



State Board of Education News

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SBOE approves streamlined science standards

Austin – The State Board of Education today gave final approval to streamlined science standards for kindergarten through high school. Streamlining eliminates, clarifies or combines some standards without adding additional content.

The board also gave preliminary approval to updated standards, known as Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), for English and Spanish language arts and reading for high school. Final approval is expected to occur in June.

However, after amending English and Spanish language arts and reading standards for elementary and middle school, the board postponed the final vote on those standards until 8 a.m. May 10 to provide time for the board and Texas Agency staff to ensure that the amendments have been accurately incorporated before adoption. The two-and-a-half week delay will not affect Proclamation 2019 approved by the board. In addition, the delay will not extend the public comment period.

While the board is revising the language arts and reading standards, the board worked to reduce the science standards. Science is the first subject to undergo a streamlining process.

This action came in response to comments from teachers who felt that there were too many standards, which made it difficult to teach all the content assigned to a specific grade level during the course of a school year.

Based on comments from a wide-range of speakers, the board approved compromise-language on two high profile standards.

The board changed biology standard (4)(A) from “compare and contrast prokaryotic and eukaryotic cells and evaluate scientific explanation for their complexity;” as approved on first reading to:

“compare and contrast prokaryotic and eukaryotic cells, including their complexity, and compare and contrast scientific explanations for cellular complexity.”

The board also changed biology standard (6)(A), which, as approved on first reading, read: “identify components of DNA, describe how information for specifying the traits of an organism is carried in the DNA, and evaluate scientific explanations for the origin of DNA;”

As approved Friday, it now reads “identify components of DNA, identify how information for specifying the traits of an organism is carried in the DNA, and examine scientific explanations for the origin of DNA.”

“It was clear from testifiers that many who had varied concerns found the compromise language chosen by the board to be acceptable, addressing both the need to streamline content while still encouraging critical thinking by students,” SBOE Chair Donna Bahorich said.

The board did agree to delay implementation of the streamlined science standards to the 2018-2019 school year to give districts and educators time to align curriculum and instructional materials to the streamlined standards.