

Current Issues

Intelligent Design

The "Intelligent Design (ID) Movement" is comprised of a diverse group of persons - including philosophers, lawyers, theologians, public policy advocates, and scientific or technical professionals - who believe that contemporary evolutionary theory is inadequate to explain the diversity and complexity of life on Earth. They argue that a full scientific explanation of the structures and processes of life requires reference to an intelligent agent beyond nature. The ID Movement seeks to modify public science education policy at state and local levels to allow inclusion of the Movement's critiques of evolutionary theory and its assertions of an extra-natural origin of biological diversity and complexity. Institutionally, the Movement is supported by the Center for Science and Culture of the Discovery Institute and has also created its own virtual professional society to promote its views. However, all other relevant professional scientific organizations judge the ID Movement to be outside of mainstream science and its theoretical proposals to be unwarranted on the basis of observations from nature and laboratory experiments.

AAAS Resolution

[AAAS Board Resolution on Intelligent Design Theory](#) AAAS Board of Directors October 18, 2002 [Download PDF](#).

General

[Doubting Darwin](#), by Jerry Adler, *Newsweek*, February 7, 2005

[Science Classes Are for Science, Not Faith](#), by Alan Leshner, AAAS CEO, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, February 2, 2005

[The Crusade Against Evolution](#), by Evan Ratliff, *Wired*, October 2004

[In Defense of Darwin and a Former Icon of Evolution](#), by Fiona Proffitt, *Science*, June 25, 2004

[Political Challenges to the Teaching of Evolution](#)
American Geological Institute

Intelligent Design and Peer Review

In June 2004, a paper by Stephen Meyer advocating Intelligent Design was published in the Proceedings of the Biological Society of Washington (i.e., DC). The paper marks the first time a paper advocating Intelligent Design has been published in a peer-reviewed scientific journal. However, the Council of the Society maintains that the paper was published without their knowledge and have deemed the paper inappropriate for the journal. [Read more about this issue.](#)

Santorum Amendment

In early 2002, President Bush signed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (popularly known as the No Child Left Behind bill) into law. The bill included a nonbinding "sense of the Senate" amendment offered by Sen. Rick Santorum (R.-PA) stating that "where biological evolution is taught, the curriculum should help students to understand why the subject generates so much continuing controversy." Before final passage the Conference Committee removed the Amendment from the legislation proper but retained a somewhat revised form as part of an "explanatory statement" related to the bill. Opponents to the measure maintain that by citing evolution specifically as a controversial topic the bill is not intended to encourage critical thinking among students, but rather to discredit evolution theories.

[Read related articles about the Santorum amendment.](#)

State Science Education Standards

General

[Teachers Torn over Religion, Evolution](#), by Sean Cavanagh, *Education Week*, February 5, 2005
Registration is free, but required, to view this article.

[Evolution Takes a Back Seat in U.S. Classes](#), by Cornelia Dean, *The New York Times*, February 1, 2005. *Registration is free, but required, to view this article.*

Fordham Foundation Report - [Good Science, Bad Science: Teaching Evolution in the States](#) (2000)

State Issues

[Georgia](#) | [Kansas](#) | [Maryland](#) | [Missouri](#) | [Montana](#) | [Ohio](#) | [Pennsylvania](#)

Georgia

In the ongoing controversy surrounding the content of its science curriculum, the Georgia Education Board proposed new guidelines for the science education curriculum that remove the word "evolution," and also omitted references to the age of the earth, the process of natural selection, human impact on the environment, and the Big Bang and age of the universe.

Although the Big Bang and the "e-word" were restored, it is unclear if the other content will be restored in the final draft. Changes are to take effect in May, 2004. In 2002 the Cobb County, Georgia, school board approved a policy that asserted that "discussion of disputed views of academic subjects is a necessary element of providing a balanced education, including the study of the origin of the species." In adopting its policy the Board specifically denied that it should be interpreted "to promote or require the teaching of creationism." In August, 2002 parents of Cobb County school children sued the Cobb County Board of Education to have "disclaimer stickers" removed from science textbooks. The stickers caution that the books contain information about evolution. The stickers state, in part: "Evolution is a theory, not a fact, regarding the origin of living things."

Updated 2/3/2005

[Read the text of the proposed policy, a letter from the Georgia Academy of Science, and related articles.](#)

Kansas

In August 1999, the Kansas Board of Education acted to eliminate macroevolution and Big Bang cosmology from the State's science education standards. In 2001, the board voted to adopt new standards that reinstated the study of evolution, the origins of life and the cosmos. During the 2004 election cycle four members of the Board who support the reinstated standards will be up for reelection. This section contains the Kansas Standards, news reports and commentary on the School Board's action and statements by national science organizations.

Updated 2/25/2005

[Read institutional statements and related articles.](#)

Maryland

The Charles County Board of Education is in the process of adopting a new policy to guide curriculum development. Prior to the fall election in a brainstorming session the board developed a nearly 100-item long list of "goals" that included distribution of Bibles to students, censoring school reading lists of books containing "immorality or foul language," and eliminating science books that are "biased toward evolution" but including videos and textbooks that promote creationism. The school board has stated that the list was not necessarily intended to be enacted as policy. Meanwhile, school officials in Cecil County are preparing to vote on the adoption of a new high school biology textbook. Some board members have criticized the way evolution is currently taught in science classes, urging the board members to adopt a textbook that teaches criticisms to the theory of evolution.

Updated 2/9/2005

[Read related articles](#)

Missouri

The Missouri General Assembly has introduced a bill requiring equal time be given to evolution and intelligent design in science classes. House Bill 911 includes a long list of proposed idiosyncratic definitions of terms and concepts such as "analogous naturalistic process," "biological intelligent design," "destiny," and "extrapolated radiometric data."

Updated 2/17/2004

[Read the proposed curricula and related articles.](#)

Montana

In December of 2003 a "town meeting" was called in Darby, Montana, to discuss the possibility of including elements of Intelligent Design into the science curriculum of the public schools. More than 200 students, parents and community members attended the presentation by Intelligent Design advocates, launching a community-wide debate over the inclusion of anti-evolution hypotheses in the science curriculum. The school board subsequently approved a science curriculum that includes "alternate theories of origin," including Intelligent Design. In

response, concerned parents, with the support of the newly formed Ravalli County Citizens for Science, have threatened to sue Darby county school officials for the inclusion of religious materials in the curriculum. The Darby, Montana dispute provides an interesting case-study in Intelligent Design initiatives taking place at a grass-roots, rather than state level.

Updated 7/7/2004

[Read related articles and listen to related stories on NPR.](#)

Ohio

The State School Board of Ohio voted 13-4 on February 10, 2004 expressing its intent to adopt lesson plans for 10th grade science classes that indirectly encourage teaching Intelligent Design theory while offering views about evolution that some scientists say are inaccurate. The point of dispute in the lesson plans is a section that purports to be a "critical analysis of evolution," which encourages students to consider arguments for and against evolution. Three web sites that advocate intelligent design are included in the plan's list of "Technology Connections." In 2002 the State of Ohio approved new science education standards for the public schools. During the approval process Intelligent Design theory advocates lobbied unsuccessfully for alternative theories to evolution to be included in the standards. The board approved science standards that included the disclaimer that the standards do not "mandate the teaching or testing of intelligent design." The present controversy appears to reflect efforts by Intelligent Design advocates to accomplish at the level of curriculum what they were unable to accomplish with respect to the standards.

Updated 10/19/2004

[Read the proposed curricula and related articles.](#)

Pennsylvania

The Dover Area School Board in Dover, Pennsylvania has recently positioned itself in the forefront of the Intelligent Design controversy by becoming the first school district to require the teaching of Intelligent Design. In June of 2004, school board member William Buckingham rejected a biology textbook saying it was "laced with Darwinism." He subsequently recommended the textbook "Of Pandas and People: The Central Question of Biological Origins" as a supplemental textbook. "Of Pandas" advocates Intelligent Design as a viable scientific alternative to the contemporary theory of evolution. The board held several meetings with teachers beginning as early as May 2004 to discuss science education standards. Dover-area teachers say they were directed to develop a curriculum that would include a critique of evolution and allow competing theories to be presented. Shortly after an agreement was reached by board members and educators allowing for "Of Pandas" to be available as a supplemental text, but not a part of the lesson plan, the board voted to require Intelligent Design to be taught in all high school biology courses.

Updated 1/12/2005

[Read related stories, Pennsylvania's academic science standards and the Dover Area School Board Science Curriculum Guide.](#)