



# 2018 Annual Report



**NCSE** National Center for  
Science Education





## OUR MISSION

**NCSE promotes and defends accurate and effective science education, because everyone deserves to engage with the evidence.**



## At NCSE, we know that evidence is greater than misinformation.

But, as we've also learned, evidence alone won't win the day when it comes to helping students and their families grasp the science of climate change and evolution. To overcome misinformation—and for that matter misconceptions, and distortions of science—evidence needs to be presented in such a way that it can be held up, examined, and understood. Usually with the guidance of someone—whether it's a science teacher or an outreach leader—who's able to navigate the shoals of polarized perspectives.

In 2018, we took our ideas about evidence, misinformation, and science learning on the road. We launched our Teacher Ambassador program and, after meeting with the first cohort focused on climate change, produced and published evidence- and misconception-based lessons, freely available to anyone, with evolution lessons from our second cohort of teacher ambassadors to follow. We worked in communities around the country through our science outreach program, leading climate change and evolution activities that were fun, engaging, and that always included an examination of evidence. And we continued to monitor and respond to threats to accurate science education as we helped defeat nine anti-science measures in five different states.

The secret sauce of our work, and what really held sway in our efforts to overcome misinformation, was local leadership. Our teacher ambassadors were recruited precisely because they've figured out ways to deal respectfully with denial and misinformation among students, parents, and community members, in places where there are often persistent ideological obstacles to accepted climate and evolution science. They began preparing to provide professional learning to local colleagues on both the content and pedagogy of the misconception-based lessons they helped write, as well as the techniques they use to deal with ideological resistance, and to spread these state-of-the-art approaches throughout their communities.

When students, teachers, administrators, and for that matter all community members are confident about their ability to think like scientists, they can fight back against misinformation by recognizing faulty reasoning, false equivalence, and other tricks aimed at distorting scientific evidence. These skills will be vital in solving the problems of our world, problems that demand a scientifically empowered citizenry.

Thank you for supporting us in this work. We cannot do it without you.

Sincerely,



Ann Reid

*Executive Director*





At the National Center for Science Education, we help ensure students across the country get the accurate, effective evolution and climate science education they deserve.

## Our work is based on a simple but powerful premise:

local leaders—master science teachers, community outreach organizers, and citizens mobilized against threats to science education—are in the best position to help their communities overcome misconceptions and misinformation about climate change and evolution.

## How do we do it?

### Supporting Teachers

In communities where climate change and evolution are socially contentious, many educators avoid teaching those topics. We met this challenge by launching our Teacher Ambassador Program. NCSE Teacher Ambassadors train their peers to present customized classroom lessons with the aim of helping students overcome misconceptions about climate change and evolution.

#### In 2018, Supporting Teachers:

- launched its Teacher Ambassador Program with 18 Teacher Ambassadors in 14 states.
- brought the teacher ambassadors together with content and pedagogy experts to develop two five-lesson units—one on evolution, one on climate change—that the teacher ambassadors tested in their classrooms. The climate change lessons are freely available online.
- partnered with the Center for Climate Change Communication at George Mason University and the University of California Museum of Paleontology to plan, implement, and assess the workshops.
- facilitated webinars on the climate lessons with more than 400 registered attendees.
- publish its monthly e-newsletter containing vetted teaching resources and latest news, which was sent to 6,000 subscribers.

## Breaking Down Barriers

Our science education outreach efforts address a “science deficit” in areas where community members have few opportunities to interact with science and scientists. We train and support local volunteer leaders who facilitate engaging, inquiry-based activities at libraries, science museums, and other public community locations and events.

### In 2018, Breaking Down Barriers:

- was active in nine sites around the country.
- engaged with more than 3,000 children and adults at local events ranging from a town library to the Iowa County Fair.
- developed and shared with dozens of volunteer leaders five activity kits, such as Rising Tides, about sea-level rise, and Walk (Bipedally) Like a Chimp, about the evolution of human locomotion.
- trained docents and volunteers in its no-conflict approach at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History.

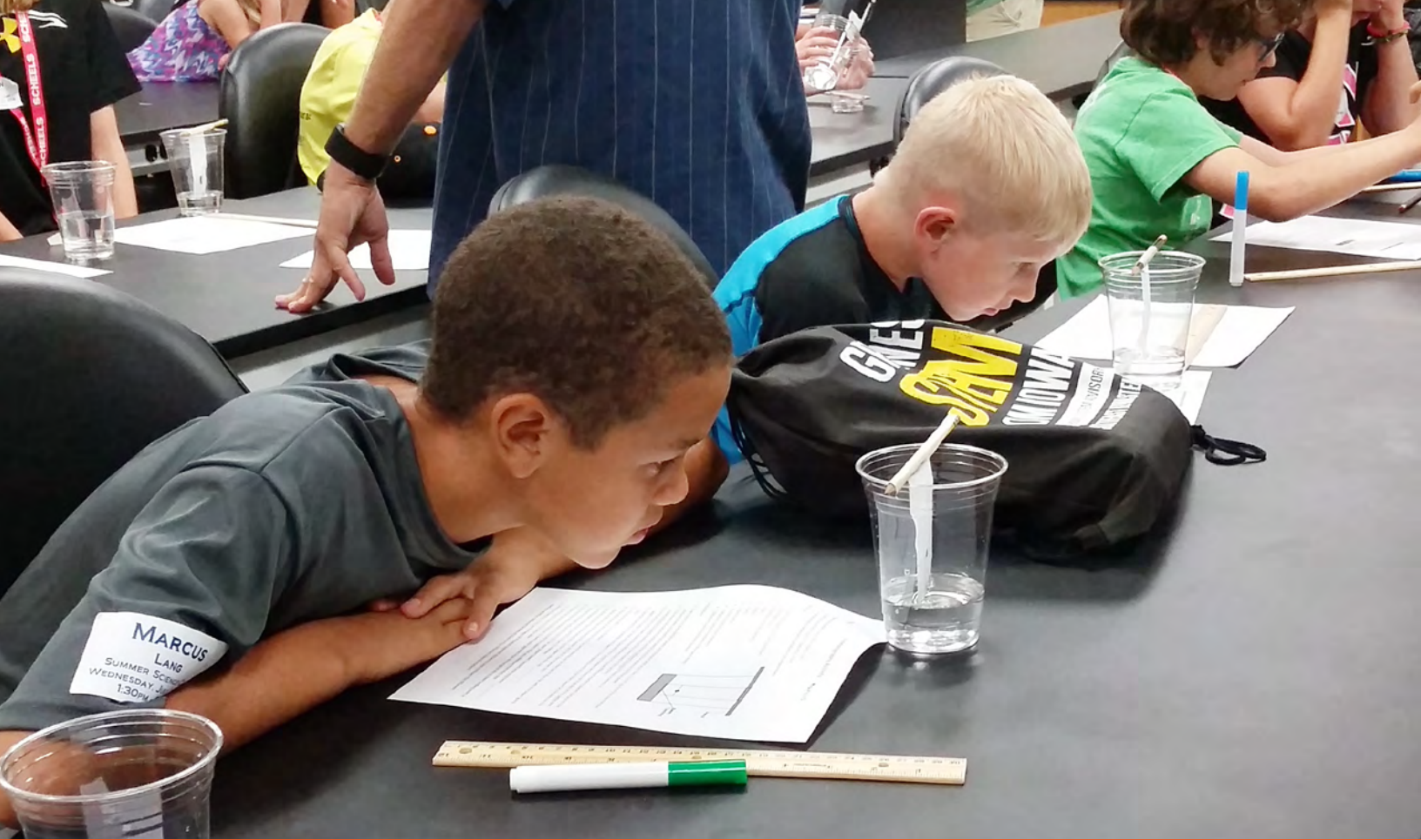
## Catalyzing Action

We have a well-earned reputation for having our finger on the pulse of state and local actions affecting science education, and being the go-to source, for the public generally and the news media specifically, for up-to-date information on threats to the integrity of science taught in the classroom. We help students, parents, administrators, and concerned citizens block threats to accurate evolution and climate science education.

### In 2018, Catalyzing Action:

- helped defeat nine anti-science bills in five states.
- generated support for high quality state science standards in six states.
- authored or provided background information for 40 articles, commentaries, and media pieces in outlets such as the *New York Times* and *PBS Frontline*.





## A Look Ahead

### As 2019 unfolds, we've begun scaling up our programming.

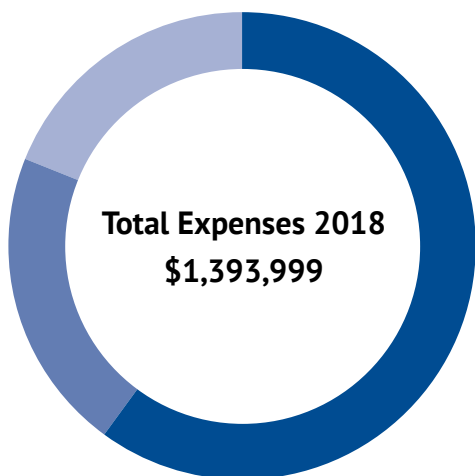
- We recruited six graduate students to participate as fellows in a rigorous year-long fellowship program that will provide the skills they need to lead community science education activities and become masterful science communicators.
- We developed six additional evolution and climate change science activities and disseminated them to our “Breaking Down Barriers” volunteer leaders across the country.
- We recruited a third cohort of master teachers and trained them to serve as NCSE Teacher Ambassadors for climate education.
- We identified 18 anti-science measures proposed in statehouses across the nation.

“As we struggle as a society with the implications of unlimited access to information of uncertain provenance and unequal accuracy, the kind of critical thinking that a good science education provides has never been more important.”

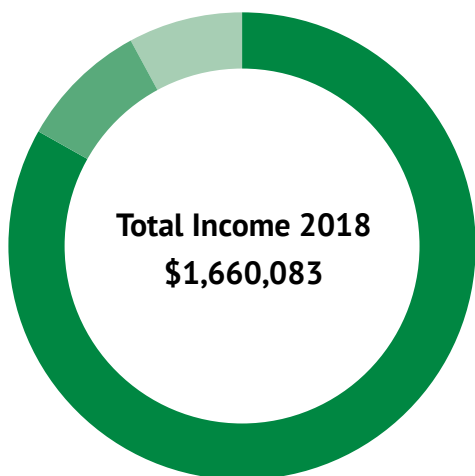
**Ann Reid**  
*Executive Director*

## Financial Report

We are grateful for the ongoing support and dedication of the individual supporters and foundations who make our work possible.



- Program: \$779,413 (60%)
- General and Administration: \$272,268 (21%)
- Fundraising: \$242,318 (19%)



- Individuals: \$1,384,803 (83%)
- Earned income: \$155,934 (9%)
- Foundations: \$119,346 (7%)

## Board of Directors

### Officers

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*Informal Learning Experiences, Inc.*

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*Harvard University*

**Barry Polisky**  
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**Benjamin D. Santer**  
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*Executive Director*

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*Director of Development*

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*Editor, Reports of the NCSE*

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*Deputy Director of Communications (through February)*

**Paul Oh**  
*Director of Communications*

**Emily Schoerning**  
*Director of Community Organizing and Research (through May)*



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