



Department of Biology
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Dover Area School Board
2 School Lane
Dover, PA 17315

An Open Letter to the Dover Area School Board:

As scientists, scholars, and teachers, we are compelled to point out that the quality of science education in your schools has been seriously compromised by the decision to mandate the teaching of "intelligent design" along with evolution. Science education should be based on ideas that are well supported by evidence. Intelligent design does not meet this criterion: It is a form of creationism propped up by a biased and selective view of the evidence.

In contrast, evolution is based on and supported by an immense and diverse array of evidence and is continually being tested and reaffirmed by new discoveries from many scientific fields. The evidence for evolution is so strong that important new areas of biological research are confidently and successfully based on the reality of evolution. For example, evolution is fundamental to genomics and bioinformatics, new fields which hold the promise of great medical discoveries.

According to the *York Daily Record* (November 23, 2004), you issued a statement claiming that "Darwin's Theory is a theory, it is still being tested as new evidence is discovered. The theory is not a fact. Gaps in the theory exist for which there is no evidence." This is extraordinarily misleading. While one can refer to the general body of modern evolutionary knowledge as "theory," the same is true of all other scientific knowledge, such as the theory of relativity or the theory of continental drift. It is one of the hallmarks of scientific inquiry that all such ideas are open to testing and reinterpretation. That theories are open to testing, however, does not mean that they are wrong. Evolution has been subject to well over a century of continual testing. The result: Its reality is no more in dispute among biologists than, for example, the existence of atoms and molecules is among chemists.

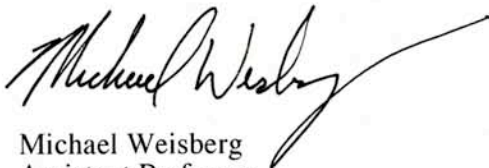
Our students need to be taught the method and content of real science. We urge you to alter the misguided policy of teaching intelligent design creationism in your high school science curriculum. Instead, empower students with real, dependable scientific

knowledge. They need this knowledge to understand the world around them, to compete for admission to colleges and universities, and to compete for good jobs. They deserve nothing less.

Sincerely,



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