Hello:

I am writing to endorse the adoption, and subsequent implementation of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) by supporting Bill LD 49 "An Act to Improve Science and Engineering Education for Maine’s Students".

I work with the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) every day to engage children, teens and college students in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). These standards were written by science education leaders from 26 states, including Maine’s. There is absolutely NO social-political commentary in these standards. The NGSS are a science, technology and engineering learning progression for children from K-12 and many colleges refer to them for core knowledge for college freshmen.

I have read every page of the standards and I can assure you that they are thoughtful, well written, and scientifically accurate and they guide me as I develop STEM curriculum for students of all ages. These new standards are more similar than dissimilar to the older version, but with added emphasis on the process of science and engineering: asking questions, designing experiments (or engineering new gadgets), analyzing results (does the gadget perform), forming conclusions based on evidence and communicating conclusions to others. Problem solving and analytical thinking is an integral part of NGSS. The Board of the Maine Science Teachers Association has approved the NGSS for adoption in Maine and every one of the science teachers I have worked with throughout the state, applauds the new standards and most are actively using them.

Something to keep in mind: The previous national standards were written in the mid 90's and so much has occurred since then. Not only do scientists understand more about science, but we also understand more about the capacity of students (at different ages) to learn. This new knowledge informed our education leaders and helped to reshape and improve the out-dated standards. Would we want our automobile manufacturers to build cars using standards from the 90’s? Or would you want doctors to treat cancer using 30 year old methods? I would think not!

In summary, I strongly endorse adopting and implementing the NGSS standards to improve K-12 STEM education for Maine students.

Sincerely,

Debbie Landry

Deborah Landry, Ph.D.
Executive Director, iXplore STEM
dlandry@ixplorestem.org
Adjunct Professor
University of New England, Biddeford, ME
Center for Excellence in the Neurosciences