

# 2023 Annual Report



**NCSE** National Center for  
Science Education



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## OUR VISION

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One day, students of all ages will be scientifically literate, teachers will be prepared and empowered to teach accurate science, and scientific thinking and decision-making will ensure that all life can thrive and overcome challenges to our shared future.

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**Until 2023**, there had only been two executive directors in the 40-plus-year history of NCSE. I became the third when I began in that role in December, after Ann Reid retired. If you want to learn more about me and my work over the years, please check out this [profile](#) published by *Science*, just before I began in my new role.

Though I was not directly involved in NCSE's programming in 2023, I have been a close follower of and friend to the organization over the years. So I watched intently as NCSE engaged in its critical work last year. In an effort to expand its on-the-ground efforts with teachers, NCSE's Supporting Teachers program welcomed Wendy Johnson as a Partnership Specialist. A former classroom teacher in Michigan with a Ph.D. in curriculum, instruction, and teacher education and ecology, evolutionary biology, and behavior, Johnson was hired to lead

professional learning at conferences and workshops.

Our research program continues to conduct high-level national studies to better understand the challenges faced by educators in teaching topics such as climate change, evolution, and the nature of science. In 2023, NCSE published a paper that asked the question: What types of coursework prepare biology teachers to teach evolution effectively? The study found that evolution coursework led to positive outcomes such as devoting more class hours to evolution and prioritizing common ancestry and human evolution as topics of instruction. But there were some surprises too!

Our longest-tenured program, Catalyzing Action, continued to monitor and mobilize against legislation and policy developments that threatened the accurate teaching of climate science and evolution. In 2023, NCSE helped defeat anti-science bills in 10 states and rallied support for quality state science standards and textbooks in three states. NCSE also brought media attention to bear on climate change denial propaganda aimed at youth, such as "The Kids Guide to the Truth about Climate Change," published by Everbright Media, a company founded by former Arkansas governor Mike Huckabee.

Though I was only officially with the organization for less than a month in 2023, my heart and mind have been aligned with NCSE for many years. That connection has given me boundless enthusiasm and energy for the critical work ahead in 2024 and beyond.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dr. Amanda L. Townley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

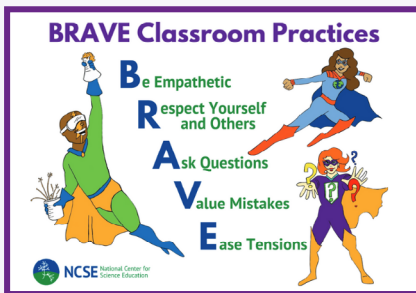
Amanda L. Townley

*Executive Director*

# NCSE at Work in 2023

## Supporting Teachers

We give science teachers the tools they need to help students resolve common misconceptions about climate change, evolution, and the nature of science.



### Brave Classroom Practices

NCSE.ORG

NCSE launched a set of pedagogical tools for teachers with its BRAVE classroom practices model.



### "Letting Kids Do the Science"

NCSE.ORG

We interviewed Illinois science teacher Jeff Grant, who described working with NCSE to help students overcome common science misconceptions as "life changing."



### "Chewing on Change: The Tales Teeth Tell Us"

NCSE.ORG

For Darwin Day, we reprised our evolution symposium from the National Association of Biology Teachers annual conference, featuring Larisa DeSantis of Vanderbilt University.



*"Why should teachers use NCSE's lessons?  
They let kids do the science."*

—JEFF GRANT, NCSE TEACHER AMBASSADOR

# Catalyzing Action

We help individuals and communities resist threats to accurate and effective science education.



## Texas Officials Target Climate Science in Textbooks

EENEWS.NET

NCSE reported on and alerted national media to the censoring of climate change and evolution by the Texas state board of education in proposed science textbooks.



## NCSE Helps to Expose Climate Change Propaganda Aimed at Kids

NCSE.ORG

NCSE was prominently featured in an exposé of “The Kids Guide to the Truth about Climate Change,” a booklet published by Everbright Media, which contained climate change denial propaganda aimed at kids.



## West Virginia’s “Intelligent Design” Bill Sparks National Outcry

NCSE.ORG

An “intelligent design” bill in West Virginia made headlines locally and nationally thanks to NCSE’s efforts.



*“[NCSE’s] Branch said the guide ignores key scientific advances and uses factual information in a misleading way.”*

# Investigating Science Education

Investigating Science Education conducts high-quality and high-impact research to better understand science education.



## What's Effective and Ineffective in Preparing High School Biology Educators to Teach Evolution? Evidence from a Representative National U.S. Survey

[EVOLUTION-OUTREACH.BIOMEDCENTRAL.COM](http://EVOLUTION-OUTREACH.BIOMEDCENTRAL.COM)

Researchers from NCSE and Penn State University, studying the question, “What’s effective and ineffective in preparing high school biology educators to teach evolution?”, found that evolution coursework led to positive outcomes such as devoting more class hours to evolution and prioritizing common ancestry and human evolution as topics of instruction.



*“[T]he results of the present study suggest that pre-service coursework in evolution is important in preparing educators to teach evolution effectively. Requiring pre-service teachers to take even a single more evolution-containing class more than they are presently required to take would make a measurable difference for the better ... But the present study also suggests, surprisingly, that pre-service methods coursework aimed at preparing educators to teach evolution effectively tends, at present, to be counterproductive, especially insofar as it results in educators presenting creationism as scientifically credible.”*

—REPORT CONCLUSION

*“Some of the results were expected, but some certainly were not. That’s why it’s important to do the research!”*

—GLENN BRANCH, NCSE DEPUTY DIRECTOR



## NCSE in the News

The National Center for Science Education is a go-to source for local, national, and international media outlets covering climate change and evolution education in the US.

### The New York Times

[Penguins in Your Fridge? These 7-Year-Olds Have Climate Solutions.](#)



[Mike Huckabee's "Kids Guide to the Truth About Climate Change" Shows the Changing Landscape of Climate Denial](#)



### EDUCATION WEEK

[Will Restrictions on Teaching "Controversial" Issues Target Science Classes?](#)



### Science

[Brought up in a Creationist Home, a Scientist Fights for Evolution](#)



*"Our goal is for all students in the United States to have the opportunity to engage with the scientific evidence [for evolution and climate change]. And the sky's the limit."*

— AMANDA L. TOWNLEY, NCSE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## Financial Report

We are grateful for the ongoing support and dedication of the individual supporters and foundations who make our work possible.



- Individuals: \$1,113,982 (80%)
- Foundations: \$181,500 (13%)
- Earned income: \$105,133 (7%)



- Program: \$1,002,720 (64%)
- General and Administration: \$337,160 (22%)
- Fundraising: \$227,956 (14%)

## Board of Directors

|  |   |
|--|---|
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|  | Naomi Oreskes<br><i>Harvard University</i>  |

## Staff

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Ann Reid<br><i>Executive Director</i>             | Cari Herndon<br><i>Curriculum Specialist</i>                   |
| Amanda L. Townley<br><i>Executive Director</i>    | Nina Hollenberg<br><i>Member Relations Manager</i>             |
| Lin Andrews<br><i>Director of Teacher Support</i> | Deb Janes<br><i>Director of Development</i>                    |
| Glenn Branch<br><i>Deputy Director</i>            | Wendy Johnson<br><i>Teacher Support Partnership Specialist</i> |
| Astrid Broertjes<br><i>Director of Operations</i> | Paul Oh<br><i>Director of Communications</i>                   |
| Stuart Fogg<br><i>IT Project Specialist</i>       | Blake Touchet<br><i>Teacher Support Partnership Specialist</i> |
| Heather Grimes<br><i>Program Coordinator</i>      |  |





## OUR MISSION

NCSE promotes and defends accurate and effective science education,  
because everyone deserves to engage with the evidence.



**NCSE** National Center for  
Science Education

230 Grand Avenue, Suite 101, Oakland, CA 94610

510-601-7203 | [info@ncse.ngo](mailto:info@ncse.ngo) | [www.ncse.ngo](http://www.ncse.ngo)

