

I am a parent of two elementary school students in Wyoming. I appreciate the importance of a solid education as a foundation for a successful career. I want nothing short of a strong education for my children, which is why I am addressing the board today.

I am a concerned parent who wants my children to believe that they are creations made for a purpose by God. I entrust my children with a Wyoming public school education based on the understanding that the school won't interfere with the religious beliefs that their father and I intend to teach them. Their religion is my prerogative, not Wyoming's. In addition, I am speaking on behalf of their rights as individuals, as they cannot do that for themselves at this point. They have a right to not be indoctrinated by the state to accept any religion, particularly one their parents don't agree with. I am also a taxpayer. As a taxpayer I don't want the state to use my tax dollars to push atheism and atheistic worldviews on my children.

I understand that schools are supposed to be neutral when it comes to religion. I am not sure I like that concept, but it is better than having a school push a religion that is contrary to the tenets of faith that they will be taught in our home.

My concern is with the Framework for K-12 Science Education and Next Generation Science Standards you seek to adopt today. That program is the subject of a lawsuit filed in a Federal District Court in Kansas in September. The lawsuit claims that the program seeks to establish an atheistic worldview in our children. Let me read you the first paragraph of the complaint:

"The Plaintiffs, consisting of students, parents and Kansas resident taxpayers, and a representative organization, complain that the adoption by the Defendant State Board of Education on June 11, 2013 of Next Generation Science Standards will have the effect of causing Kansas public schools to establish and endorse a non-theistic religious worldview (the "Worldview") in violation of the Establishment, Free Exercise, and Speech Clauses of the First Amendment, and the Equal Protection Clauses of the 14th Amendment."

This is a suit against the same program you are now considering. I would highly recommend that you read the complaint wherein the first six pages summarize the key problems with the entire program. I would strongly encourage you to read the complaint before proceeding.

It can be found on a website maintained by the non-profit group that filed the case with nine Kansas families: Citizens for Objective Public Education. Go to www.copeinc.org. You can download the Complaint at: www.copeinc.org/legal-complaint.html.

Ordinarily a mom with a Kindergartner in school should have no worries. However, the NGSS and Framework starts the indoctrination in Kindergarten. I found this to be the case when I looked at page 6 of appendix E to the NGSS and the progressions for teaching evolution, beginning in Kindergarten. I understand that Wyoming's current standards do not begin teaching evolution until grade 8, and even then, it is taught as theory. At least at this older age, they are more cognitively equipped to decide whether to accept or reject this theory.

The idea of science education seeking to impose a worldview seems very wrong to me. I thought science was the one enterprise that was free of religion. Science is supposed to teach us what it actually knows, not what some group of scientists would like us to know.

My next concern regards the NGSS seeking to teach a worldview. I searched the Framework, and found the following:

"To capture the vision in the Framework, students should be assessed on the extent to which they have achieved a coherent scientific worldview.... [NGSS Appendix G. Crosscutting Concepts, p 3 (April, 2013)]

The Kansas Complaint explains the nature of the "scientific" worldview in paragraph 9, based on its description by Richard Lewontin, a prominent evolutionary biologist:

"Our willingness to accept scientific claims that are against common sense is the key to an understanding of the real struggle between science and the supernatural. We take the side of science *in spite* of the patent absurdity of some of its constructs, *in spite* of its failure to fulfill many of its extravagant promises of health and life, *in spite* of the tolerance of the scientific community for unsubstantiated just-so stories, because *we have a prior commitment, a commitment to materialism*. It is not that the methods and institutions of science somehow compel us to accept a material explanation of the phenomenal world, but, on the contrary, that *we are forced by our a priori adherence to material causes* to create an apparatus of investigation and a set of concepts that produce material explanations, no matter how counter-intuitive, no matter how mystifying to the uninitiated. *Moreover, that materialism is absolute, for we cannot allow a Divine Foot in the door.*" [Richard Lewontin, *Billions and Billions of Demons* 44 N.Y. REV. OF BOOKS 31 (Jan. 9, 1997) (emphasis added)]

This looks like an atheistic worldview to me. So when the program says it wants to establish a scientific worldview, it appears that it is actually atheistic. The COPE website cites several U.S. court cases showing that Atheism and Secular Humanism are religions. COPE's analyses attached to the Complaint assert that the program promotes all of the tenets of those religions.

The Complaint sets out a number of devices used by the program to ensure the worldview becomes a habit of mind. These devices include a plan to start the indoctrination in the minds of very young children. In addition the program is designed to cohere with the Common Core math and English Language Arts standards. So this atheistic program will be systemic and integrated into the entire public school curriculum.

None of this is transparent. The Complaint says atheistic assumptions are used but not explained.

This is appalling. I cannot stand by and allow this vote to take place without speaking out.

Furthermore, I would implore you to halt the adoption of these standards until you have a complete understanding of the effect this will have on Wyoming public school students and their families. If even part of what the Complaint alleges is true, then there is a problem. I haven't seen anything yet to show that any of it is false.

I implore you to seek legal counsel to review and analyze these standards and the framework before going any further. I do not understand why the state would spend a dime on implementing a program that is not objective and religiously neutral? Why should the state spend taxpayer dollars implementing a program that may likely be declared unconstitutional by a court? The

Kansas case is relevant to Wyoming because any appeal that goes to the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals establishes the federal law, which will be applicable to Wyoming as well.

I believe that there will be huge practical problems with implementing the program. There is no certainty that young minds have the cognitive capacity to process the kinds of information they are expected to "know and understand." Primary school teachers will have to be trained in biology, physics, statistics, chemistry, geology, and the like.

For the sake of Wyoming children, please do not adopt this program today. At the very least seek independent counsel from lawyers and other educators who do not share the bias that is evident in this program. Have them analyze the Kansas Complaint and the evidence that is developed during the case. Wisdom suggests that the NGSS and Framework should be placed on the shelf until the courts have resolved the Kansas Complaint.

Thank you for your time and serious consideration of these concerns.