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OUR MISSION

The Las Cruces Public Schools, in partnership with students, families, and the community, provides a student-centered learning environment that cultivates character, fosters academic excellence, and embraces diversity.

505 S. Main St., Suite 249
Las Cruces, NM 88001
575.527.5807
www.lcps.k12.nm.us

October 3, 2017

Christopher N. Ruszkowski
Acting Secretary of Education
New Mexico Public Education Department
300 Don Gaspar Ave.
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Dear Mr. Secretary:

As the state moves forward with the long-anticipated adoption of new science standards, the Las Cruces Public Schools wishes to express concerns about key omissions in the proposed New Mexico STEM-Ready Science Standards. As an early adopter of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), LCPS recognizes the need for a revised vision of science education to prepare students for college, career and citizenship. However, there is great concern that omissions in standards that support conceptual understanding of complex systems will have a lasting detrimental impact on science education. The removal of terminology such as *evolution* and *climate change* flies in the face of the evidence accepted by the majority of the scientific community. These omissions dilute the accuracy of key scientific concepts that may forever impact the science literacy of students.

Public schools have the responsibility to provide students with the skills required to become critical thinkers, capable of analyzing evidence and constructing arguments based on the evidence. Taking on topics that are controversial and engaging with content that has multiple interpretations is key to giving students the opportunity to participate in authentic scientific inquiry. Removing these topics would deny New Mexico students access to scientific inquiry, examination, and debate that is fostered among students in states across the nation. Such a policy decision would marginalize New Mexico students and render them less able to compete with their peers across the nation and the globe.

The Las Cruces Public Schools continues to experience success with the implementation of rigorous science standards. In 2015, LCPS began integrating the Next Generation Science Standards, without modification, into science curricula in grades 6-8. Science educators and stakeholders have embraced these changes and there has been a notable increase in student achievement in science in the middle grades.

Adopting modified standards not only imperils the education of students, but potentially the economic future of our state. New Mexico can never hope to improve quality of education, and in turn quality of life, if the state implements policies that drive away industry and leave residents with fewer opportunities for high wage employment.

Christopher N. Ruszkowski
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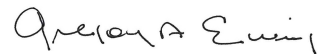
On behalf of the students of New Mexico, now and future, we implore you to provide them with access to science education that is afforded to students across the nation. Maintain the integrity of science education by ensuring the NGSS standards are adopted as designed, without omission of key scientific concepts.

This letter was unanimously approved by the Las Cruces Board of Education on October 3, 2017.

Respectfully,



Sra. Maria Flores
President
Las Cruces Board of Education
sraflores@lcps.net



Gregory Ewing, Ed.D.
Superintendent
575.527.5807
gewing@lcps.net