



Position Statement on the Revision of the Georgia Performance Standards in Science

The Georgia Science Teachers Association is an organization that seeks to expand levels of student achievement in Georgia. We are the premier organization in the state for sharing best practices in science education. The association represents science teachers from around the state who teach in a variety of schools and contexts.

Science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) industries are the drivers of tomorrow's economy. According to the Department of Commerce, from 2000 to 2010, jobs in STEM fields grew at three times the rate of any other field. Through 2018, jobs in STEM fields are expected to increase by 17 percent, nearly double the projected growth rate of other jobs. Our state's future economic success, and that of our students, is closely tied to developing a workforce with the talent, creativity and knowledge to innovate in STEM fields.

The Georgia Science Teachers Association believes that the time has come for the existing Georgia Performance Standards in science to be reviewed and revised. For the benefit of Georgia's students, an assessment of our current standards must be completed as soon as possible. We believe that the review should be informed by the vetted research which serves as the foundation of Next Generation Science Standards and of the *Framework for K-12 Science Education*. Both of these documents are based on internationally benchmarked research into how students learn science content and college and career readiness, and will prove to be an essential, promising part of strengthening K-12 STEM education in Georgia.

Georgia has the opportunity to take a step towards ensuring that all our students have access to a world-class science education by conducting this review. These internationally benchmarked standards are the work of accomplished, practicing K-16 educators and researchers from 26 states, including Georgia, working together. The standards were developed through a state-led process in which Georgia served as a lead state. Citizens and educators from within our state provided valuable feedback and leadership in every draft of the standards. There is no federal support of these standards and no federal incentives tied to their review or adoption. Our support is founded in a belief that Georgia's students deserve the right to a science education that provides them with the knowledge, skills, and education they will need to succeed in school and to support our state's economy at nationally and globally competitive levels.

It is our desire that every child in Georgia will receive a high quality science education that will prepare them for life and work in the 21st century. In order for that to occur, our students need a set of challenging science standards that will provide them with the knowledge and skills needed for success. We strongly encourage Georgia's elected officials and state leaders to actively support science education for all students by moving forward with this evaluation and review during the 2014-2015 academic year.

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