

Stricken language would be deleted from and underlined language would be added to present law.

State of Arkansas
90th General Assembly
Regular Session, 2015

A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1967

By: Representative Bentley

For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT TO REQUIRE THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO DISCONTINUE THE ADOPTION OF THE NEXT GENERATION SCIENCE STANDARDS; TO MAINTAIN THE CURRENT SCIENCE STANDARDS AND ONLY MAKE REVISIONS TO THE CURRENT STANDARDS WITH SCIENCE STANDARDS THAT ARE SUPERIOR TO THE ONES CURRENTLY IN PLACE; TO DECLARE AN EMERGENCY; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Subtitle

TO REQUIRE THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO DISCONTINUE THE ADOPTION OF THE NEXT GENERATION SCIENCE STANDARDS; AND TO DECLARE AN EMERGENCY.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. DO NOT CODIFY.

(a)(1) The Thomas B. Fordham Institute, which testified in favor of Common Core State Standards at the Joint Education Committee meeting in July 2013, has conducted significant research comparing the quality of state standards with Common Core State Standards.

(2) Their reports include Final Evaluation of the Next Generation Science Standards, released on June 13, 2013, followed by Commentary on Appendix L: Alignment of the Next Generation Science Standards with the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics, released on August 20, 2013, which compare Next Generation Science Standards to current state science standards.



(b)(1) The Next Generation Science Standards were released in April 2013.

(2) The Fordham Institute evaluated Next Generation Science Standards compared with all existing state standards, the District of Columbia and two international science standards. They reported, "We released that evaluation in June. It was the considered opinion of the review team based on our criteria, that the Next Generation Science Standards deserve a "C" grade. Among the serious challenges the analysts found in the Next Generation Science Standards was an acute dearth of math content, even in situations where math is essential to the study and proper understanding of the science that students are being asked to master. The failure to include essential math content is particularly troubling in light of statements by the authors of the Next Generation Science Standards that they intended to integrate mathematics into their new science expectations."

(c) Fordham's evaluation found the current science standards of twelve (12) states (including Arkansas whose current science standards earned a grade of "B") and the District of Columbia are "clearly superior" to Next Generation Science Standards.

(d) For states that desire to improve science standards the Fordham study advised, "If they are bent on replacing their science standards, the Next Generation Science Standards is not the only available option, nor is it necessarily the best one. We've noted previously six states received grades of A or A- from Fordham's reviewers for their present science standards. Other states might do well simply to adopt their standards."

SECTION 2. Arkansas Code Title 6, Chapter 15, Subchapter 1, is amended to add an additional section to read as follows:

6-15-103. Science standards.

(a) The State Board of Education shall immediately discontinue any and all efforts to endorse, adopt, rebrand, and implement the Next Generation Science Standards.

(b) The state board shall continue to use the science standards currently in place and only revise the current standards with science standards that have been nationally recognized as superior to the science standards already adopted.

(c) A comprehensive set of standards shall not be endorsed, adopted or

implemented until a complete set of the standards is available for the review, comment, and approval process, which shall include the state board, the Department of Education, the Senate Committee on Education, the House Committee on Education, and the public.

SECTION 3. EMERGENCY CLAUSE. It is found and determined by the General Assembly of the State of Arkansas that experts around the country have studied the Next Generation Science Standards and have determined that they are flawed; that the current science standards in the state are superior to the Next Generation Science Standards; and that this act is immediately necessary to prevent further adoption and implementation of the inferior Next Generation Science Standards. Therefore, an emergency is declared to exist, and this act being immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health, and safety shall become effective on:

(1) The date of its approval by the Governor;

(2) If the bill is neither approved nor vetoed by the Governor, the expiration of the period of time during which the Governor may veto the bill; or

(3) If the bill is vetoed by the Governor and the veto is overridden, the date the last house overrides the veto.