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[Home](#) > AAAS concerned about Texas science standards

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[Glenn Branch](#) [2]

10.23.2008

[AAAS concerned about Texas science standards](#) [3]



Alan I. Leshner

Writing in the *Houston Chronicle* (October 22, 2008), the chief executive officer of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Alan I. Leshner, deplores the recent appointment of three antievolutionists to a committee charged with reviewing a draft of Texas's state science standards. "The new standards will shape how science education is taught in Texas for the next decade, and it would be a terrible mistake to water down the teaching of evolution in any way," he [writes](#) [4], adding, "At a time when most educators are working to prepare students for 21st century jobs, the board members' action threatens to confuse students, divide communities and tarnish Texas' reputation as an international science and technology center."

Leshner's op-ed emphasizes the strength of the scientific consensus on evolution ("Mainstream science and medical organizations in the United States and worldwide, representing tens of millions of scientists, accept evolution as the best explanation for how life developed on Earth"), the fact that many people of faith, including scientists and clergy alike, regard evolution as no threat to their faith, and the importance of preserving the integrity of science education. But what he hammers home is the economic importance of a quality science education: "To maintain the state's strength as an engine of U.S. research and

innovation, Texas education leaders should stick to the basics. Students need a solid science foundation to thrive in the 21st century."

In supporting a scientifically appropriate and pedagogically responsible treatment of evolution in the Texas state science standards, Leshner joins the [21st Century Science Coalition](#) [5], the [Texas Freedom Network](#) [6], and [Texas Citizens for Science](#) [7], as well as the editorial boards of the [Waco Tribune](#) [8] (October 3, 2008) and the [Austin American-Statesman](#) [9] (October 6, 2008). As the world's largest general interest scientific organization, the AAAS regularly defends the teaching of evolution in the public schools, and [presents](#) [10] a useful collection of relevant statements, publications, resources, and links in a section of its on-line press room.

[General](#) [11]

[2008](#) [12]

[Texas](#) [13]

[+ read](#) [3]

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Links

[1] <https://ncse.com/printpdf/13298>

[2] <https://ncse.com/users/glenn>

[3] <https://ncse.com/news/2008/10/aaas-concerned-texas-science-standards-002667>

[4] <http://www.chron.com/disp/story.mpl/editorial/outlook/6073364.html>

[5] <http://www.texasscientists.org>

[6] <http://www.tfn.org>

[7] <http://www.texscience.org>

[8] <http://www.wacotrib.com/opin/content/news/opinion/stories/2008/10/03/10032008waceditorial.html>

[9] http://www.statesman.com/opinion/content/editorial/stories/10/06/1006science_edit.html

[10] http://www.aaas.org/news/press_room/evolution/

[11] <https://ncse.com/general>

[12] <https://ncse.com/news/2008>

[13] <https://ncse.com/news/texas>