

2017 – NM’s Public Education Department (PED) Attempts to Remove Critical Parts of the Next-Gen Science Standards

On September 15th, 2017, Mother Jones [reported](#) that “New Mexico’s public education agency wants to scrub discussions of climate change, rising global temperatures, evolution, and even the age of planet Earth from the standards that shape its schools’ curriculum.” The changes were supported by Secretary of Education Christopher Ruszkowski.

Mother Jones

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New Mexico Doesn’t Want Your Kids to Know How Old the Earth Is

Or why it’s getting warmer.

ANDY KROLL SEP. 15, 2017 6:00 AM



Education Secretary to Change way students learn science

Here are some of the proposed changes: “...the draft released by New Mexico's education officials changes the language of a number of NGSS guidelines, downplaying the rise in global temperatures, striking references to human activity as the primary cause of climate change, and cutting one mention of evolution while weakening others. The standards would even remove a reference to the scientifically agreed-upon age of the Earth—nearly 4.6 billion years. (Young Earth creationists use various passages in the Bible to argue that the planet is only a few thousand years old.)”

Here follow some of the proposed redactions made by the NM PED.

Construct a scientific explanation based on evidence from rock strata for how the geologic time scale is used to organize Earth's ~~4.6 billion-year-old~~ **geologic** history.

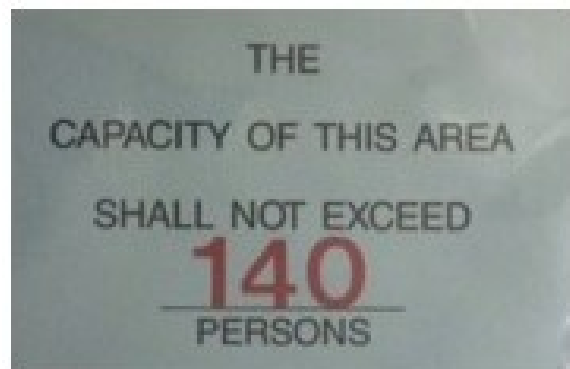
Ask questions to clarify evidence of the factors that have caused the **fluctuation** ~~rise~~ in global temperatures over the past century.

Analyze ~~geoscience~~ data and the results from global climate models to make an evidence-based forecast of the current rate of global or ~~regional~~ climate change **fluctuation** and associated future impacts to Earth systems.

Construct an explanation based on evidence that ~~the process of evolution primarily results from four factors~~ **biological diversity is influenced by**: (1) the potential for a species to increase in number, (2) the heritable genetic variation of individuals in a species due to mutation and sexual reproduction, (3) competition for limited resources, and (4) the proliferation of those organisms that are better able to survive and reproduce in the environment.

On October 16th, 2017, the PED held a hearing, and the public (including many scientists and teachers) turned out in droves to oppose the changes. The hearing was Standing Room Only.

Many oppose proposed changes to science education standards



NCSE [reported on October 26th](#) that New Mexico's Public Education Department officials on Wednesday decided to adopt the Next Generation Science Standards 'in their entirety,

And on November 14th, 2017, NCSE [reported](#) that

“New Mexico is now officially the nineteenth state to have adopted the Next Generation Science Standards. On November 14, 2017, the New Mexico Register (containing the state's administrative rules) was updated to specify that the NGSS, along with six New-Mexico-specific additions, would be the New Mexico STEM-ready science standards.

As NCSE previously reported, New Mexico was embroiled in controversy after the Public Education Department proposed the adoption of a set of standards modeled on the performance expectations of the NGSS, but revised to weaken their treatment of evolution, climate change, and the age of the earth.

The proposal was generally unpopular, with scientific, educational, environmental, business, and faith groups across the state expressing their opposition. Ultimately, the Public Education Department capitulated, expressing its intention to adopt the NGSS in their entirety with the addition of the six New-Mexico-specific standards.

With the publication of the new rules, that intention was fulfilled. In adopting the NGSS, New Mexico joins Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Washington, as well as the District of Columbia.”