

Iowa Science Standards Proposed Strategic Plan

Rationale: Iowa adopted new science standards on August 6, 2015. The Science Standards Review Team recommended these standards after a comprehensive process including reviewing existing standards, gathering public feedback, and addressing concerns. The following strategic plan was designed to engage Iowa students, parents, teachers, administrators, and the public as partners as Iowa embarks on the implementation process. The plan addresses communication, professional development, and expectations with the ultimate goal of educators teaching and assessing, and students learning the new standards.

Email and Announcement: Partnering with the Iowa Academy of Science, an introductory email will be sent to the field through the AEA science consultants and Iowa Academy of Science membership to congratulate the science learning community highlighting the process, professional learning opportunities, and expectations.

Website Development: Following State Board adoption, the new science standards were posted on the Iowa Department of Education website. A small group of review team representatives will convene to work to create a format for standards on iowacore.gov, and lessons on iowalearns.org.

Parent Guides: Representatives from the Science Review Team are currently updating the Parent Guides for science that are posted on the Department website. They will be available in English and Spanish.

Iowa Science Standards Kick-Off: In conjunction with the University of Iowa and Grand View University, the Department will host a day of learning on October 20, 2015 for leaders in the science learning community. Administrators, curriculum directors, AEA consultants, teacher leaders, and professors will be invited. The goal for this meeting will be to orient leaders to the new standards and prepare them to support classroom implementation. The University of Iowa will bring in one of the writers of the Next Generation Science Standards to provide an overview and discuss best practice. The event will be streamed live with a link on the DE website.

AEA and LEA Professional Development: To prepare AEA consultants and LEA curriculum leaders to deliver professional development throughout the state this year, a two-day training will be conducted at Grand View University on September 28-29. This will be led by the Science Writing Committee. It will also happen in subsequent years: August 8-9, 2016, and August 7-8, 2017. The AEA consultants will deliver professional development for three initial years and in the future to districts and teachers. A survey will be given at the end of the first year to the field to identify needs and target districts needing additional support.

Webinars: In conjunction with our science standards implementation partner, Achieve, webinars based on specific requests (ie: grade-band specific, gifted and talented population, etc.) will be offered. These will be led by a national expert on the specific identified topic.

Summer Symposiums-Teaching the Standards: On June 15-17, 2016 and June 14, 2018, a symposium for teachers will be held for teachers. National experts in science and the new standards will be invited. The goal is to provide professional development with national experts in job-alike groups: after school providers, elementary teachers, middle school teachers, and high school teachers. Guidance for the event will be from the Science Steering Committee and the professional development work team on the Science Leadership Team. In June 2019, AEAs will hold regional symposiums with a focus on reflection.

Timeline and Expectations: The implementation of the Iowa science standards will be a multi-year process:
Exploration and Awareness and Statewide Capacity Building 2015-2016
Classroom Transitions, Shifts, and Practices 2016-2017
Leveraging Materials, Resources, and Expertise 2017-2018
Full K-12 Implementation 2018-2019

Because of unique nature of the assigned middle school/junior high grade level standards, the implementation process must include at least one grade by 2018-2019; a second grade level must be included by 2019-20, etc. A more detailed implementation plan with specific expectations during each transition year will be forthcoming by the Department of Education. The Assessment Task Force is reconvening to determine a recommended approach for the adoption of a science assessment.