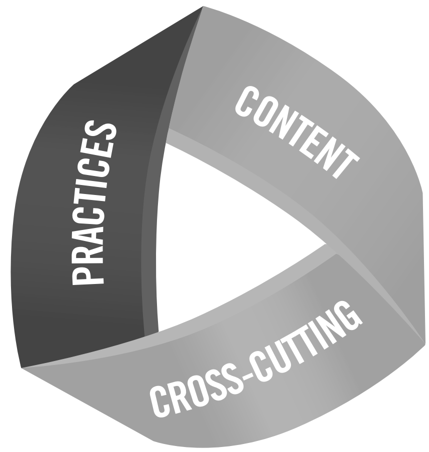
A look at the *Next Generation Science Standards*

By Ted Willard

The final version of the *Next Generation Science Standards* (NGSS) is expected later this spring. Once it is released, educators across the country will need to carefully study the standards as plans are made for adoption and implementation. The following text and diagram below provides an overview on the architecture of the standards.

Overall architecture

NGSS differs from prior science standards in that they integrate three dimensions (science and engineering practices, disciplinary core ideas, and crosscutting concepts) into a single performance expectation and have intentional connections between performance expectations. The system architecture of NGSS highlights the performance expectations as well as each of the three integral dimensions and connections to other grade bands and subjects. The architecture involves a table with three main sections.



What is assessed (performance expectations)

A performance expectation describes what students should be able to do at the end of instruction and incorporates a practice, a disciplinary core idea, and a crosscutting concept from the foundation box. Performance expectations are intended to guide the development of assessments. Groupings of performance expectations do not imply a preferred ordering for instruction—nor should all performance expectations under one topic necessarily be taught in one course. This section also contains *Assessment Boundary Statements* and *Clarification Statements* that are meant to render additional support and clarity to the performance expectations.

Foundation box

The foundation box contains the learning goals that students should achieve. It is critical that science educators consider the foundation box an essential component when reading the NGSS and developing curricula. There are three main parts of the foundation box: science and engineering practices, disciplinary core ideas, and crosscutting concepts, all of which are derived from *A Framework for K–12 Science Education*. During instruction, teachers will need to have students use multiple practices to help students understand the core ideas. Most topical groupings of performance expectations emphasize only a few practices or crosscutting concepts; however, all are emphasized within a grade band. The foundation box also contains learning goals for *Connections to Engineering, Technology, and Applications of Science* and *Connections to the Nature of Science*.

Connection box

The connection box identifies other topics in NGSS and in the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) that are relevant to the performance expectations in this topic. The *Connections to other DCIs in this grade level* contains the names of topics in other science disciplines that have corresponding disciplinary core ideas at the same grade level. The *Articulation of Disciplinary Core Ideas (DCIs) across grade levels* contains the names of other science topics that either provide a foundation for student understanding of the core ideas in this standard (usually standards at prior grade levels) or build on the foundation provided by the core ideas in this standard (usually standards at subsequent grade levels). The *Connections to the Common Core State Standards* contains the coding and names of CCSS in Mathematics and in English Language Arts & Literacy that align to the performance expectations.

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From The Science Teacher, March 2013

Inside the NGSS Box

What is Assessed

A collection of several performance expectations describing what students should be able to do to master this standard.

Foundation Box

The practices, core disciplinary ideas, and crosscutting concepts from *A Framework for K–12 Science Education* that were used to form the performance expectations.

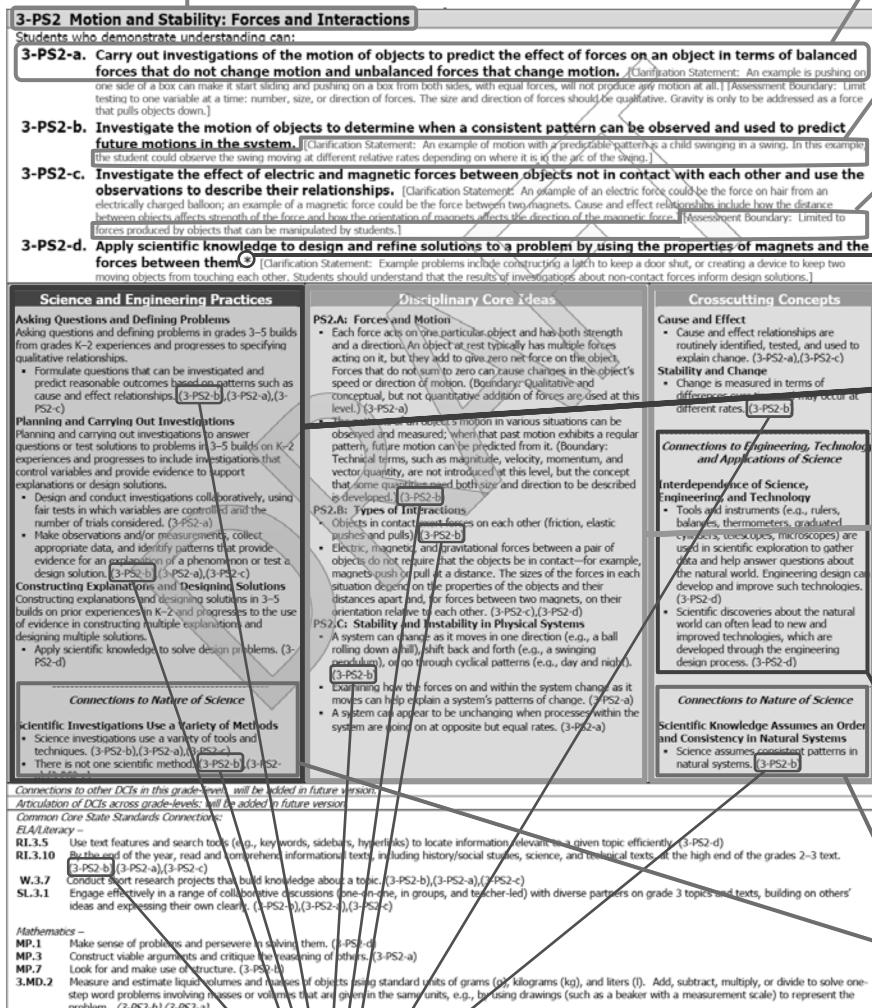
Connection Box

Other standards in the *Next Generation Science Standards* or in the *Common Core State Standards* that are related to this standard.

Based on the January 2013 Draft of NGSS

Title and Code

The titles of standard pages are not necessarily unique and may be reused at several different grade levels. The code, however, is a unique identifier for each set based on the grade level, content area, and topic it addresses.



3-PS2 Motion and Stability: Forces and Interactions

Students who demonstrate understanding can:

3-PS2-a. Carry out investigations of the motion of objects to predict the effect of forces on an object in terms of balanced forces that do not change motion and unbalanced forces that change motion. [Clarification Statement: An example is pushing on one side of a box can make it start sliding and pushing on a box from both sides, with equal forces, will not produce any motion at all.] [Assessment Boundary: Limit testing to one variable at a time: number, size, or direction of forces. The size and direction of forces should be qualitative. Gravity is only to be addressed as a force that pulls objects down.]

3-PS2-b. Investigate the motion of objects to determine when a consistent pattern can be observed and used to predict future motions in the system. [Clarification Statement: An example of motion with a predictable pattern is a child swinging in a swing. In this example the student could observe the swing moving at different relative rates depending on where it is in the arc of the swing.]

3-PS2-c. Investigate the effect of electric and magnetic forces between objects not in contact with each other and use the observations to describe their relationships. [Clarification Statement: An example of an electric force could be the force on hair from an electrically charged balloon; an example of a magnetic force could be the force between two magnets. Cause and effect relationships include how the distance between objects affects strength of the force and how the orientation of magnets affects the direction of the magnetic force.] [Assessment Boundary: Limited to forces produced by objects that can be manipulated by students.]

3-PS2-d. Apply scientific knowledge to design and refine solutions to a problem by using the properties of magnets and the forces between them.* [Clarification Statement: Example problems include constructing a latch to keep a door shut, or creating a device to keep two moving objects from touching each other. Students should understand that the results of investigations about non-contact forces inform design solutions.]

Science and Engineering Practices	Disciplinary Core Ideas	Crosscutting Concepts
Asking Questions and Defining Problems Asking questions and defining problems in grades 3–5 builds from grades K–2 experiences and progresses to specifying qualitative relationships. • Formulate questions that can be investigated and predict reasonable outcomes based on patterns such as cause and effect relationships. (3-PS2-b),(3-PS2-a),(3-PS2-c) **Planning and Carrying Out Investigations** Planning and carrying out investigations to answer questions or test solutions to problems in 3–5 builds on K–2 experiences and progresses to include investigations that control variables and provide evidence to support explanations or design solutions. • Design and conduct investigations collaboratively, using fair tests in which variables are controlled and the number of trials considered. (3-PS2-a) • Make observations and/or measurements, collect appropriate data, and identify patterns that provide evidence for an explanation of a phenomenon or test a design solution. (3-PS2-b),(3-PS2-a),(3-PS2-c) **Constructing Explanations and Designing Solutions** Constructing explanations and designing solutions in 3–5 builds on prior experiences in K–2 and progresses to the use of evidence in constructing multiple explanations and designing multiple solutions. • Apply scientific knowledge to solve design problems. (3-PS2-d) *Connections to Nature of Science* **Scientific Investigations Use a Variety of Methods** • Science investigations use a variety of tools and techniques. (3-PS2-b),(3-PS2-a),(3-PS2-c) • There is not one scientific method. (3-PS2-b),(3-PS2-a)	**PS2.A: Forces and Motion** • Each force acts on one particular object and has both strength and a direction. An object at rest typically has multiple forces acting on it, but they add to give zero net force on the object. Forces that do not sum to zero can cause changes in the object's speed or direction of motion. (Boundary: Qualitative and conceptual, but not quantitative addition of forces are used at this level.) (3-PS2-a) • The patterns of an object's motion in various situations can be observed and measured; when that past motion exhibits a regular pattern, future motion can be predicted from it. (Boundary: Technical terms, such as magnitude, velocity, momentum, and vector quantity, are not introduced at this level, but the concept that some quantities need both size and direction to be described is developed.) (3-PS2-b) **PS2.B: Types of Interactions** • Objects in contact exert forces on each other (friction, elastic pushes and pulls). (3-PS2-b) • Electric, magnetic, and gravitational forces between a pair of objects do not require that the objects be in contact—for example, magnets push or pull at a distance. The sizes of the forces in each situation depend on the properties of the objects and their distances apart and, for forces between two magnets, on their orientation relative to each other. (3-PS2-c),(3-PS2-d) **PS2.C: Stability and Instability in Physical Systems** • A system can change as it moves in one direction (e.g., a ball rolling down a hill), shift back and forth (e.g., a swinging pendulum), or go through cyclical patterns (e.g., day and night). (3-PS2-b) • Examining how the forces on and within the system change as it moves can help explain a system's patterns of change. (3-PS2-a) • A system can appear to be unchanging when processes within the system are going on at opposite but equal rates. (3-PS2-a)	**Cause and Effect** • Cause and effect relationships are routinely identified, tested, and used to explain change. (3-PS2-a),(3-PS2-c) **Stability and Change** • Change is measured in terms of differences over time, and may occur at different rates. (3-PS2-b) *Connections to Engineering, Technology, and Applications of Science* **Interdependence of Science, Engineering, and Technology** • Tools and instruments (e.g., rulers, balances, thermometers, graduated cylinders, telescopes, microscopes) are used in scientific exploration to gather data and help answer questions about the natural world. Engineering design can develop and improve such technologies. (3-PS2-d) • Scientific discoveries about the natural world can often lead to new and improved technologies, which are developed through the engineering design process. (3-PS2-d) *Connections to Nature of Science* **Scientific Knowledge Assumes an Order and Consistency in Natural Systems** • Science assumes consistent patterns in natural systems. (3-PS2-b)

Connections to other DCIs in this grade-level: will be added in future version.
Articulation of DCIs across grade-levels: will be added in future version.
Common Core State Standards Connections:
ELA/Literacy –
RI.3.5 Use text features and search tools (e.g., key words, sidebars, hyperlinks) to locate information relevant to a given topic efficiently. (3-PS2-d)
RI.3.10 By the end of the year, read and comprehend informational texts, including history/social studies, science, and technical texts, at the high end of the grades 2–3 text. (3-PS2-b),(3-PS2-a),(3-PS2-c)
W.3.7 Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic. (3-PS2-b),(3-PS2-a),(3-PS2-c)
SL.3.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 3 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly. (3-PS2-b),(3-PS2-a),(3-PS2-c)
Mathematics –
MP.1 Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them. (3-PS2-d)
MP.3 Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others. (3-PS2-a)
MP.7 Look for and make use of structure. (3-PS2-b)
3.MD.2 Measure and estimate liquid volumes and masses of objects using standard units of grams (g), kilograms (kg), and liters (l). Add, subtract, multiply, or divide to solve one-step word problems involving masses or volumes that are given in the same units, e.g., by using drawings (such as a beaker with a measurement scale) to represent the problem. *(3-PS2-b),(3-PS2-a)*

Performance Expectations

A statement that combines practices, core ideas, and crosscutting concepts together to describe how students can show what they have learned.

Clarification Statement

A statement that supplies examples or additional clarification to the performance expectation.

Assessment Boundary

A statement that provides guidance about the scope of the performance expectation at a particular grade level.

Engineering Connection (*)

An asterisk indicates an engineering connection in the practice, core idea, or crosscutting concept that supports the performance expectation.

Scientific and Engineering Practices

Activities that scientists and engineers engage in to either understand the world or solve a problem.

Disciplinary Core Ideas

Concepts in science and engineering that have broad importance within and across disciplines as well as relevance to people's lives.

Crosscutting Concepts

Ideas, such as *Patterns* and *Cause and Effect*, which are not specific to any one discipline but cut across them all.

Connections to Engineering, Technology, and Applications of Science

These connections are drawn from the disciplinary core ideas for engineering, technology, and applications of science in the *Framework*.

Connections to Nature of Science

Connections are listed in either the practices or the crosscutting connections section of the foundation box.

Codes for Performance Expectations

Codes designate the relevant performance expectation for an item in the foundation box and connection box. In the connections to common core, italics indicate a potential connection rather than a required prerequisite connection.

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