

Talking points from Dr. Beth Allen after House General Government Oversight and Accountability Committee meeting.

1. Our state science standards, developed by OK teachers, require teachers to use the 8 scientific practices in their classroom which guarantee critical thinking- even thinking critically about currently accepted science. I would show them a standard and how the practices are integrated into the subject matter.
2. Science, by nature, is never settled. That's why we have peer review. However, there are some theories, such as gravity, the cell theory, Newton's Laws of Motion, etc. that have so much evidence for them that they are accepted as laws. However, even the cell theory is modified over time as we gather more data. Case in point? The argument over whether or not viruses are alive.
3. There is no control in the bill over what is a viable alternative theory. While we assume they mean creationism, if a teacher decided that Big Foot, flat earth, the existence of aliens that built the pyramids and Stonehenge, etc. were viable scientific theories, there is no mechanism by which the local education authority can have the final say over what is taught. In other words, if a teacher starts teaching the creation theory as viewed by the Buddhist or Hindu or muslim religion, there is nothing a principal or school district can do about it. AND, the state department must support it.
4. Finally, it sets students up for learning more about alternative theories than strong science that is tested by standardized tests that are necessary for being college and career ready. In Oklahoma, our economy requires a strong STEM workforce. This bill does nothing to help students be STEM ready, and therefore harms our economy.