2025 Annual Report

NCSE National Center for Science Education

OUR VISION

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.

2025 was a momentous year in many respects. It marked the 100th anniversary of the famed Scopes "monkey" trial challenging an anti-evolution education law in Tennessee. It also marked the 20th anniversary of the *Kitzmiller v. Dover* decision that found the teaching of "intelligent design" in public classrooms unconstitutional. The National Center for Science Education celebrated both, co-sponsoring a two-day symposium with Vanderbilt University's Evolutionary Studies Initiative and producing a popular webinar series, among other things, to mark the occasions.

But 2025 was also a very challenging year for science: funding continued to be denied to research institutions, trusted resources such as climate.gov were shuttered, and accepted science like anthropogenic climate change came under attack.

As teachers, schools, and like-minded non-profits navigated this uncertain landscape, we continued our advocacy work, monitoring ideological incursions into the science classroom, and built upon our regionally based coastal-resilience professional learning opportunities called My COAST. We created more free "Story Short" lessons for teachers and led workshops all over the country. But we knew we needed to do more. So we formed a study group of teachers interested in implementing an NCSE-developed science and media literacy tool called DataWISE to help students see through the science misinformation that is so pervasive. We welcomed our second cohort of Sound Science Fellows, providing higher education faculty and museum educators the opportunity to enhance professional learning in climate science, evolution, and the nature of science for K–12 teachers. We launched a podcast aimed at combating misconceptions about climate change and evolution. We also began building strategic partnerships, laying the groundwork for a new program to be launched in 2026 that connects scientists, institutions, and organizations that address persistent challenges to teaching science in public schools. I am excited by this new program's potential impact!

Overall, our Science Education and Outreach team led professional learning opportunities in 12 states, with 3,986 contact hours (meaning face-to-face time) with educators. Among those experiences was our annual NCSE-sponsored Evolution Symposium at the National Association of Biology Teachers conference during which Lindsay Hunter and Rick Hunter captivated the audience as they told the tale of the discovery of *Homo naledi* in the Rising Star cave system.

In 2025, Catalyzing Action, which monitors and mobilizes against legislation and policy developments that threaten the accurate teaching of climate science and evolution, helped defeat anti-science bills in five states and rallied support for quality state science standards in three states. Of particular note, NCSE provided support needed to convince the North Dakota legislature not to add "intelligent design" to its state science standards. Our research program, Investigating Science Education, published a review article on overcoming obstacles to evolution and climate change as well as published three articles in collaboration with a team of outside researchers.

We had much to celebrate in 2025, even as the national landscape provided grim reminders of the need to continue the fight for science and science education. We at NCSE are committed to continuing that fight in 2026 and beyond!

Sincerely,

Amanda L. Townley
President & CEO

NCSE at Work in 2025

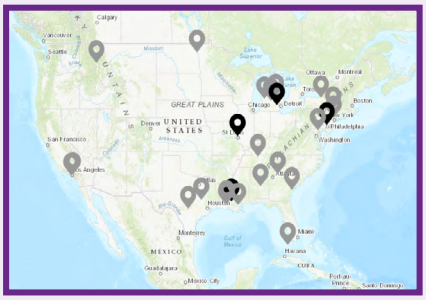
Science Education and Outreach

We help students overcome common misconceptions about climate change, evolution, and the nature of science.

NCSE's My COAST helps Florida teachers study climate change impacts on coral reefs

NCSE.NGO

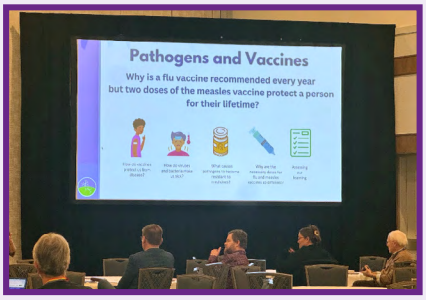
NCSE brought together 28 teachers from across Florida to learn about climate change and its impact on coral ecosystems.



A rave review for NCSE's Story Shorts

NCSE.NGO

The *American Biology Teacher* lauded NCSE's Story Shorts for their fidelity to the Next Generation Science Standards while requiring a shorter time commitment.



Homo naledi and DataWISE among NCSE offerings at 2025 NABT conference

NCSE.NGO

At the National Association of Biology Teachers annual conference, NCSE hosted a symposium that included the story of the discovery of *Homo naledi* and a look at NCSE's science and media literacy tool, DataWISE.

"The Story Shorts and Side Quests provide an excellent exposure to storylines with a shorter time commitment without sacrificing the skills we hope our students garner through the process."

—THE AMERICAN BIOLOGY TEACHER

Catalyzing Action

Catalyzing Action helps individuals and communities resist threats to accurate and effective science education

Climate.gov on the chopping block

NCSE.NGO

Interviewed by the Hechinger Report, NCSE Deputy Director Glenn Branch describes the significance of the potential shuttering of this federal resource used by teachers.

Will a new Supreme Court decision encourage opting out of evolution?

NCSE.NGO

NCSE staff explain to Chalkbeat the potential threats to evolution education in public classrooms as a result of the *Mahmoud v. Taylor* decision.

Iowa adopts a worsened set of science standards

NCSE.NGO

NCSE's Glenn Branch summarizes the reaction to Iowa's misguided decision to weaken its science standards.

"Iowa's science teachers need accurate science standards in order to enable their students to become scientifically literate and to equip them to succeed in STEM education and employment."

—NCSE'S GLENN BRANCH, BLEEDING HEARTLAND

Investigating Science Education

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

Sage Research Methods

A Longitudinal Analysis of the Public Acceptance of Evolution

METHODS.SAGEPUB.COM

NCSE Deputy Director Glenn Branch is co-author of a piece discussing the methods used in a longitudinal study of changes in public acceptance of evolution in the United States.

SPRINGER NATURE Link

Teaching human evolution in Alabama high school biology classrooms: the LUDA project

LINK.SPRINGER.COM

NCSE's Amanda L. Townley is co-author of a study that examines whether explicit efforts to try to reduce the conflict between evolution and religion in the classroom have been demonstrated to influence student understanding and acceptance of evolution.

Taylor & Francis by informa

Overcoming obstacles to evolution and climate change education: A synoptic review from a US perspective

TAYLORFRANCIS.COM

NCSE Deputy Director Glenn Branch contributed this book chapter to the *International Handbook of Research on STEAM Curriculum and Practice*.

"[U]sing a classroom activity aimed at reducing conflict between science and religion can help religious (particularly Christian) students have a more comfortable experience learning about evolution."

—TEACHING HUMAN EVOLUTION IN ALABAMA HIGH SCHOOL BIOLOGY CLASSROOMS: THE LUDA PROJECT

^ Photo credit: Chris Line of the Freedom From Religion Foundation

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 U.S.

Smithsonian MAGAZINE

A Century Ago, a High School Teacher From a Small Tennessee Town Ignited a National Debate over Human Evolution

THE HECHINGER REPORT

Teachers Relied on a Federal Website for Climate Education. The Government May Shut it Down

Forbes

Lessons in Hubris and Humility Can Help Science Serve the Public

ISSUES IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

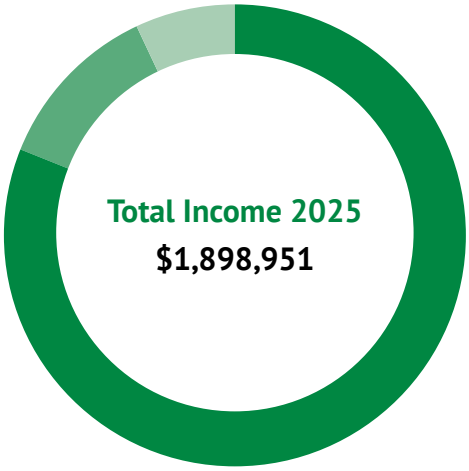
Of Pandas and Science Curricula

"If the Scopes trial happened today, it would be a pay-per-view event."

— 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: $1,544,666 (81%)
- Foundations: $228,500 (12%)
- Earned income: $125,785 (7%)

- Program: $909,753 (62%)
- General and Administration: $297,597 (19%)
- Fundraising: $285,385 (19%)

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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

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