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## [Update on evolution in the Florida state science standards](#) [3]

Support for the inclusion of evolution in Florida's draft science standards continues to amass. Writing in the *Orlando Sentinel* (October 25, 2007), Mike Thomas [quipped](#) [4], "We are moving toward intelligently designed science curriculum in public schools. And by that I mean we are leaving intelligent design out of classrooms. By golly, Florida is evolving." The standards are presently [open](#) [5] for public comment for sixty days; Thomas reported, "Of 1,400 respondents to date, more than 80 percent support evolution." A spokesperson for the Florida Department of Education told Thomas that the draft standards are based on "[w]hat research says should be in the standards" and that nothing would be deleted from the standards in the absence of a research-based argument for the deletion.

Following previous [editorials](#) [6] in *Florida Today*, the *Tallahassee Democrat*, and the *South Florida Sun-Sentinel*, the *Orlando Sentinel* (October 27, 2007) [opined](#) [7], "It's taken seven years, but Florida is on its way to developing a science curriculum for the new millennium -- one that requires teachers openly and vigorously to teach about evolution," adding, "it's important that the state Board of Education and Gov. Charlie Crist fully endorse these changes to ensure Florida's children can compete in the increasingly technology-driven global marketplace." Noting that evolution is one of the so-called Big Ideas of the science standards, the editorial concluded by proposing, "Let's add one more big idea. In Florida, science should win out over politics when it comes to educating children."

Subsequently, *Education Week* (November 7, 2007) [reported](#) [8] that "[a]s of last week, an estimated 3,000 people had weighed in online. ... In an early count of online comments submitted so far, a majority of respondents agreed with how evolution was presented in individual Florida benchmarks." But the support for evolution was, unsurprisingly, not unanimous; one comment quoted by *Education Week* recommended, "Do some research of creation science. ... Evolution 'facts' have been disproven." While applauding the inclusion of evolution in the draft standards, NCSE deputy director Glenn Branch warned,

"I expect to see some of kind of organized effort [by opponents] to deprecate the standards," citing such efforts elsewhere.

After the public comment period is over, on December 14, the writing committee is expected to review the public comments, although it is not obliged to revise them in response, and then to forward a final version of the standards to the state board of education for approval. Jane Pfeilsticker, a member of the committee, [told](#) <sup>[9]</sup> **[Link broken]** the *Bradenton Herald* (October 28, 2007), that the committee was "100 percent" agreed that evolution ought to be included, adding, "I do teach evolution, and I also teach Sunday school ... I do not feel or see a conflict." And high school biology teacher Brian McClain, a member of the committee, was quoted by *Education Week* as saying that not discussing evolution "would be comparable to teaching earth science without talking about plate tectonics, or chemistry without the periodic table."

[Anti-Evolution](#) <sup>[10]</sup>

[2007](#) <sup>[11]</sup>

[Florida](#) <sup>[12]</sup>

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[5] <http://tools.fcit.usf.edu/ScienceReview/>

[6] [http://www.ncseweb.org/resources/news/2007/FL/972\\_evolution\\_in\\_the\\_florida\\_state\\_10\\_23\\_2007.asp](http://www.ncseweb.org/resources/news/2007/FL/972_evolution_in_the_florida_state_10_23_2007.asp)

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[8] <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2007/11/07/11evolution.h27.html>

[9] <http://www.bradenton.com/local/story/183339.html>

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