



April 11, 2005

Mr. George Griffith
Science Consultant
Kansas State Department of Education
120 SE 10th Avenue
Topeka, KS 66612-1182

Dear Mr. Griffith:

Thank you for your e-mail of April 8 asking if there are any speakers from the American Association for the Advancement of Science “interested in appearing before the Kansas State Board of Education science subcommittee to provide expert opinion regarding the mainstream scientific view of the nature of science.”

After much consideration, AAAS respectfully declines to participate in this hearing out of concern that rather than contribute to science education, it will most likely serve to confuse the public about the nature of the scientific enterprise.

The fundamental structure of the hearing suggests that the theory of evolution may be debated. It implies that scientific conclusions are based on expert opinion rather than on data. The concept of evolution is well-supported by extensive evidence and accepted by virtually every scientist. Moreover, we see no purpose in debating interpretations of Genesis and “intelligent design” which are a matter of faith, not facts. The AAAS position is that facts and faith both have the power to improve people’s lives, and they can and do co-exist. But they should not be pitted against one another in science classrooms.

The consensus view of the scientific community on evolution is well-established and presented clearly in the AAAS’s Benchmarks for Scientific Literacy and in the National Academy’s National Science Education Standards. Although scientists may debate details of the mechanisms of evolution, there is no argument among scientists as to whether evolution is taking place.

We do not believe that any useful purpose would be served by our participation in this event.

Sincerely,

Alan I. Leshner
Chief Executive Officer

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