



December 17, 2020

TO: District Superintendents  
Superintendent of Schools  
Public School Administrators  
Religious and Independent School Administrators  
Charter School Administrators

FROM: Steven Katz, Assistant Commissioner- Office of State Assessment  
Marybeth Casey, Assistant Commissioner - Office of Curriculum & Instruction  
and Early Learning

RE: Flexibility in the 1,200 Minute Science Laboratory  
Requirement

Laboratory experiences are a vital component of any science course. While the [school reopening guidance](#) issued by the New York State Education Department (the Department) affords districts some flexibilities in providing laboratory experiences to students, the Department is cognizant that fulfilling the 1,200 minute requirement for admission to a Regents Examination may be extremely challenging given the current inconsistencies in student access to laboratory materials and experiences.

Since the Board of Regents has not yet made decisions about the June and August 2021 administrations of Regents Examinations, students must be prepared for the performance components of the Regents Examinations in science as well as written questions based on the process skills students acquire through science laboratory experiences. While the Department recognizes the vital importance of laboratory experiences in science education, schools may waive the requirement that students complete 1,200 minutes of successful laboratory experiences in order to be admitted into a Regents Examination in science for the following administration dates: January 2021, June 2021, and August 2021. Additionally, with respect to the January 2021 administration that has been canceled and in the event of the cancellation of future Regents Examination administrations, schools will be permitted to waive the requirement that students complete 1,200 minutes of successful laboratory experiences to meet eligibility conditions for exemption from a Regents Examination in science.

**Districts should still ensure that students are receiving quality science education that to the greatest extent possible, includes laboratory experiences that prepare students for t**

Questions about the science laboratory requirements may be directed to the Department's Office of Curriculum and Instruction via email to [emscurric@nysed.gov](mailto:emscurric@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.