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Three antievolutionists have been appointed to a six-member committee to review the draft set of Texas state science standards, and defenders of the integrity of science education are livid. "The committee was chosen by 12 of the 15 members of the board of education, with each panel member receiving the support of two board members," as the *Dallas Morning News* (October 16, 2008) [explains](#) [4]. Six members of the board "aligned with social conservative groups" chose Stephen C. Meyer, the director of the Discovery Institute's Center for Science and Culture, Ralph Seelke, a biology professor at the University of Wisconsin, Superior, and Charles Garner, a chemistry professor at Baylor University.

Meyer, Seelke, and Garner are all signatories of the Discovery Institute-sponsored "Dissent from Darwinism" [statement](#) [5]. Meyer and Seelke are also coauthors of *Explore Evolution: The Arguments For and Against Neo-Darwinism* (Hill House, 2008), which, like [Of Pandas and People](#) [6], is a supplementary textbook that is intended to instill scientifically unwarranted doubts about evolution. A recent review by biologist John Timmer [summarized](#) [7], "But the book doesn't only promote stupidity, it demands it. In every way except its use of the actual term, this is a creationist book." Garner reportedly [told](#) [8] the *Houston Press* (December 14, 2000) that he "criticizes evolutionary theory in class."

Meyer and Seelke also [testified](#) [9] in the 2005 "kangaroo court" hearings held by three antievolutionist members of the Kansas state board of education, in which a parade of antievolutionist witnesses expressed their support for the so-called minority report version of the state science standards (written with the aid of a local "intelligent design" organization), complained of repression by a dogmatic evolutionary establishment, and claimed to have detected atheism lurking "between the lines" of the

standards. A version of the minority report was adopted in 2005, despite criticism from the National Academy of Sciences, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and the National Science Teachers Association, but the balance of power on the board changed, and supporters of the integrity of science education quickly [restored](#) [10] a proper treatment of evolution to the standards.

Referring to the appointment of Meyer, Seelker, and Garner, Dan Quinn of the Texas Freedom Network [told](#) [11] the *Austin American-Statesman* (October 16, 2008), "I think these state board members have really lifted the veil on what their real agenda is here ... It's clear they picked a few experts and a few people with a clear conflict of interest and a political agenda." Similarly, in a press release issued on October 15, 2008, Texas Citizens for Science's Steven Schafersman [lamented](#) [12], "It is unfortunate that some SBOE members have such a poor regard for the education of Texas science students that they must resort to pushing their own anti-evolutionist and Creationist religious ideologies into the science standards revision process."

The three remaining members of the committee — "veteran science professors from major Texas universities," as the *Morning News* observed — are David Hillis, a biology professor at the University of Texas, Austin, Gerald Skoog, a professor of education at Texas Tech University, and Ronald Wetherington, an anthropology professor at Southern Methodist University. The *American-Statesman* noted, "a seventh panel member could be nominated. The panel is expected to send recommendations on the proposal back to the board in the coming months," with a public hearing following in November 2008 and a final decision on the standards scheduled for March 2009.

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