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As the October 16, 2017, public hearing in Santa Fe on the new state science standards proposed for New Mexico approaches, there is no sign of the opposition to their omission of references to evolution, human responsibility for climate change, and the age of the earth abating.

As NCSE previously reported, the proposed standards are modeled on the performance expectations of the Next Generation Science Standards, which have been adopted by eighteen states and the District of Columbia so far. But, as *Mother Jones* (September 15, 2017) [observed](#) [4], "the draft released by New Mexico's education officials changes the language of a number of NGSS guidelines, downplaying the rise in global temperatures, striking references to human activity as the primary cause of climate change, and cutting one mention of evolution while weakening others."

On October 10, 2017, the Albuquerque Public Schools Board of Education voted 5-1 to recommend the adoption of the entire NGSS unedited rather than the proposed science standards, noting that "the changes do not reflect valid science information as we understand it today." [According](#) [5] to the *Albuquerque Journal* (October 10, 2017), the superintendent of the Albuquerque Public Schools sent a separate letter opposing the proposed standards, highlighting "possible economic impacts if national businesses don't move to New Mexico because they believe the state's workforce is not well-educated."

The Albuquerque district is the largest in the state, but it is not alone. As NCSE previously reported, the Los Alamos School Board recommended adoption of the NGSS with the addition of certain New-Mexico-

specific standards rather than the proposed standards, while the Santa Fe School Board unanimously voted to recommend the adoption of the NGSS and furthermore agreed to stage a teach-in at the Public Education Department in Santa Fe on October 13, 2017. The school board and the superintendent in Las Cruces have also expressed concern about the proposed standards, [reports](#) [6] the *Las Cruces Sun-News* (October 6, 2017).

Opposition continues to come from the state's scientific community as well. Over sixty scientists at Los Alamos National Laboratories signed a [letter](#) [7] (PDF) that appeared as a full-page advertisement in the *Santa Fe New Mexican* on October 9, 2017, stressing that "There is absolutely no scientific rationale for weakening the treatment of these subjects." Previously, the faculty senate at New Mexico Tech sent a [letter](#) [8] objecting to the divergences of the proposed standards from the NGSS and urging the adoption of the NGSS. Further statements from faculty at New Mexico's colleges and universities are expected.

As NCSE previously [reported](#) [9], the New Mexico Science Teachers' Association, the National Education Association — New Mexico, the LANL Foundation, the National Science Teachers Association, and the National Association of Biology Teachers have all expressed their opposition to the proposed standards, as have the state's leading newspapers, the *Santa Fe New Mexican*, the *Las Cruces Sun-News*, and the *Albuquerque Journal*, which memorably described them as "fly[ing] in the face of accepted science" and "breathtaking in their offensiveness."

The origin of the proposed standards is still mysterious. KOB-4 in Albuquerque (October 12, 2017) [asked](#) [10] the Public Education Department, "If we're basing our science standards off a national standard, why are we changing some of the key terminologies when it comes to climate change? Why are we eliminating some of the discussion about evolution and the earth's age? Who had input on developing the new standards and making these changes?" Secretary-Designate of Education Christopher Ruszkowski's answer was not responsive to any of the station's questions.

There is still time — if only a few days' worth — for concerned New Mexicans to protest the proposed standards. The Public Education Department will be [accepting](#) [11] written comments on the standards from the public through October 16, 2017 and will then hold a public hearing in Santa Fe.

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