



Family Concerns

"Bridging the Information Gap"

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DID THE MATERIAL WORLD JUST APPEAR?

The Battle over the Explanation of Origins Continues in Kansas

The newly-elected Kansas State Board of Education held its first meeting of the year on Tuesday January 9 in Topeka. During a forty-five minute citizen's forum that is always scheduled before the monthly meetings, a number of speakers spoke concerning the Board's intention to remove the current definition of science from the Standards.

2500 signatures

In addition, over 2500 signatures were delivered to the Board asking the Board to uphold the current standards. The Board formally placed the issue on the agenda for a **vote on February 13 and 14**. They have a majority of so-called "moderate" members who favor changing the standards to exclude any hypothesis that goes outside of naturalism and materialism.

Some of the infamous words that are to be deleted

(excerpts from the present standards):

- "We believe in the best interest of educating Kansas students that all students have a good working knowledge of science, particularly what defines good science, how science moves forward, what holds science back, and how to critically analyze the conclusions that scientists make."
- "From the testimony and submissions we have received we are aware that the study and discussion of the origin and development of life may raise deep personal and philosophical questions for many people on all sides of the debate."
- "All scientific theories should be approached with an open mind, studied carefully, and critically considered. We, therefore, think it is important and appropriate for students to know about these scientific debates."
- "We also emphasize that the Science Curriculum Standards do not include intelligent design, the scientific disagreement with the claim of many evolutionary biologists that the apparent design of living systems is an illusion . . . these standards neither mandate nor prohibit teaching about this scientific disagreement."
- Nature of Science: "Science is a systematic method of continuing investigation that uses observations, hypothesis testing, measurement experimentation, logical argument and theory building to lead to more adequate explanations of natural phenomena. Science does so while maintaining strict empirical standards and healthy skepticism . . . a hypothesis is a testable statement about the natural world that can be used to build more complex inferences and explanations. A theory is a well-substantiated explanation of some aspect of the natural world that can incorporate observations, inferences, and tested hypotheses."

The proposed change (in part)

"Science is a human activity of systematically seeking natural explanations for what we observe in the world around us . . . Scientific explanations must be testable and

repeatable, and finds must be confirmed through additional observations and experimentation. As it is practiced in the late 20th and early 21st century, science is restricted to explaining only the natural world, using only natural cause. (Emphasis Added) This is because science currently has no tools to test explanations using non-natural (such as supernatural) causes."

More to be removed:

- "Although science proposes theories to explain changes, the actual causes of many changes are currently unknown (e.g. the origin of the universe, the origin of fundamental laws, the origin of life and the genetic code, and the origin of major body plans during the Cambrian explosion."
- Grade 8-12; Standard 1, BM 1, Science is Inquiry, Indicator 6: ". . . understands methods used to test hypotheses about the cause of a remote past event (historical hypothesis) that cannot be confirmed by experiment and/or direct observations by formulating competing hypotheses and then collecting the kinds of date (evidence) that would support one and refute the other."
- Standard 3 Life Science, Benchmark 3: "The student will understand the major concepts of the theory of evolution. Indicator 1 a: Biological evolution postulates an unguided natural process that has no discernable direction or goal."
- ". . . in many cases the fossil record is not consistent with gradual, unbroken sequences postulated by biological evolution."
- "The view that living things in all the major kingdoms are modified descendants of a common ancestor (described in the pattern of a branching tree) has been challenged in recent years by: a. Discrepancies in the molecular evidence (e.g. differences in relatedness inferred from sequence studies of different proteins) previously thought to support that view. B. A fossil record that shows sudden bursts of increased complexity (the Cambrian Explosion), long periods of stasis and the absence of abundant transition forms rather than steady gradual increases in complexity and c. Studies that show animals follow different rather than identical early stages of embryological development."

These are a few of the deletions and changes proposed by the new Board.

Action: To get a copy of the petition to the State Board of Education, contact Shar Hoffman at sh@everestkc.net Encourage your neighbors and friends to sign and return to us. Attend and/or give testimony at the Board meeting on February 13 in Topeka If you plan a three-minute testimony, come early to sign up and bring at least 12 copies of your testimony to give to the Board members. Write or call your Board member. For more information go to www.intelligentdesignnetwork.org.