**DC Science Parent Letter Template**

[This letter can be issued to families if you are receiving questions about DC Science or feel it necessary to communicate proactively about it.]

[ENTER DATE]

Re: DC Science Assessment Update

Dear Parent or Guardian,

The DC Science Assessment is the assessment that is used across schools in DC to help understand how well students are learning and growing in Science. A student will take the assessment three times in the course of their K-12 education - in grades 5 and 8 as well as when he or she takes Biology in high school.

You may have recently heard in the news that the District of Columbia has terminated its contract with the vendor that developed the DC Science assessment. I am writing to clarify what this means and confirm that there is no impact on your student’s classroom learning this year at [SCHOOL].

The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), which administers state-wide testing, identified errors in the scoring and design of the test and cancelled the contract with the vendor who designed the test due to those errors. *Other assessments, such as PARCC in English and Math, are not affected by this action.* OSSE has announced that:

* Scores for students who took the 2016 science assessment are no longer valid and will be discarded;
* Scores for students who took the 2017 science assessment will not be released; and
* There will be no 2018 DC Science assessment.

It is also important that you are aware that the scores are not currently used by our school for grading or promotion of students. While not having a test removes one of the tools that we have to measure and understand student learning, we will continue to use all the other methods we currently use, including class work and school- and classroom-level tests.

We know that any time our students spend taking assessments is important. OSSE has taken this extraordinary step to demonstrate its commitment to a valid and reliable statewide assessment program. OSSE is committed to moving swiftly to develop a new, high-quality assessment and to keeping our schools abreast of updates. They have apologized for any inconvenience and concern this has caused.

If you have questions, please contact your school administrator or visit OSSE’s webpage at [www.osse.dc.gov/strengtheningdcscience](http://www.osse.dc.gov/strengtheningdcscience).