT NEW STATE SCIENCE LEARNING STANDARDS

By Keshia Clukey 02:45 PM

ALBANY — Schools statewide will begin implementing new state science learning standards starting in fall 2017, the state Education Department and Board of Regents announced Monday.

Revising the P-12 standards has taken five-years, as state education leaders [tried to avoid](#) the controversy surrounding the math and English language arts Common Core learning standards. Those math and ELA standards were rolled out quickly as the state competed for federal Race To The Top dollars, which became a major point of conflict with teachers feeling left out of the process and critics saying testing began before schools had the proper resources and time to properly prepare students.

Last spring, more than 21 percent of eligible third- through eighth-grade students refused to take the Common Core-aligned math and ELA exams.

“The Board and the Department took a measured, years-long approach to making sure we got it right in updating the state’s science learning standards,” Regents Chancellor Betty Rosa said in a news release Monday. “These standards give all our children the best possible opportunities to succeed, while also giving educators the flexibility to design classroom experiences that stimulate students’ interest and prepare them for the future.”

The board is expected to vote to adopt the new standards Tuesday.

The state science standards, which are based on the national Next Generation Science Standards, would be reflected in state tests in the 2020-21 school year for fifth and eighth grades, according to a timeline presented to the board at its June meeting. The Regents exams would then be administered in the 2021-22 school year, according to the timeline.

Unlike the Common Core, there is no federal funding or mandates around implementing revised science standards, and the science standards are not required for use in the accountability system, Okhee Lee, professor of childhood education at New York University's Steinhardt School, told POLITICO New York.

The process of revising and adopting the new standards included two public surveys, feedback from teachers, school and district administrators, according to the release. A statewide leadership team, science education steering committee and Science Education Consortium served as advisers to the process. The teams and consortium are also working with districts and the state on best implementation practices and how to align curriculum to the new standards. They also will take into consideration changes made to the math and ELA learning standards, which are currently being revised.

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In updating its standards, New York joins several states pushing nationally for updated science standards, with the previous generation of standards nearly two decades old, Lee said in an interview earlier this year.

The new standards are based on a redesign of the science discipline, making connections to math and ELA, and a different way of thinking in an age when students have access to evolving technology and the Internet, said Lee, a member of the team that helped write the national standards.

"Science has always been [based] traditionally on content that we just study," she said. "The new standards actually change that equation quite drastically. The idea is that if you can find information on Google or on your cell phone...it's not worth spending school time."

The standards instead focus on having students studying and finding out why something happens and then communicating their findings using diagrams, charts and models, further explaining what they know and how they know it, she said.

In a statement on the new standards, State Education Commissioner MaryEllen Elia said "It's essential that our standards evolve to provide equitable learning opportunities so all students can benefit."

View the new state sciences standards here: <http://bit.ly/2hm5yFV> and the proposal here: <http://bit.ly/2hmcymh>.

*To view online:*

<http://www.politico.com/states/new-york/albany/story/2016/12/regents-set-to-adopt-new-state-science-learning-standards-107989>

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