

Abstract Submitted
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Fighting for physics and Earth science in Florida's high schools

PAUL COTTLE, Florida State University — During its Spring 2009 session, the Florida Legislature considered a bill that would have suspended its comprehensive standardized test in high school science and substituted an end-of-course test in biology to satisfy the requirements of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. By doing so, the bill would have further deemphasized high school physics and Earth science in a state where physics courses are sometimes not available in high schools (even in International Baccalaureate programs) and where the state's own statistics say that only 16% of high school graduates have taken a physics course. A group of about one hundred science faculty from thirteen colleges and universities in Florida responded with a letter to Governor Crist and visits to legislators asking that the biology-only provisions be defeated (and they were). The group has now produced a white paper on high school science requirements that has been distributed to government and business leaders and been publicized via op-ed pieces and news items in several media outlets statewide. This poster will describe the situation in Florida and the faculty group's efforts. It will also compare Florida's high school requirements in science with those in the other SESAPS states.

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