September 8, 2017

Maine Department of Education  
c/o Shari Templeton  
23 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333-0023

Re: Public Comment Science & Technology Science Standards

Dear Ms Templeton & Maine Department of Education,

My name is Beth ByersSmall and I am currently employed at the University of Maine as the National Science Foundation Teaching Fellowship Program Coordinator for the Maine Center for Research in STEM Education (RISE Center). I have had the privilege to interact with Maine’s science standards from three different perspectives: classroom teacher, professional development provider and coordinator of pre-service teacher development. In each of these roles, I have seen the power of the three-dimensions of science standards, as outlined in the Next Generation Science Standards, transform and improve science education.

I cannot speak strongly enough for the need for the adoption and implementation of the NGSS at the state governmental level. Teachers, pre-service teachers, parents and students need to know Maine has a progressive style of science education - a style that supports active engagement in science and engineering practices and application of crosscutting concepts to deepen student understanding of core ideas.

In my experiences, I have seen the benefits that three-dimensional science teaching and learning can provide. As a former classroom teacher at the elementary, middle and high school level, I have watched student after student deepen their thinking and understanding in science due to the rigor and relevance of the NGSS. These standards provide a framework for high-quality science education like none other I have experienced. The NGSS sets students up for success in the real world. The student expectations in NGSS are designed to be assessed in real work contexts, providing students with the opportunity to utilize skills in a manner that shows the value of being an informed citizen. Our students need these experiences if we are to adequately prepare them for the future.

As my colleagues and I have been sharing for years now, adoption of the NGSS by the state will mean access to this multi-dimensional learning for all students in Maine regardless of location and/or school and district size. This is about equity for all students and support for all teachers.

Sincerely,

Beth ByersSmall, NSF Teaching Fellowship Project Coordinator  
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