



STATE OF DELAWARE  
**STATE COUNCIL FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

MARGARET M. O'NEILL BUILDING  
410 FEDERAL STREET, SUITE 1  
DOVER, DE 19901

VOICE: (302) 739-3620  
TTY/TDD: (302) 739-3699  
FAX: (302) 739-6704

August 29, 2013

Ms. Susan K. Haberstroh, Ed.D.  
Department of Education  
401 Federal Street – Suite 2  
Dover, DE 19901

RE: 17 DE Reg. 148 [DOE Proposed State Science Content Standards Regulation]

Dear Ms. Haberstroh:

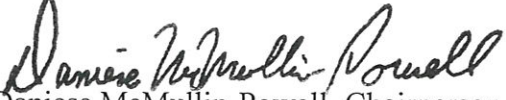
The State Council for Persons with Disabilities (SCPD) has reviewed the Department of Education's (DOE's) proposal to amend its content standards regulation by adopting "Next Generation Science Standards". The NGSS standards were developed in partnership with twenty-six (26) states, including Delaware. The proposed regulation was published as 17 DE Reg. 148 in the August 1, 2013 issue of the Register of Regulations.

As background, the attached August 5, 2013 News Journal article provides useful background on the initiative. Some Delaware teachers and a DuPont scientist were involved in the development of the standards. The standards include the science of evolution and humans' effect on global climate change. According to the article, some critics have expressed reservations about the standards. For example, climate change and sea level rise education could potentially affect property values and construction at Delaware beaches. Others decry a perceived loss of local control over standards.

SCPD endorses the proposed regulation. For a small state like Delaware, there is great value in partnering with a large consortium of other states to develop evidence-based standards based on "mainstream" science. This approach also reduces prospects for local political interests attempting to skew standards based on considerations apart from "mainstream" science (e.g. business interests could attempt to suppress student exposure to environmental issues).

Thank you for your consideration and please contact SCPD if you have any questions or comments regarding our position on the proposed regulation.

Sincerely,

  
Daniese McMullin-Powell, Chairperson  
State Council for Persons with Disabilities

cc: The Honorable Mark Murphy, Secretary of Education  
Dr. Donna Mitchell, Professional Standards Board  
Dr. Teri Quinn Gray, State Board of Education  
Ms. Mary Ann Mieczkowski  
Ms. Paula Fontello, Esq.  
Ms. Terry Hickey, Esq.  
Mr. John Hindman, Esq.  
Mr. Brian Hartman, Esq.  
Developmental Disabilities Council  
Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens

17reg148 doe-ngss 8-29-13.doc

8-5-13  
PJ

# National science standards considered for Delaware teachers

By Matthew Albright  
The News Journal

As Delaware teachers bring their reading and math teaching in line with national standards, Delaware is headed toward adopting a similar program for science courses.

But the standards could again raise debate over teaching evolution and climate change in schools, and some parents are worried they

could be losing control over what their kids are learning.

The Next Generation Science Standards are designed to make science classes more rigorous and to bridge a sometimes wide divide in what is taught in different states, proponents say.

"These are standards that are going to make your child competitive in a global society," said

See STANDARDS, Page A5

# Standards: State board planning to vote in Sept.

Continued from Page A1

Tonya Mead, science associate at the Department of Education.

Among other changes, Mead says the standards aim to engage students in the scientific process.

In the fourth grade, for example, Delaware's current standards require students to know life cycles for a variety of plants and animals. The new standards, Mead said, would require students to analyze the life cycles for their differences.

The State Board of Education is set to discuss the standards at its meeting this month, and will vote next month on whether to adopt them.

The standards include the science of evolution and humans' effects on global climate change.

Delaware's existing standards include evolution, Mead said. She emphasized that both topics are taught "not as an understanding of belief, but an understanding of concepts that are fundamental to our understanding of biology."

Climate change is an important concept for students to know, she said.

"The goal is to give students the facts of what we know, so they can hold a healthy debate based on the evidence," she said.

But teaching climate change has faced opposition in Delaware.

In January, the Sea Level Rise Advisory Committee debated including climate change and sea level rise in public schools. After some members criticized the plan, the committee proposed general public education without specific mention of schoolchildren.

One of those critics was Rich Collins, president of the Positive Growth Alliance.

"What they'll do is, once they indoctrinate our children, which they will, they're going to tell us that we won't be able to go buy gasoline to go on vacation, that we have to build our house in a certain place and that we have to get the blessing of the people who are in control who are better than us," Collins said.

The committee was created by Collin O'Mara, state environmental secretary, to address the effects of sea level rise on Delaware's coasts. Sussex County's representative on that committee announced in May that he had been instructed to abstain from any recommen-

## SCIENCE STANDARDS MEETINGS

The meetings will be hosted at 6 p.m. on the following dates and locations:

- Tuesday, Carvel State Office Building, 9th and French streets, Wilmington
- Wednesday, Carvel Research and Education Center, 16483 County Seat Highway, Georgetown
- Thursday, Department of Agriculture, 2320 South DuPont Highway, Dover
- Aug. 12, DNREC Lewes Field Facility, 901 Pilottown Road
- Aug. 13, Middletown High School, 120 Silver Lake Road

dation vote — some county officials questioned the science behind climate change.

Some parents are concerned that the standards will leave less control in the hands of local community.

Evan Queitsch is a member of the Delaware Education Reform Coalition, a group of parents, grandparents and teachers who have rallied against a national math and reading standards program.

"This is another national set of standards, as opposed to state or local standards," Queitsch said.

Queitsch also points to groups that have criticized the standards. The Fordham Institute, an Ohio-based education policy think-tank, gave the standards a "C" grade, rating it barely better than Delaware's existing standards.

But Michael Watson, head of teaching and learning at the Department of Education, says the standards are more rigorous. "Scientists and educators, including Nobel laureates, have attested to the high-quality con-

tent and rigor of the Next Generation Science Standards," Watson said.

State officials also emphasize that the standards merely outline what students should know, not telling districts or individual teachers how to go about giving students that knowledge. They also say Delaware has had ample input into the creation of the standards.

Delaware is one of 26 "lead states" that has helped to develop the standards. Some of its teachers and local science leaders, including a scientist from DuPont, were involved in writing them.

Mead said it makes sense for Delaware to be a leader in the standards movement because many families move into or out of Delaware from other states.

The Department of Education is hosting a series of public meetings to discuss the standards. Queitsch said his group is planning to attend some of those meetings to share their concerns.

Matthew Albright can be reached at malbright@delawareonline.com or at 324-2426. Follow him on Twitter @TNJ\_malbright.