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The external review of the latest draft of the Kansas science standards is complete, and there's no comfort in it for the antievolutionist majority on the state board of education. The external reviewer, Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL), restricted its comments to the educational usefulness of the standards and did not evaluate their scientific accuracy. Even so, the antievolution material inserted by the board at the behest of local "intelligent design" enthusiasts came under fire.

The Associated Press (October 14, 2005) [reported](#) [4] that McREL "cited only 7 percent of the material in the standards as questionable. Much of that material reflected intelligent design advocates' criticism of evolutionary theory that natural chemical processes can create the building blocks of life, that all life has a common origin and that man and apes share a common ancestor." And the *Kansas City Star* (October 14, 2005) [reported](#) [5] that McREL observed that "most of the changes meant to criticize evolution could not be found in other educational sources. It also concluded that changes meant to question the validity of evolution contradicted other guidelines that stressed the importance of the theory."

What's next? The state board of education might order its staff or request the original writing committee to revise the draft in light of McREL's comments. But Steve Case, the co-chair of the writing committee, told the *Kansas City Star* that the committee -- which [decried](#) [6] the board's changes to the standards -- would not participate further, saying, "They've taken over the writing ... So they'll make the changes." Board chair Steve Abrams told the *Star* that, barring any delays, the board was likely to vote on the standards at its next meeting, November 8 and 9, 2005.

The Associated Press's story mentioned a possible source of delay: "if the national and international science groups balk at allowing their materials to be part of the Kansas standards. In 1999, those organizations refused to grant copyright permission for changes in the Kansas standards that eliminated

most references to evolution." John Calvert of the Intelligent Design Network was quoted as saying that such a denial of permission would be "another example of science interfering with education."

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[6] http://www.ncseweb.org/resources/news/2005/KS/19_kansas_science_committee_denou_8_4_2005.asp

[7] <https://ncse.com/news/anti-evolution>

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