

Statement about Evolution and Science Education

“In grammar school they taught me that a frog turning into a prince was a fairy tale. In the university they taught me that a frog turning into a prince was a fact!” Ron Carlson

The origin of mankind and life itself are intriguing questions. The answers we give to the questions influence our worldview, what we believe and how we treat others.

This group is reviewing the science standards for Georgia based upon the Next Generation Science Standards. Achieve is a partner in this process. We are using the frameworks to reevaluate, rewrite and implement a new set of standards in K-12 science education in Georgia. This is a noble task. This work can do much good. If we are not careful however, this work can also do much harm.

One area of concern is the teaching of Darwinian Evolution. Of the two major viewpoints of origins, Darwinian Evolution can be summarized by the phrase “Atom to Adam”. The general outline is that the earth we see today resulted from a cosmic explosion, solidified, and overtime chemicals combined in some way to form life, then this life in some way changed into more complex life, which overtime resulted in humans and the features of the world we see today. Some major beliefs are the Descent of Man, that is that mankind can be traced back chronologically to a common ancestor with the primates. Another notion is that Natural Selection through Mutations can explain how these changes took place over time. This time period is believed to be over four billion years. The book Origin of Species is considered a major publication and the year 1859 as a turning point in history of what many believe about the origins of man.

Much can be said about the implications of biological evolution and much has been written among scientists, philosophers and others since this event. Here are some facts.

- There is no scientific evidence life has come from non-life.
- There is no evidence of transitional forms from one life form to another.
- There are logical inconsistencies with Darwinian beliefs.
- Natural Selection has been shown to exist but does not add information or explain how new more complex life forms appear.
- The fossil record does not provide evidence for evolution.
- Evolutionists are hesitant to see their beliefs logically examined in public.
- Many assertions are made and many statements are published to support the belief of evolution but no evidence is provided.
- Darwinism is closely linked with Philosophical Naturalism.

- Darwinian evolution is believed to be scientific but due to lack of evidence is a historical theory of origins and not operational science.
- Darwinian evolution is taught as a fact in many educational settings including K-12 science education.

Given these facts we must ask why any reference is made to evolution in the framework of the Next Generation Science Standards. If these statements can not be challenged or rewritten then there may be a serious problem moving forward with this good work.

Science is about gaining facts and making predictions from those facts. This is called operational science. The scientific method has been adopted as the keystone to scientific research and enlarging man's understanding of the world in which he lives. Human development and civilization, especially in the modern technical and engineering enriched or enhanced culture, has resulted in the many scientific achievements made in recent centuries. Facts, curiosity, making predictions, forming laws, and constant reevaluation of previous conclusions, are parts of how science works.

Since this is the case, the NGSS standards that pertain to evolutionary beliefs should be rewritten as statements for investigation or inquiry and not as facts to be taught. Teaching evolution as fact is no more than indoctrination and that is not what science is about. Doing so would be tantamount to co-opting science to push a worldview.

Some members of the public believe in evolution. Many in the educational establishment believe in evolution as well. These individuals have been taught that to be educated one must adopt this viewpoint. However much of the public in Georgia and many science teachers in particular do not subscribe or endorse in any fashion to Darwinian evolution. To codify evolution as a standard of science will not only offend the educators and create a hostile learning environment but will become increasingly offensive to the public at large. This will contribute further to the antagonism they have to the educational establishment. This antagonism originated over this topic in the first place and must be addressed in an honest and forthright manner.

The good people involved in NGSS desire to see meaningful changes in science education and immediate improvements upon implementation. This is why we wanted to be part of this effort in the first place. The public needs to be behind this work to make it happen. This effort is intended to not only bring immediate improvements but generate hope to eliminate many current barriers to future effectiveness. This is why many still support public education. This support will be compromised and possibly damaged permanently if any aspect of this work is conducted in an underhanded manner. Making decisions "behind the scenes" without proper input will not create the needed support so crucial to success- no matter how well meaning and noble the intentions, how well connected the individuals are to national organizations and key figures, or how fanciful presentations are prepared and delivered.

Now is a good time to bring attention to this matter. I am making myself available to help. Working together we can set an example of how to resolve this important matter.

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