

High School Science, FAQ

Revised: May 16, 2016

When did the discussion about the high school science sequence begin?

The formal, district wide discussion regarding the high school science sequence began during the 2008 – 2009 academic year. The conversation was initiated in the 2007 – 2008 academic year at the high schools, within the science departments and it transitioned to district wide committee work. The discussion and the work of district curriculum teams and administrative participants included an examination of freshmen science classes across the state. A formal presentation was made to the Curriculum & Instruction (C&I) Committee of the Board in December 2014.

Why was the decision made to make Biology the science class for all freshmen?

Traditionally in Cherry Hill, QPS (Quantitative Physical Science) was offered as the freshmen Honors (H) level science class and CPS (Conceptual Physical Science) was offered at the freshmen Accelerated (A) and Regular (R) levels (CPS R level was extinguished after the 2011 – 2012 academic year). QPS and CPS provided very different opportunities to students upon completion of the course work.

When the decision was made for Biology to be the freshmen science class, fewer than 50% of all high school students were completing four years of science. As a result, fewer than 50% of all high school students were exposed to Biology, Chemistry and Physics. All students would benefit from four years of science instruction at the high school level.

Will there be any changes to science at the elementary or middle school levels for the 2016 – 2017 academic year?

The New Jersey Department of Education has mandated that secondary schools (middle and high school) be prepared to implement the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) with the opening of 2016 – 2017 academic year. The elementary schools must be prepared to implement the NGSS with the opening of the 2017 – 2018 academic year. The NGSS provides a focus across three dimensions: Science and Engineering Practices, Crosscutting Concepts, and Disciplinary Core Ideas.

For additional information: <http://www.state.nj.us/education/aps/cccs/science/>

What are science labs and how are they scheduled/conducted at the high school level?

One of the high school graduation requirements in New Jersey is that students must successfully complete three years of lab sciences, one of which must be Biology. All science classes include lab activities, with the number and type of actual lab activities varying by course during an academic year. A science lab is a hands on activity that allows students to “do science,” applying the skills and concepts they are learning in a controlled environment. All high school classes meet four times during the six day schedule: twice for 57 minutes and twice for 86 minutes. It is at the discretion of the teacher when to conduct the lab activities.

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What changes are being made to the high school science program for the 2016 – 2017 academic year?

While curriculum has been revised at the high school level to include the NGSS, the only real “change” to the high school science program for the 2016 -2017 academic year is that all freshmen will take Biology and that QPS and CPS will no longer be offered.

Who will be teaching Biology with the increased number of students who are taking the course in the 2016 – 2017 academic year?

Our district science staff will be teaching the Biology classes. 100% of the teachers who will be teaching Biology are appropriately certified through the New Jersey Department of Education.