

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

I am Darlene Fortier and I teach 3rd grade at Cochiti Schools on the Cochiti Reservation. We are a pre-k-8 school with approximately 300 students. We are a small school that is passionate about science. We have utilized the LANL Science Kits from the Los Alamos National Labs Foundation, have a solar car making experience in fifth grade every year, as well as individual classroom activities support by the classroom teachers. Our middle school students have hands-on science daily in grades 6-8.

As the head of the science goal team for the past three years, it was my responsibility to ensure that teachers had resources to teach science. This was not an easy task with lack of funding or time in the day, but we did our best! It was early on that I started to use Next Generation Science Standards after I discovered them through my master's degree program.

While not officially adopted by our state, I found them, and still find them, to be comprehensive, deeply aligned to Common Core State Standards in math and reading, which is bonus for all stakeholders since we are teaching our students through the Common Core State Standards, thus making those connections. We are able to include science in our reading blocks as a result of said alignment. The Next Generation Science Standards are all encompassing. Really, all that a teacher could hope for.

I am here today to implore you to adopt the Next Generation Science Standards in their entirety, as without the framework of the Next Generation Science Standards, we are left flesh without bones. I feel that without said framework, one will create a burden on teachers who want to dig deep and have the resources to do so.

With 19 states having adopted the Next Generation Science Standards as written, a teachers dream of resource sharing is fulfilled as we connect around the country. This would not be the case with the PED STEM-ready standards as they are site specific, so to speak, and then burdensome for us educators. In addition, adding 35 new standards to the already comprehensive Next Generation Science Standards, the stress will be overwhelming in the attempts to implement said PED Stem-Ready standards.

Please adopt the Next Generation Science Standards, as written, with the complete framework intact as a benefit to all of New Mexico's students.

Thank you.