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Governor Susana Martinez
New Mexico Acting Secretary of Education Christopher Ruskowski
New Mexico Representatives and Senators
Citizens of New Mexico

Dear Governor Martinez, Secretary Ruskowski, Legislators, and New Mexico Citizens,

It has recently come to my attention that the state of New Mexico is considering adopting altered Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). I am concerned about this for many reasons. First of all, NGSS were developed by numerous diverse scientists and experts who spent many years developing and refining standards that would ensure students were college- and/or career-ready by utilizing "internationally benchmarked" science content. We should not undermine their work and expertise. Secondly, N.M. students time and time again have ranked low on educational attainment and performance. Are these adjusted standards going to continue to increase the achievement gap in our students upon graduation?

Being both a parent and teacher makes me think that we are not going to be adequately preparing our children to apply to colleges and careers in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) fields in comparison to their peers who attended schools who did adopt NGSS.

Finally, as a teacher, I know by adopting the NGSS as they were originally created, will ensure I can collaborate equally with educators and experts across the United States when developing lessons and curricular resources for my students.

I strongly feel that NOT adopting NGSS as they were created is NOT what is best for our students in the state of New Mexico. Please reconsider this decision and make a decision that will make New Mexico students an asset to the future of STEM in our state.

Respectfully,
Michelle Estrada
Kindergarten Teacher, Desert Hills Elementary, Las Cruces Public Schools
2010 Presidential Awardee for Excellence in Math and Science Teaching
2011 Las Cruces Public Schools Teacher of the Year