

Shelbi Simeone, New Mexico Teaching Policy Fellow: Testimony Before the New Mexico Department of Education in Support of Next Generation Science Standards

My name is Shelbi Simeone and I am a special education teacher and Teach Plus fellow from the Las Cruces school district. We have made a shift to the Common Core Standards for Math and Language Arts, due to the rigorous demand of academics they provide for students to be ready for the college and career world. It is only appropriate that we continue to support the academic needs of our students by implementing the Next Generation Science Standards. The three-dimensional model of the Next Generation Science Standards include eight different Practices, four different Core Ideas, and seven different Crosscutting Concepts. With models that are engraved in multidimensional education, instead of fact based knowledge, there is allowance for not only better teaching, but better overall learning for students.

The current standards that are in place for science education in New Mexico do not promote the STEM ready world we are preparing students for today. The New Mexico Standards are geared towards fact memorization, versus the claim, reasoning, and evidence model that is used in Next Gen. Many of the standards are outdated in their request from the students. For example, only asking students to "Obtain information to identify." Through Next Generation Science Standards students will be more prepared to engage in engineering practices as well as inquiry based learning. According to our newly adopted New Mexico ESSA plan, Science will have to be taught in the elementary grade levels beginning in 2019. The proposed Next Generation Science Standards are the "STEM-Ready" standards that best prepare students, beginning at the age of kindergarten, to be literal in science, as well gain a better conceptual understanding.

A champion educator in Las Cruces made a striking point in noting, "For every 10 scientists that are hired at NASA, 30 engineers are hired." We must prepare our future engineers in the best manner possible. The Next Generation Science Standards allow for that. It is only to the benefit of our students in New Mexico that the council whom recommend the adoption of Next Generation Science Standards was a group of educators from this very state. Whom better to know and advocate for students needs then the professionals whom oversee their education and are in the classroom with them every day. Let us treasure the champion educators in this wonderful state and trust them in their professional knowledge that they have created high quality and rigorous standards that are intended for the upmost future successes of our students. Therefore, I strongly feel that the Next Generation Science Standards need to be adopted in the manner of which they were written and without changes.

Thank you for your time, attention, and consideration.