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03.08.2017

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Louisiana's state board of elementary and secondary education voted to adopt a new set of state science standards on March 8, 2017, [according](#) [4] to the *Baton Rouge Advocate* (March 8, 2017) — but not without a nod in the general direction of creationism.

At a meeting of a committee of the board held on March 7, 2017, testimony and discussion centered on the treatment of evolution in the standards, [according](#) [5] to the Associated Press (March 7, 2017). After critics complained that no alternatives to evolution were included in the standards, the committee voted 7-2 to add a reference to the so-called Louisiana Science Education Act in a separate document, Bulletin 1962, which outlines for school districts what BESE approved and includes only the Performance Expectations. Thereafter, in a separate and unanimous vote, the board approved the standards themselves, which teachers will use as the basis for classroom instruction, as drafted by the Standards Review Committee.

As NCSE previously reported, the LSEA, passed and enacted in 2008, calls on state and local administrators to help to promote "critical thinking skills, logical analysis, and open and objective discussion of scientific theories being studied including, but not limited to, evolution, the origins of life, global warming, and human cloning"; these four topics were described as controversial in the original draft of the legislation.

The LSEA also allows teachers to use "supplemental textbooks and other instructional materials to help students understand, analyze, critique, and review scientific theories in an objective manner" if so permitted by their local school boards. Writing in *Slate* in 2015, Zack Kopplin [presented](#) [6] evidence that the LSEA was invoked by Louisiana school districts as justification for using creationist material in their classrooms.

Beyond the explicit reference to evolution, the links between the LSEA and creationism are abundantly clear. For instance, a sponsor of the bill [told](#) ^[7] the *Hammond Daily Star* (April 6, 2008) that the bill was aimed at promoting the discussion of "scientific data related to creationism," and Louisiana's governor Bobby Jindal [told](#) ^[8] (at about 9:00) NBC News in 2013 that the LSEA permits the teaching of creationism.

The effort, led by Zack Kopplin, to repeal the LSEA have been endorsed by a host of scientific and science education organizations, including the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the National Association of Biology Teachers, the American Institute for Biological Sciences, the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, and the American Society for Cell Biology.

The *Advocate* reports that the new standards will take effect in the 2018-2019 school year, with the 2017-2018 school year serving as a transitional period for teacher training and field testing. It remains to be seen what, if any, effect the mention of the LSEA will have.

[Revised on May 1, 2017, to correct the second paragraph.]

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