



[Comments](#) 0 | [Recommend](#) 0

95% of professors in study back teaching of evolution alone in Texas public schools

12:00 AM CST on Tuesday, November 18, 2008

By **TERRENCE STUTZ** / The Dallas Morning News
tstutz@dallasnews.com

AUSTIN – An overwhelming majority of science professors at Texas' public and private universities say they're against a state policy requiring that weaknesses in the theory of evolution be covered in public school science classes, according to a new study released Monday.

About 95 percent of those responding to the study by the progressive group Texas Freedom Network said schools should teach "just evolution" in covering the origins of life on earth. The rest said children should learn both evolution and the creationist theory called "intelligent design."

A sociology professor at the University of Texas at Arlington surveyed 464 university biologists and anthropologists in the study, released just as the State Board of Education gears up for Wednesday's public hearing on new science curriculum standards.

A main topic of discussion is expected to be how teachers should treat Charles Darwin's theory of evolution.

"Many of these science faculty members help determine who gets into our state colleges and universities," said the study's author, Raymond A. Eve. "Their responses should send parents a clear message that those who want to play politics with science education are putting our kids at risk."

Most study respondents said they believe any focus on the weaknesses of evolution theory and on alternative theories would harm students' college readiness and their ability to compete for jobs.

New science standards are expected to be approved early next year by the education board, where a majority of members have voiced support for retaining the current mandate to cover both strengths and weaknesses of major scientific theories, notably evolution, in science courses.

"This is something we've been doing for over 20 years in Texas, and we should keep doing it," said board chairman Don McLeroy, R-College Station.

Texas Freedom Network president Kathy Miller, whose group often spars with social conservatives, said it would be a mistake to ignore the beliefs of science professors from public and private universities across the state.

"This survey leaves no doubt that the political crusade against evolution and other attempts to dumb down our public school science curriculum are deeply misguided," Ms. Miller said.