



THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK / ALBANY, NY 12234

CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION AND EARLY LEARNING
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TO: District Superintendents
Superintendents of Schools
Public School Administrators
Religious and Independent School Administrators
Charter School Administrators

FROM: Marybeth Casey *Marybeth Casey*
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SUBJECT: Virtual Laboratory Experiences and the 1,200 Minute Science Laboratory Requirement for the 2021-22 School Year

This memo provides guidance on the permissibility of virtual laboratory experiences and the 1,200 laboratory minutes requirement for the upcoming 2021-22 school year.

Laboratory experiences are a vital component of any science course and schools need to ensure their students receive this important instructional experience. Per Commissioner's Regulation §100.5(b)(7), in order to qualify to take a Regents Examination in any of the sciences, a student must complete 1,200 minutes of laboratory experience with satisfactory documented laboratory reports. The regulatory requirement for students to complete 1,200-minutes of laboratory experience with satisfactory laboratory reports for admission to a Regents Examination in science will be in effect for the 2021-22 School Year.

Due to the continued need for flexibility in instructional methodologies for the 2021-22 school year because of the ongoing impact of COVID-19, to be eligible to participate in a science Regents Examination, **students will be able to meet the 1,200-minute science laboratory requirement through hands-on laboratory experiences, virtual laboratory experiences, or a combination of virtual and hands-on laboratory experiences, coupled with completion of satisfactory laboratory reports.** This flexibility pertains to all students, regardless of type of instruction students are receiving (i.e., in-person, hybrid, or remote). This laboratory requirement is in addition to the course requirement.

As a reminder, if a student completed a course culminating in a Regents Examination in science during the 2019-20 or 2020-21 school year but was excused from the 1,200-minute laboratory requirement due to the COVID-19 crisis, the student continues to be eligible for admission into

future test administrations for that specific Regents Examination. The Department is planning to administer the January 2022 and June 2022 Regents Examinations and expects to release the final exam schedules for these exam periods by the end of September. Districts should ensure that students are receiving quality science education that to the greatest extent possible, includes laboratory experiences that prepare students for both the performance and written components of the Regents Examinations.

The school is responsible for aligning laboratory experiences specific to each science course, determining the mode or modes of instruction, and identifying a viable vetted list of acceptable virtual labs or a combination of virtual and hands-on labs that students will complete for each science course that culminates in a Regents Examination. Schools must determine a method for students to record laboratory experiences and complete satisfactory laboratory reports. Questions about the science laboratory requirements may be directed to the Department's Office of Curriculum and Instruction via email to emscurric@nysed.gov.

Questions about required laboratory activities or performance components associated with a Regents Examination or the Regents Examination schedule may be directed to the Department's Office of State Assessment via email to emscassessinfo@nysed.gov.

The Department is grateful to the dedicated educators, school staff, community members, and parents who are working so diligently to ensure that students are safe and well. Please continue to monitor NYSED's [COVID-19 Information site](#) for additional guidance as it becomes available.