

***Position Statement
of the
Science Teachers Association of Texas
on
EQUITY IN SCIENCE EDUCATION***

(Adopted 4/04)

The Board of Directors of the Science Teachers Association of Texas, a statewide organization that represents more than 5,500 science educators from kindergarten through college, recommends that all state and local instructional leaders provide resources that will enable all students, especially females, underrepresented minorities, and students from economically disadvantaged areas of the state to successfully learn science.

The Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), the National Science Education Standards (NSES), and Project 2061's Benchmarks delineate what students should know and be able to do to become scientifically literate citizens. These goals are promoted for each student in our public schools. Student progress in meeting these science standards is monitored with the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS). The 2005 graduates will be the first group required to pass the Exit Level Science TAKS to graduate.

Accessibility to appropriate facilities, technology, equipment and supplies is essential for the development of scientific literacy. Equity must be achieved so that all Texas students, from the struggling student to the gifted, from the wealthy to the economically disadvantaged, have access to the tools they need to meet the TEKS and NSES. If this access is not provided, we will indeed be leaving some children behind.

The TEKS specify in Grades K through 8, the equipment that students must use to become scientifically literate. In high school science, the TEKS require students to select appropriate equipment and technology, to use probeware, and to analyze data as they practice problem-solving skills. For science teachers to provide students with experience in selecting and using these technologies, adequate funds must be provided to purchase required technology and equipment. There must be no difference in accessibility, regardless of wealth or geographic location of the district.

Professional development is essential to prepare teachers to meet the challenges of the diverse classroom and for the successful integration of technology and equipment in science education. All science education-related mandates from the state must come with appropriate and sustained funding for professional development.

If the State of Texas is seriously committed to providing quality science education for all students; then educational funding must be equitable. Only when all children are equally welcome to the table of learning, will Texas benefit from its diverse and rich make up of citizens.

The Board of Directors of the Science Teachers Association of Texas (STAT) urges all state decision-makers and local instructional leaders to ensure that appropriate resources are provided to allow all science teachers to teach so that all students have the opportunity to successfully learn science.