

NSTA GIVES UNCRITICAL ENDORSEMENT TO NGSS

In November 2013, the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) issued a [Position Statement](#) on the Next Generation Science Standards. Not surprisingly, the teachers group gave an uncritical endorsement to NGSS, praising the initiative with nary a hint of criticism.

The statement says “NSTA supports the vision described in the *Framework* and recommends the adoption and implementation of the *NGSS*.” NSTA urges states and local districts to maintain “fidelity to the original [NGSS] document and commit the resources and support necessary to fully implement them.”

The NSTA Statement praises several aspects of the *Framework* and *Standards*: (a) their connections to “the real world”; (b) the performance expectations and ... the science and engineering practices, disciplinary core ideas, and crosscutting concepts”; (c) “learning goals that progress over the years and become more complex”; (d) “focus on a smaller, more teachable number of disciplinary core ideas”; (e) “integrating engineering and technology into science standards;” (f) preparation of students for “college, career, and citizenship”; and (g) alignment with Common Core English and math standards.

NSTA really doesn’t offer anything new in its twelve-page Statement. The document is basically a slight rewording of information on the [NGSS website](#). The references listed are all from establishment sources: the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), the National Research Council (NRC), and the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE).

Several groups have criticized various aspects of NGSS. These include the [Thomas B. Fordham Institute](#), [Citizens for Objective Public Education](#), and the [Cornwall Alliance](#). You won’t find anything that is at all critical in the NSTA Statement, however; NGSS is all good according to NSTA.

On his [Art of Teaching Science website](#), science educator Jack Hassard calls NSTA’s position “uncritical and authoritarian.” Hassard says NSTA “granted outright compliance with the NGSS, even though there is a groundswell questioning the use of standards, the Common Core State Standards, and the Next Generation Science Standards.”

Part of NGSS’ motivation is the claim that there is a shortage of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) graduates going into the workforce. Hassard denies this, saying “there is statistical data that refutes the shortfall claim.” Another claim is that NGSS will increase America’s competitiveness in the global economy. Hassard replies that “America is one of the most competitive countries in the world, indeed, number 4 in the world.”

Hassard calls the movement to common standards “dangerous.” He asks: “How can we really think that one set of statements of science goals can be valid for all learners, all schools, and all

teachers?” He further asks if a single set of standards will “be any better than the standards that exist in the 50 states today?” Hassard complains that the English language arts, mathematics, and science standards have been put together by “committees of experts largely from colleges and universities, and with very little initial comments by teachers and curriculum specialists,” with “little to no public record.”

With its Statement endorsing NGSS, NSTA has maintained its standing as an establishment group supporting a flawed set of “national” science standards. There is a lot to criticize about the NGSS *Framework* and *Standards*, including promotion of a materialistic worldview, biased coverage of origins science, support of radical environmentalism, emphasis on practices (skills) over content, flawed progression of topics, lack of clarity, and avoidance of mathematics. The NSTA statement mentions none of this, and it thereby does a disservice to the science teachers it represents.