



## **New Mexico Academy of Science**

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20 January 2014

Ms. Hanna Skandera  
Secretary of Education  
New Mexico Public Education Department  
Jerry Apodaca Education Building  
300 Don Gaspar Avenue  
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501

Dear Secretary Skandera;

The New Mexico Academy of Science (NMAS) recommends adoption and implementation of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) by the New Mexico Public Education Department. Support for this initiative was expressed in a unanimous vote of the Board of Directors at the January 11, 2014 quarterly meeting. It follows that of the National Academies and represents our unending interest in improving science education throughout the state of New Mexico.

Founded in 1902, the NMAS has been in continuous existence since 1915. The NMAS is a member of the National Association of Academies of Science (NAAS) and an affiliate of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). The purposes of the NMAS are to promote science and science education within the State of New Mexico; improve communication among scientists, science educators, and the New Mexico general public and its governmental representatives; recognize scientists, science educators, and science students; encourage scientific research; and increase public awareness of the role of science in human progress and human welfare throughout New Mexico.

The New Mexico Academy of Science supports the adoption and implementation of the Next Generation Science Standards because this will:

- 1) Increase the scientific literacy of all students in New Mexico schools in all core science disciplines;

- 2) Positively impact the readiness of New Mexico students to enter college or a career in the workforce as scientists, engineers, or technicians;
- 3) Prepare students to apply critical thinking skills to problems facing them as citizens who will manage the resources and businesses of New Mexico;
- 4) Prescribe appropriate material for study in the science classroom which is based on current research and pedagogical strategies;
- 5) Address New Mexico's consistently low national ranking in science education, both in general scientific literacy (8th graders ranked 44th in the nation according to the 2011 National Assessment of Educational Progress) and in specific scientific career preparation (high school students ranked 46th in the nation according to the Science and Engineering Readiness Index); and
- 6) Positively impact the finances of New Mexico's education budget as we build on the existing national science efforts to improve education.

The NMAS recommends solicitation of appropriate funding from the New Mexico Legislature and solicitation of support from the Governor so that ample state funding is allotted for new materials required for NGSS implementation and for professional development of teachers and administrators who will be using NGSS in their schools. It will take a concerted effort to provide time for teachers and administrators to learn, assimilate, practice, and reflect as they mesh the NGSS standards with the Common Core State Standards currently used in New Mexico classrooms.

We thank you for considering our position and encourage you to recommend the adoption and implementation of the Next Generation Science Standards for all students in New Mexico schools.

Sincerely,

Michaela Buenemann, Ph.D.  
President, New Mexico Academy of Science  
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Cc: Governor, Susana Martinez  
Director of Math and Science Bureau, Lesley Galyas  
Co-Chairs of Math and Science Advisory Council, Hy Tran and Malva Knoll