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Newspapers in Georgia are hailing the settlement in *Selman v. Cobb County*, the case that challenged the constitutionality of a textbook warning sticker that described evolution as "a theory, not a fact." The plaintiffs won the trial, but on appeal the verdict was vacated, due primarily to concerns about the evidence, and remanded to the trial court for further proceedings. On December 19, 2006, a [settlement](#) [4] was announced in which the Cobb County Board of Education agreed not to restore the warning sticker, not to take any of a number of actions that "would prevent or hinder the teaching of evolution" (including "excising or redacting materials on evolution" in textbooks), and to reimburse \$166,659 of the plaintiffs' legal fees.

The *Marietta Daily Journal* (December 21, 2006) editorially [commented](#) [5], "The Cobb school board finally admitted the obvious on Tuesday: that its 'evolution sticker' case had devolved into a waste of time, tax dollars and educators' attention. As a result, it took the long-overdue step of pulling the plug on its federal court appeal of a lower-court ruling that said the evolution disclaimer stickers the board had ordered placed in all high school science textbooks were unconstitutional." Noting that the board spent about \$109,000 to pay its own attorneys, the editorialist added, "Just think how many teachers could have been hired with that \$275,000 or so the board wasted on something that never should have been an issue in the first place."

The *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* (December 21, 2006) praised the board for the settlement, [writing](#) [6], "From a tax-frittering, pseudo-science muddle, the board seems to be evolving into a deliberate and engaged panel capable of putting the reputation and credibility of the district ahead of politics or personal creeds." Describing the evolution sticker fiasco as expensive and embarrassing, the editorialist also noted that the controversy "dominated too much of the school board's time in the last four years and contributed to the defeat of two sitting board members in the most recent elections." The editorialist

concluded, "The school board should not create additional burdens for the schools through its own arrogance in pursuing agendas that have neither public support nor the public good at their core."

Mike King, a columnist for the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, offered (December 21, 2006) a different, and harsher, perspective. "The current edition of the much-maligned Cobb County school board is limping off the stage," King [wrote](#) [7]. "In what might be seen as a lame-duck valedictory, the board is giving up its four-year campaign to ensure that Cobb County students haven't been duped by teachers into believing the evolution theory." King suggests that the board misunderstood its constituency -- "Truth is, there never has been widespread support within the county to change the way human biology should be taught. It has always been the work of a handful of anti-evolution zealots" -- and concludes, "But, for now, this era of embarrassment for the Cobb County school district seems, thankfully, to be drawing to a close."

Civil liberties groups are also hailing the settlement. ACLU of Georgia Executive Director Debbie Seagraves welcomed the settlement, [saying](#) [8], "I commend the brave parents in Cobb County who have fought for more than four years to ensure that their children receive proper science education in their public schools ... We are proud that we were able to represent them in their courageous struggle." The Reverend Barry W. Lynn of Americans United for Separation of Church and State [explained](#) [9], "Cobb County school officials have taken the right step to ensure that their students receive a quality education ... Students should be taught sound science, and the curriculum should not be altered at the behest of aggressive religious groups."

Shelley Rose, the Interim Southeast Region Director of the Anti-Defamation League [commented](#) [10], "The real winners here are the students," adding, "The stickers should never have been placed in textbooks, and the Board's action only served to divide the community and undermine science education, which is so critical to our children's future success. We hope that this settlement heals the divisions and puts the focus back on science education." The ADL presented lead plaintiff Jeffrey Selman with its "Unsung Hero Award" in 2002, and also submitted a friend-of-the-court brief on behalf of the plaintiffs when the case was appealed. (All eight of the briefs supporting the plaintiffs are [available](#) [11] on NCSE's website.)

Additionally, Georgia Citizens for Integrity in Science Education -- the state's grassroots group dedicated to promoting scientific literacy and excellence in science education -- issued a press release commending the board for agreeing to the settlement. "The action taken by the Board means that limited resources can be directed to where they have always belonged, in the classroom," [said](#) [12] GCISE's secretary, Ron Matson, a biology professor at Kennesaw State University. "It further ensures that the Cobb County science curriculum meets the Georgia Performance Standards and that students will understand the central role evolution plays in all biological sciences."

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[6] [http://nl.newsbank.com/nl-search/we/Archives?s_hidethis=no&p_product=AT&p_theme=at&p_action=search&p_maxdocs=200&p_field_label-0=Author&p_field_label-1=title&p_bool_label-1=AND&s_dispstring=muddle%20AND%20date\(12/21/2006%20to%2012/21/2006\)&p_field_date-0=YMD_date&p_params_date-0=date:B,E&p_text_date-0=12/21/2006%20to%2012/21/2006\)&p_field_advanced-0=&p_text_advanced-0=\(muddle\)&xcal_numdocs=20&p_perpage=10&p_sort=YMD_date:D&xcal_useweights=no](http://nl.newsbank.com/nl-search/we/Archives?s_hidethis=no&p_product=AT&p_theme=at&p_action=search&p_maxdocs=200&p_field_label-0=Author&p_field_label-1=title&p_bool_label-1=AND&s_dispstring=muddle%20AND%20date(12/21/2006%20to%2012/21/2006)&p_field_date-0=YMD_date&p_params_date-0=date:B,E&p_text_date-0=12/21/2006%20to%2012/21/2006)&p_field_advanced-0=&p_text_advanced-0=(muddle)&xcal_numdocs=20&p_perpage=10&p_sort=YMD_date:D&xcal_useweights=no)

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[9] http://www.au.org/site/News2?abbr=pr&page=NewsArticle&id=8797&security=1002&news_iv_ctrl=1241

[10] http://www.adl.org/PresRele/RelChStSep_90/4949_90.htm

[11] <http://www2.ncseweb.org/selman/amicus.html>

[12] <http://www.georgiascience.org/2006/12/21/georgia-citizens-for-integrity-in-science-education-press-release/>

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

[14] <https://ncse.com/news/2006>

[15] <https://ncse.com/news/georgia>