

Georgia Performance Standards
Carroll County Schools

Summary of the Teaching of Evolution (August 16, 2010 Carroll County Board Meeting...Work Session)

I have reviewed Georgia's curriculum for science, world history, and courses related to the teaching of the Old Testament and the New Testament. I will briefly summarize the courses as they relate to evolution and creationism.

The teaching of evolution is included in the science curriculum of the Georgia Performance Standards in seventh grade life science and in tenth grade biology.

The Evidence of Evolution is the unit included in the seventh grade curriculum. The overview for this unit includes: "The students will examine the evolution of living organisms through inherited characteristics and natural selection. They will investigate the survival of organisms and their successive generations as related to their inherited characteristics and adaptations. They will utilize the fossil record found in sedimentary rock as an important tool in providing evidence of evolution".

The Evolution of the Theory of Evolution is the unit included in tenth grade biology. The overview for this unit includes: "Students include a timeline based on research of the contributions of scientists to the theory of evolution at different points in history. This allows students to trace the history of the theory as well as discovering the types of evidence that support the theory of evolution and how new evidence can result in changes in accepted theory".

World History is a required core content course taught in our high schools in ninth grade. The curriculum for World History includes a unit of study on the earliest civilizations worldwide. Students are expected to understand the culture of a society is the product of religion, beliefs, customs, traditions, and government.

The state of Georgia has two approved courses using the Bible as the textbook. The courses are Literature and History of the Old Testament Era and Literature and History of the New Testament Era. Both classes are electives and students may earn a half unit of credit for each class. The courses must be taught in an objective and non-devotional manner with no attempt made to indoctrinate students as to either the truth or falsity of the biblical materials or texts from other religious or cultural traditions. The courses may not include teaching of religious doctrine or sectarian interpretation of the Bible or of texts from other religious or cultural traditions.

Georgia's curriculum does not include the teaching of creationism. The 1987 U.S. Supreme Court Decision *Edwards v. Aguillard* ended any prospect of teaching creationism in public schools in the United States. This decision clearly states that biblically based "creation science" is not a science and cannot be taught as such in public schools as an alternative or in addition to the mainstream evolutionary theory of the biological sciences.

In 2001, the Cobb County School District decided to accommodate the religious views of complaining residents by inserting a disclaimer into all science textbooks stating "...Evolution is a theory, not a fact...." Additionally, the school board chair stated that the disclaimer "...is relevant to the value that we place on the concept of a Supreme Being...." The US District Court, Atlanta Division ruled that the sticker adopted by the Cobb County Board of Education violates the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment (*Selman v. Cobb County School Board*).

Attached is a chart outlining Georgia's curriculum as a supporting document.



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Course	Unit	Focus
Life Science Grade 7	Evidence of Evolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural Selection Environmental Conditions Fossils Evidence of Change
Biology Grade 10	The Evolution of the Theory of Evolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Species of plants, animals, and microorganisms are related by descent from common ancestors Great diversity of organisms is the result of more than 3.5 billion years of evolutions Modern classification systems are based upon biochemical and genetic evidence Evolution explains the number of different life forms Molecular evidence supports anatomical evidence from fossils
World History	First Civilizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will begin a study of the earliest civilizations worldwide Students will understand that the culture of a society is the product of the religion, beliefs, customs, traditions, and government of that society
Literature and History of the Old Testament	Content of the Old Testament	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> History Recorded by the Old Testament
Literature and History of the New Testament	Content of the New Testament	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> History Recorded by the New Testament

For specific information related to the Georgia Performance Standards refer to:
www.georgiastandards.org