

The Board of Education of USD 437, Auburn - Washburn, recently voted to return the state science standards and to adopt the science writing committee's Fifth Working Draft instead.

Kansas Citizens for Science applauds this action, and encourages all local school boards to place a similar item on their agenda for discussion.

USD 437, Auburn-Washburn, Resolution to Adopt Fifth Working Draft

DATE: April 26, 2000

FROM: Board of Education, USD 437, Stephen A. Angel, President

TO: Kansas State Board of Education

REFERENCE: Kansas K-12 Science Standards

The Auburn-Washburn USD-437 Board of Education unanimously passed the following resolution: "Draft Five of the Science Standards, as composed by the Kansas Science Writing Committee, shall be used to supplement K-12 science curriculum design in this district." The vote on this resolution resulted from a comparison of the two Kansas science standards documents - Draft Five and the SBOE adopted standards. Our assessment is encapsulated in the following four-point summary.

1. The Kansas State Board of Education (SBOE) appointed and charged a competent committee of Kansas scientists, science educators and administrators to generate K-12 Kansas science standards. Pursuant to a year of study, rewrites, reviews and input from Kansas patrons, this committee generated science standards consistent with national expectations yet sensitive to the values of Kansas citizens.
2. The SBOE document was confusing, incorrect, and inconsistent with post-secondary expectations. There are grammatical mistakes and misrepresentations of the scientific language throughout the SBOE document. There are additional SBOE indicators and definitions which are philosophically interesting but scientifically inaccurate. Finally, the SBOE document omits reference to knowledge which could jeopardize student performance on national and international platforms.
3. Auburn-Washburn educators are sensitive to the strong and varied religious beliefs of their students and district patrons. Methods to address standards where religion and science may appear to conflict are best articulated in Draft Five. In particular, students will be required to understand scientific theories without being compelled to believe in them.
4. A mission of the Auburn-Washburn educational community is to implement curriculum "which can provide for the individual and diverse needs of students and guarantee success for all learners." Adoption of Draft Five is consistent with this mission.