

Strengthening Science Education and Environmental Literacy in California's New Era Of Local Control: The Toolkit

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For Local Advocates & Community Stakeholders: ASSESSING DISTRICT SUPPORT FOR SCIENCE EDUCATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEXT GENERATION SCIENCE STANDARDS (NGSS)

This document provides a series of questions designed to help parents, students, educators, community partners and business leaders quickly assess what the major strengths and challenges are for science education in your district, identify opportunities for investment, and determine whether your district's existing Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) is, or is not, addressing those opportunities. While the answers to these questions will lead to recommendations you can advocate to your district leadership, they can also be useful as a guide to engage in discussions with district and site leaders to develop robust solutions to improve science teaching and learning beyond the LCAP.

District Science Program	Is it being addressed in the LCAP?
Question 1: Does the district currently have a K-12 science program where science teaching and learning is happening regularly in all classrooms, at all grade levels?	How is science and NGSS being addressed in the LCAP (e.g., adequate time for science in elementary grades, available secondary science coursework and course pathways, etc.)?
Question 2: Are there participation and achievement gaps in science among high need student groups?	If so, how do the LCAP priorities and services address these gaps?
Question 3: Does the district have a comprehensive plan for implementing NGSS?	How are the supports necessary to implement the NGSS being addressed in the LCAP? (e.g., curricular resources, professional learning, materials acquisition, facilities for laboratory science, resources for environmental/outdoor learning experiences, etc.)
Question 4: What kind of science instruction is happening in classrooms? How are data being gathered and how is the data being used?	Are science data that assess the quantity and quality of science teaching and learning being used as measures and/or metrics reported in the LCAP?
Question 5: To what extent is the environment used as a context for science teaching and learning in the classroom? Are there opportunities for environmental learning activities on campus (e.g. school gardens, green learning spaces), through community outdoor spaces, or off-campus facilities (e.g., residential outdoor science schools and nature centers) to support and reinforce science learning?	Does the LCAP contain support for the use of environmental education as a strategy for science learning in your district?



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Question 6: What role will technology play in the teaching and learning of science/NGSS (e.g., what is available, what is adequate, what is missing)?	How are technology needs and supports for science being addressed in the LCAP?
Question 7: What additional supports will teachers, schools, and district administrators need to implement NGSS (e.g., professional learning opportunities around engineering design, environmental literacy and other newer aspects of the standards)?	How is the district investing in additional supports for science in the LCAP? (e.g., professional learning, coaching, curricular and instructional support staff, resources for field-based experiences for students, etc.)
Question 8: How is the district integrating science with other existing district plans, programs and initiatives to ensure that students are prepared for college and careers upon high school graduation?	Is the integration of science with other district initiatives apparent in the LCAP? (e.g., professional learning for teachers around the convergence of Common Core and NGSS, use of science in the district English Language Learner support program, incorporation of environmental literacy, project-based learning, Linked Learning centered on science, etc.)
Question 9: In what ways is the district building relationships with and accessing partnerships, such as with scientists, museums, community-based providers of science and environmental education, colleges/universities, and business and civic leadership in the region that can advocate for science?	Are there existing district-community partnerships around science? Is there support in the LCAP for the development or expansion of district-community partnerships around science?
Question 10: How are parents and key stakeholders in the community being engaged to support science and build momentum for a shift that is truly best for students?	Does the LCAP include explicit plans to engage parents and community stakeholders around science education?