



Dear Ballard families,

Beginning in the fall of 2016, the Ballard Science Curriculum Leadership Team (CLT) engaged in a two-year analysis of the Iowa Core Science Standards and the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). In addition to the analysis of the standards, the K-12 Science CLT studied the *Framework for K-12 Science Education* (published by the National Research Council and the National Academy of Sciences), an evidenced-based meta-analysis of the research articulating best practices in science curriculum, instruction, and assessment. As a result of this extensive work, our team developed a K-12 scope and sequence and piloted resources to support those standards. Because of this thorough two-year curriculum review process, we are excited to begin our implementation of the new Iowa Core Science standards this fall.

[According to the Iowa Department of Education,](#)

- The science standards allow students to think of science learning not as memorization of disconnected facts, but as a holistic understanding of integrated and interrelated concepts. This is one of the biggest shifts in the new science standards compared to previous sets of science standards.
- The science standards require students to provide evidence of their learning and will equip students with the critical thinking and analytical skills they need to be successful in college and to compete for today's most rewarding jobs.
- The science standards connect scientific principles to real-world situations, allowing for more engaging and relevant instruction that clearly covers complicated topics.
- The science standards better support educators to make science accessible and interesting to ALL students by connecting learning over multiple years, across disciplines and grades, and by applying crosscutting concepts to deepen students' understanding of core ideas.
- The science standards introduce science at an earlier age when children are asking a lot of questions about the world and how it works. Most kids love science because they are inherently curious and it is an opportunity for them to have fun and learn at the same time.

As a district, this is the first comprehensive analysis of science standards in over 10 years. These standards are much more rigorous and include major advances that have taken place in science since our last review. Not only will the content potentially look different than in the past, but the instructional practices and student assessments will, as well. We are excited about the science learning opportunities our students will engage in moving forward. Your child's teacher can provide more information about science instruction and available resources as we begin the school year. As always, thank you for your involvement!

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