

Kansas school board approves plan to downgrade teaching of evolution: Teachers would explore variety of theories about origins of life

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The state education board in Kansas has tentatively approved new guidelines supported by some Christians that encourage public schools to teach a variety of theories about the origins of life, downgrading the centrality of the theory of evolution. On a 6-4 vote August 10 the Kansas Board of Education approved a draft of new standards that call for teachers to explore a variety of theories about the biological origins of life.

Final approval of the new standards is expected in either September or October. While Kansas teachers could continue to teach the still widely accepted theory of evolution first advanced by Charles Darwin, that theory, based on the notion of natural selection, would no longer be a required subject in public school curricula and would be complemented by the teaching of other theories.

One theory popular among opponents of evolution is that of “intelligent design,” which contends that an intelligent designer, rather than natural selection, explains the development of the universe and of life. President Bush stirred controversy when he told reporters he supported the teaching of intelligent design in public schools. Critics say the intelligent design theory is unscientific and is a contemporary version of creationism being advanced by conservative Christians. -*Ecumenical News International*