

Debate Evolves Over Biology Lessons
By Larry Witham the Washington Times

The Ohio School Board is considering teaching high school science students that some scientists believe parts of biological life are "designed" — not evolved from a single ancestor by blind chance as declared by Charles Darwin.

Next month, it will be the first school board to consider adding to its statewide standards the "intelligent design" theory, which advocates say explains complex parts of biology that are elusive in Darwin's evolution paradigm. Critics of the theory, such as the newly formed Ohio Citizens for Science, say intelligent design is simply a new form of creationism because it implies a higher power must have created the design. "Our challenge is to show that we can keep the process informed, open and fair, and come to a good decision,"

Ohio School Board President Jennifer L. Sheets said Thursday. "There is so much misinformation on each side already," said the self-described moderate Republican with a "rural law practice." "Absolutely nobody is saying, 'Take evolution out of the science standards.' Some people are asking for additional information to be added."

The debate over intelligent design began in mid-January when its advocates told at a board meeting that it was not a religious but a scientific concept that could be raised in science classes. The board and a science-standards-writing team was asked to amend 10th-grade science with a requirement to "know that some scientists support the theory of intelligent design, which postulates that the influence of intelligence is a viable alternative explanation for the origin and diversity of life." An explanatory note says the design theory is "compatible with belief in God and the Bible, but it does not require adherence to any particular faith or doctrine."

The idea of design implies that God or even extraterrestrial intelligence designed, for example, the first life, DNA, or some mechanisms in a cell.

Note from Pastor Kevin: Consider the empty logic of those who want to recognize intelligent design, but deny God in favor of 'extraterrestrial creators.' More and more academicians are flocking to the intelligent design camp because recent discoveries in genetics and microbiology shatter the notion that life could come about by the random acts of chance and time. They are increasingly accepting the creationist's analogy that when one finds a functioning watch in the desert it is logical to assume the existence of an intelligent watchmaker (even though you can't see him), and it is illogical to believe the watch came into existence by chance and time.

Now that these intelligent academicians can recognize the fingerprint of a master designer and engineer, some are groping for another illogical lie, that is, the engineer cannot be God; instead, it must be an ET that made us.

If they are right, then ET's are certainly more intelligent and complicated than us Earthlings. The ETs can create DNA for all the animal and plant life on earth, in a way which allows the extremely delicate balance of life to exist on this planet. They must have also played a part in perfectly placing this Earth in our solar system so that the Earth could support our delicate life.

In other words, these ET's are the Rolex of watches while we are cheap Timex'. If time and chance cannot make a Timex, then how can time and chance make a

Rolex? The answer cannot be more billions of years, because those embracing intelligent design are admitting the supposed billions of years of our universe do not provide enough time for a Timex to rise from the desert sand by mere chance and time. Therefore, something must have made the ET also. No matter how an honest academian looks at the evidence, the only logical conclusion they can come to is, "In the Beginning God created the heavens and the Earth."

The Darwinian theory of evolution allows only material forces to explain life's diversity. Under court order to spend more money on education, Ohio legislated an upgrade of academic standards in 2001.

Mrs. Sheets said the math and English standards were adopted unanimously by the 19-member board, and hopes the same will happen with the science material. It is now in its first 97-page draft for public review. Since January, Mrs. Sheets said, advocacy e-mail messages have flooded her office. At the last board meeting on Feb. 4, members were given a heavy reading list on the debate. The board convenes again March 11 in a 400-seat auditorium to hear 15-minute testimonies from four science experts, evenly divided for and against the intelligent-design proposal. The board will ask questions, but the public cannot.

Mrs. Sheets said Ohio's decision is different to a Kansas school board vote in 1999. The Kansas board excluded large-scale evolution and an ancient universe from the science standards so local schools could decide how to handle those topics.

The debate over evolution is just one key social issue creating discord in Ohio, which also is the scene of major court tests on late-term abortion and school-voucher pilot programs. "Ohio could be a model of compromise on these tough social issues," said John Green, a political scientist at the University of Akron. "You limit just late-term abortions or allow some vouchers, but don't go all the way," he said. "The people that intelligent design appeals to are policy-makers" who are weary of polarized debates on the literal Bible versus evolution. "These debates start out with local people, but it never stays that way," Mr. Green said. "The national groups look for these cases, and move in."