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Two years ago, I was invited to the National Education Association ([NEA](#) [7]) meeting in Atlanta, Georgia. With over 3.2 million members, NEA is the largest professional organization and labor union in the

country: an extremely powerful and far-reaching organization. NEA is entirely devoted to educators. Going to the NEA conference is really different from other teacher conferences. There are no workshops, no panels, no presentations in which the NCSE can participate. The teachers are there to organize, to talk education policy, to hash out details and plans for the coming year. The educators at NEA mean business, and it is rare to get an invitation to come and talk about anything else.

That year was different, though. We had been contacted by the president of NEA's Science Caucus, Toby Spencer, with a special invitation. He had watched over the years as creationists set up booths at the NEA exhibit hall to distribute material to teachers. As a science teacher, he was deeply concerned. Spencer requested that the creationists not be allowed to exhibit at NEA, but he was shouted down at the general meeting when he brought it up. So, out of desperation and hope, he contacted NCSE. If the creationists were there to spread denial and doubt, could we come and represent the science?

Though I had been working at NCSE for a year. I had no idea what to expect. Would these folks be hostile? How would the teachers respond? What does a creationist booth look like anyway?

When we got to the exhibit hall, I wandered over to the creationist booth and my jaw dropped. In front of me were hundreds of books, DVDs, and handouts spouting creationist myths and targeting evolution as falsehoods being distributed to teachers. It nearly paralyzed me to watch as teachers, attracted by the glow of free, new materials, took stacks to distribute back home. I saw thirty years of NCSE's good work slowly wash away as each teacher took a book or DVD. What was worse was the knowledge that many, if not all of them, thought they were receiving good and legitimate science. The teachers were being fooled.

Now, I could spend the rest of this post talking about the many reasons why this is a problem. I could talk about how creationist myths misrepresent the evidence for evolution and the nature of science. I could talk about how by distributing this material, the creationists are setting teachers up for painful and expensive lawsuits, as teaching creationism in public schools has been found to be [unconstitutional](#) [8]. Or I could simply ask if it wouldn't be better **not** to waste students' time.

But I want to talk about what NCSE is doing about this. Never one to hide in the face of controversy, NCSE is returning to NEA this week. This time, though, we won't be alone. Sharing a booth sponsored by the NEA Science Caucus, we are teaming up with the National Association of Biology Teachers ([NABT](#) [9]) to bring science to the exhibit halls of NEA. We'll be there chatting with teachers, giving them good resources on evolution, and signing them up for our new [teacher network](#) [10]. In addition, the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's [BioInteractive](#) [11] program has very generously donated a giant stack of posters and DVDs for us to distribute to teachers as they walk by. We have rounded up our allies and are ready to share the "good stuff" with teachers from across the country. Two years ago, I was shocked and saddened by what I saw. This year I feel prepared and excited for NCSE to be a strong advocate for science.

Are you a teacher at NEA? Stop by our booth with NABT and the NEA Science Caucus! To find out more about the NEA Science Caucus, you can visit the booth or [their website](#) [12]!

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