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08.10.2009

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How is evolution faring in state science education standards? NCSE's Louise S. Mead and Anton Mates pored over the latest standards in all fifty states. In a new study forthcoming in the journal *Evolution: Education and Outreach*, they [report](#) [4], "The treatment of biological evolution in state science standards has improved dramatically over the last ten years." Forty states received satisfactory grades for the treatment of evolution in their state science standards in Mead and Mates's study, as opposed to only thirty-one in Lawrence S. Lerner's 2000 study [Good Science, Bad Science](#) [5], conducted for the Fordham Foundation.

But the news is not all rosy. Five states — Alabama, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas, and West Virginia — received the grade of F, and a further six states — Alaska, Connecticut, Kentucky, Tennessee, Wisconsin, and Wyoming — receive the grade of D. Moreover, the "treatment of human evolution is abysmal," Mead and Mates lament, with only seven states (and the District of Columbia) providing a comprehensive treatment. Many states "do not reference the Big Bang as the current scientific theory for the origin of the universe," they add, and only 17 states provide a comprehensive treatment of the connections among biological, geological, and cosmological systems.

Mead and Mates also consider a few states that furnish "excellent examples of the successes and failures of the standards-setting process." The grades for [Florida](#) [6] and [Kansas](#) [7] have vaulted from F to A, although not without controversy: "the Kansas standards have seesawed between abysmal and excellent no fewer than four times in the last decade." In [Louisiana](#) [8], however, the passage of the so-called Louisiana Science Education Act undermined the treatment of evolution in the standards, which now receive the grade of F. And in [Texas](#) [9], the state board of education's revisions in March 2009 served to undermine the treatment of evolution in the standards to the point where they, too, receive a failing grade.

In a companion article introducing the study, NCSE's executive director Eugenie C. Scott [commented](#) [10], "On the basis of Mead and Mates's results, there is reason to be pleased by the progress over the last ten years in the inclusion of evolution in state science education standards. That the treatment of evolution is inadequate in almost one in five states still suggests that there is considerable room for improvement, but we should be optimistic that teachers, scientists, and others who care about science education will continue — as science standards continue to be periodically revised — to work for the appropriate inclusion of evolution in state science education standards."

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