

Preparing Students for a Lifetime of Success

Understanding New
Science Standards
for Grades 9-12

How will we prepare students for academic success?

Our state has adopted new standards based on the *Framework for K-12 Science Education* because we understand that a robust science education in high school will pave the way for increased opportunities in college and future careers.

The Tennessee Academic Standards for Science enable our teachers to offer all students interactive science instruction that promotes analysis and interpretation of data, critical thinking, problem solving, and connections across science disciplines—with a high set of expectations for achievement in grades 9–12.

A quality science education can help expand opportunities for all our students.

These science standards complement our English/Language Arts and mathematics standards, enabling classroom instruction to reflect a clearer picture of the real world, where solving problems often requires skills and knowledge from multiple disciplines. Further, these standards are designed to benefit and engage all students, whether they currently lack access to a quality science education or already excel in science subjects.











What is our vision for science education?

Tennessee's standards reflect the latest research and advances in modern science. In order to equip students to think critically, analyze information, and solve complex problems, the standards are arranged such that—from elementary through high school—students have multiple opportunities to build on the knowledge and skills gained during each grade, by revisiting important concepts and expanding their understanding of connections across scientific domains. Parents should understand that while some content might be similar to the past, it may look different from how they were taught.

As the current science standards are implemented in schools and districts, they will enable students to:

- Develop a deeper understanding of science beyond memorizing facts, and
- Experience similar scientific and engineering practices as those used by professionals in the field.

Classroom activities in High School will look less like this:	And more like this:
Physical Sciences 	Physical Sciences 
Students learn the periodic table by rote memorization.	Students use the periodic table as a tool to explain and predict the properties of elements.
Students learn that substances combine or react to make new substances.	Students characterize chemical reactions and use that knowledge to explain various biological and geophysical phenomena.
Students calculate energy transfer.	Students design, build, and refine devices to optimize the conversion of energy.
Life Sciences 	Life Sciences 
Students learn the stages of mitosis.	Students create scientific arguments for how mitosis can produce complex organisms with different kinds of body parts.
Students learn about trophic levels in ecosystems.	Students construct explanations for the role of energy in the cycling of matter in organisms and ecosystems.
Students create Punnett squares to learn about Mendelian genetics.	Students use statistics and probability concepts in written essays explaining how traits are expressed in a population.
Earth & Space Sciences 	Earth & Space Sciences 
Students learn about the composition of asteroids and meteors.	Students use evidence from meteorites and other planetary surfaces to form hypotheses about the early history of Earth.
Students learn about different Earth systems, including water systems and weather systems.	Students analyze geoscience data to determine the feedback effects between Earth systems.
Students study different types of natural hazards, such as hurricanes and tornadoes.	Students conduct research to gather data on how different types of natural hazards have influenced human activity.
Engineering Design 	Engineering Design 
Students learn engineering separately from other science disciplines.	Students consider or apply engineering design principles throughout each science course.
Engineering lessons are only offered to some students.	Engineering lessons are offered to all students and each student is encouraged to connect lessons to their own personal experiences.
Engineering lessons are focused on trial and error “building” projects.	Students use their understanding of engineering design concepts to explore major global issues; first breaking them down into smaller problems, then researching and discussing possible solutions that can be tackled with engineering methods.

Reshaping Science Education for All Students

To better prepare Tennessee's students for college and careers, schools need to ensure that quality science education is accessible to all students—regardless of ethnicity or zip code.

In an effort to bolster America's competitive edge in an increasingly global economy, Tennessee developed these standards by working with teachers, higher education, business, and practicing scientists. This collaborative process produced a set of high quality, college- and career-ready K-12 academic standards that set meaningful expectations for student performance and achievement in science. The standards are rich in both content and practice and arranged in a coherent manner across all disciplines and grades.

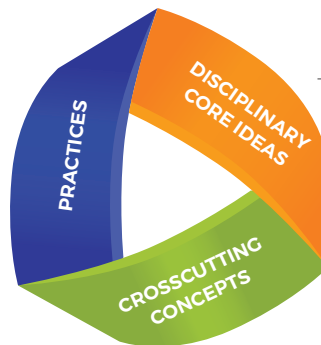


Fact: "Standards" are not "curriculum". "Standards" provide clarity about what students should know and be able to do by the end of each grade level. "Curriculum" refers to how students meet those expectations. Please contact your child's teacher or school if you have questions about their curriculum.

Three Dimensions of Science Learning

The Tennessee Academic Standards for Science emphasizes three distinct, yet equally important dimensions that help students learn science. Each dimension is integrated into the standards and—combined—the three dimensions build a powerful foundation to help students build a cohesive understanding of science over time.

Standard behaviors that scientists and engineers use to explain the world or solve problems



Fundamental scientific knowledge

Frameworks for scientific thinking across disciplines

Support your child's success in the classroom!