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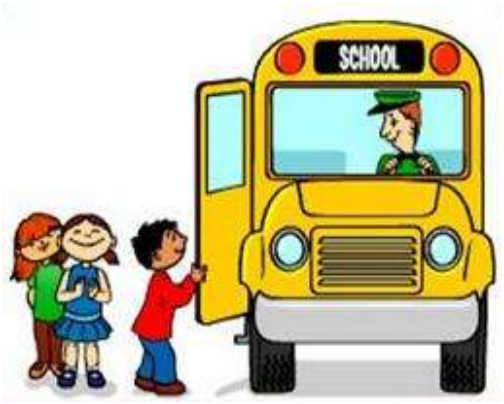
Protecting K-12 Science Education

The Next Generation Science Standards have been implemented as part of the curriculum for students in kindergarten through twelfth grade. The standards involve physical science, life science, earth and space science, and engineering. The standards concentrate on participating in the scientific process, cross-disciplinary learning, and self-taught exploration, using higher order thinking skills, and relying less on rote learning. As part of the standards, students learn about climate change in middle school and high school. Students will also learn about evolution. The Next Generation Science Standards do not require science teachers to teach non-scientific opposing views to climate change, evolution, or any other science topic during science classes.



History of the Next Generation Science Standards

Iowa educators were leaders in developing the standards. Twenty six states participated in developing the standards. Stakeholders were included in the process, including people interested in science, science education, higher education, and industry. The standards were released in 2013.

In 2013, Governor Terry Branstad initiated the process of updating Iowa's education standards, which led to the adoption of the Next Generation Science Standards. The Iowa Board of Education approved the standards in 2015, with the phase-in beginning in 2016 and 2017.

Local school districts decide how to implement the education standards. The school districts can select essential concepts from the standards to be taught within the grade levels. All Iowa students are required to take 3 years of high school science education. The state does not mandate specific science courses.

Unfortunately some people are attacking the Next Generation Science Standards.

Since their approval by the Iowa Board of Education, there have been efforts to undermine and rescind the decision via changes to Iowa Code Sections 256.7, 256.9, and 279.61. There have been attempts to make the standards optional, thus prohibiting the Iowa Board of Education from requiring that schools teach the material indicated in the Next Generation Science Standards. Other efforts would prohibit the Iowa Board of Education from adopting the Next Generation Science Standards. These efforts to undermine science education are a threat to the education of our children and their future.

Students benefit from a comprehensive science education.

A strong science education is important. Iowa has a long history of providing excellent kindergarten through twelfth grade education. In order for adults to effectively compete in today's workplace, a strong science in education is important along with an understanding of science concepts. Furthermore, Iowa students need a firm foundation in the sciences in order to succeed in college work. That is what the Next Generation Science Standards provides.

As citizens and parents, we need to demand that our legislators do not prevent the teaching of sound science to our children.

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Sources

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