

Proposed new science standards not the solution

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The fourth annual Indian River Lagoon Science Festival at Veterans Memorial Park on Saturday, October 14, 2017 in Fort Pierce. (Photo: HOBIE HILER/SPECIAL TO TCPALM)

If you want to know what's wrong with the water, don't ask the fish. Reps. McCamley and Romero, having grown up in NM schools, know something is wrong, but their prescription for fixing it - full implementation of the so-called "Next Generation Science Standards" (NGSS) - is completely wrongheaded.

McCamley and Romero blame Gov. Martinez for not implementing what amount to standards infiltrated by left-wing dogma, yet the revised PED standards retain much of the weaknesses and vagueries of the full NGSS. But weak how? Here are some examples...

Does it bother anyone that NGSS mentions amino acids, yet does not cover acids, bases or pH? Or super novae, or black holes? Or mention metamorphic, sedimentary or igneous rock types? What about simple chemistry experiments like titration, hydrolysis of water, milk-based glue, precipitates and solutions? Not even growing crystals?

Under energy, electric circuits are referred to, but not resistors, capacitors, inductors or diodes. Students study electro-magnetic forces (3-PS2-3) but lack knowledge of the electronics that make them possible.

McCamley and Romero falsely claim that the NGSS will provide students with hands-on experience, yet only two experiments are mentioned under physical science. Skill with equipment like bunsen burners, precision balances, and test tubes, all chem lab staples, appear unnecessary under NGSS.

Rather than hands-on experiments, students will mainly be using Bill Gates' Microsoft computers loaded with Pearson Education (PARCC testing) blessed software. (Cha-ching!) Frankly, more web surfing is not the solution.

As for lack of evolution, age of the Earth and climate change elements in the proposed revisions, none of the objectives in these study areas involve experiments. Instead they feature spoon-fed information. This rote memorization is exactly what McCamley and Romero swore was not in the new standards. Wrongo!

In fact, these three areas are not amenable to testing. They are all in either the unrepeatable past or the unobservable future. Hands-on experiments require repeatability, procedures simple enough, and for school settings, must be completed within a school day, requirements that are impossible for these subjects.

But no one can repeat the formation of the Earth, evolution events (mice to rats), or climate disasters 100 years from now, so it is all conjecture, and hence from the standpoint of Karl Popper's falsifiability, not truly scientific.

In my view, the over-emphasis on these projects is completely unjustifiable, amounting to further indoctrination, especially in view of the lack of training in many other areas. Sadly, this brain-washing was also likely perpetrated on McCamley and Romero themselves.

Nevertheless, McCamley/Romero's arrogant and faulty logic (ad hominem attacks, appeals to authority ipse dixit), and fear mongering (ad baculum) are still galling. Are we to presume that inventions like the light bulb, microwave oven, refrigerator, elevator, rubber tires, color TV, radios, jet engines, etc., were impossible without being properly brainwashed into dogmatic views of atheistic evolution and human-caused climate change?

If anything, science has had to battle these forces of atheistic ignorance just as much as church-based "consensus" positions. For example, Louis Pasteur confronted the atheistic dogma of spontaneous generation. Yet how will students appreciate his struggle when they won't be taught about viruses and bacteria (uncovered in NGSS)?

Instead, Romero and McCamley bring up the old saw of supposed flat earthers. In their view, of course, I'm one, though I've worked in science for over 35 years. Maybe they should check their own faulty premises (the beam that is in their own eyes) that are clouding their view of the very

real problems with NGSS, and work to fix the old standards rather than charge to support a watered-down, dumbed-down "new" set of standards.

David Tofsted, Ph.D., lives in Las Cruces