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Briefing Bulletin

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Laboratory Requirements for Science Regents Coursework

The New York State Education Department recently released a revised document on the laboratory requirements for all Regents coursework. The information below will be included in the new K-12 Science Resource Guide with Core Curricula when published in the spring of 2001.

Laboratory Requirements

- **ALL** students in a Regents science course must complete the laboratory requirement **prior** to entry into a Regents examination in science.
 - Exemptions to the laboratory requirement may be granted **only** by the New York State Education Department under extreme conditions. Please call the Math, Science and Technology Education Unit for information at 518 473-9471.
 - The laboratory requirement for entry into a Regents science examination is a minimum of 1200 minutes of hands-on lab with satisfactory laboratory reports. This is found in each New York State Regents Core Curriculum in science, as well as the Commissioner's regulations.
- Districts may set a higher time requirement, but it should be stated in school policy. Students and parents should be informed of the school's requirements.
- The requirement is stated in Part 100 regulation (passed 7/1999) as "1200 minutes." This represents a **time** requirement, not a quantity requirement (i. e., not a particular number of laboratory reports).
 - All laboratories completed by students should be **hands-on**. Students should be actively engaged in laboratory work. While computer programs, research conducted in libraries or on the Internet, and worksheets may be a part of the laboratory experience, they should not comprise the sole experience. Teacher demonstrations, followed by student

reports are also not considered to be a hands-on experience.

- All students must complete satisfactory laboratory reports. The laboratory report format is set at the local level.
- By regulation, laboratory reports must be kept on file for a minimum of six months. For students who transfer into a district, copies of labs completed by the student, or a letter from the student's teacher or principal stating completion of labs to the date of transfer are acceptable and should also be kept on file for six months.
- SED recommends that teachers of science keep a log of labs with date completed, minutes to complete, etc. Logs can be used to easily ascertain the time requirement for all students, including those who may transfer to other schools.
- Any laboratory experience that uses toxic and/or hazardous materials or potentially hazardous materials, etc. must take place under the guidance of a certified science teacher whether in, or out of school.
- Safety instruction relevant to the laboratory experience must be given to all students prior to entering the laboratory.

Please keep in mind that students must complete the minimum 1200 minutes of hands-on laboratory experiences, with satisfactory laboratory reports **prior** to entry into a Regents examination in science.

Therefore teachers may wish to publicize a date when all labs must be completed.

It should also be noted that Part 100.5 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education state that "The 1200 minutes of laboratory experience must be in addition to the required classroom instruction associated with earning a unit of credit." Because of the strong emphasis on student development of laboratory skills, each Regents Core Curriculum in science suggests a minimum of 280 minutes of class and laboratory per week.

Note: For students with disabilities, or students who are homebound, hospitalized, or recovering from catastrophic illness or injury, laboratories may be used that are comparative to those of their peers. Also alternative laboratories may be used that correspond with the content of each particular Regents science syllabus. For example the following suggestions may be used in the situation of the homebound student regarding the content area of chemistry.

The students with disabilities may:

- *use micro labs, instead of macro labs*
- *summarize and/or further expand laboratory data from his/her peers*
- *interview research scientists, medical personnel, etc.*
- *use computerized laboratory experiences*
- *use common household substances to observe and study*
- *attend school during scheduled laboratory sessions*

It is important that students with disabilities have as many traditional lab experiences as possible.