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Week of April 27, 2009

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NSTA Legislative Update: President Obama Commits to Dramatically Improve Student Achievement in Science and Math

In a major policy address on April 27 before the annual meeting of the National Academy of Sciences, President Obama discussed his plans to “reinvigorate the American scientific enterprise through a bold commitment to basic and applied research, innovation, and education.”

Specifically in regards to education the President challenged states to dramatically improve achievement in math and science "by raising standards, modernizing science labs, upgrading curriculum, and forging partnerships to improve the use of science and technology in our classrooms."

According to the White House, "the Administration's \$5 billion 'Race To The Top' fund will encourage states to improve the quality and supply of math and science teachers, including alternative routes into teaching for math and science teachers and proposals to upgrade teacher training and promote and reward effective teachers. States can also use Recovery Act funds to modernize and renovate new science labs. The Administration is also supporting investments in scholarships to attract and prepare high-quality math and science teachers through the Robert Noyce Scholarship Program and other investments in student aid, a push for rigorous, internationally-benchmarked standards, high-quality curricula aligned to the standards, and better assessments."

- [Listen to President Obama's speech](#) at the National Academy of Sciences
- [Read the President's remarks](#)
- [Read the White House fact sheet](#) on the President's commitment to research and education

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Build Content Knowledge with NSTA Resources that Correlate to State Science Standards

Science teachers and administrators can simplify their efforts to identify appropriate professional development (PD) by accessing NSTA's new state standards correlation tool. This addition to NSTA's Learning Center allows educators to view any state's standards, drill down to student objectives within each standard, and then find all available NSTA resources that support that objective. Achieving annual yearly progress (AYP) is more easily reached if teachers can focus on standards in which they need additional support. A wide range of resources, all correlated to individual state standards are identified with just a click on the desired objective.

- NSTA Press books,
- Science Objects (two-hour interactive online content modules),
- Award-winning journal articles archived from 1997,
- SciPacks (ten-hour online PD experiences with pre-testing, post-testing, and a certificate of accomplishment)
- SciGuides (apply content learned directly in the classroom with custom lesson plans, web resources, and student work)

Visit the [NSTA Learning Center](#) to begin searching for your state standards and corresponding resources today.

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Upcoming Professional Development Opportunities from NSTA

[Professional Learning Communities in Science: Designs, Tools, and Resources for Improving Student Learning](#)

Take advantage of this special NSTA summer institute scheduled for Aug. 3–5 in Orlando, Florida. The three-day institute is designed to help teams of educators learn how to develop and support a science-focused Professional Learning Community (PLC) that has continuous improvement in science teaching and learning at its core. Participants will learn what PLCs are (and are not), examine different structures for PLCs, and experience different science-specific tools and strategies to use within a PLC.

A team of national presenters, led by Susan Mundry and Kathy Stiles of WestEd, will present different models of PLCs, share tools and resources that support the work of science teachers in PLCs, and facilitate planning sessions for implementing PLCs in schools and other organizations.

The institute will be held in Orlando, Florida, August 3–5, 2009, at the Buena Vista Palace Hotel, within walking distance of the downtown Disney Marketplace offering an array of venues for nightlife, entertainment, cafes, and shopping.

For additional details or to register, contact Zipporah Miller at 703.312.9235 or by e-mail at zmiller@nsta.org.

[Urban Science Education Leadership Academy](#)

The Urban Science Education Leaders (USEL) and NSTA are partnering to offer a professional development opportunity for urban districts to build teacher leaders and scale up reform during a three-year Urban Science Education Leadership Academy.

The first of three annual academies will focus on the teacher leader's classroom implementation of best practices in science. A team of teachers accompanied by their district supervisor will collaborate to

develop the leadership skills to help guide reform that supports excellence in science learning in urban schools. Attendees will share their personal experiences, build on their knowledge of the change process, and become experienced practitioners who will lead initiatives for science education improvements in their districts. The leadership team will be expanded in years two and three to include additional district stakeholders to form engaged and responsible leaders who will enhance best practices across a larger spectrum of the urban setting and improve student performance.

The first academy will be held in Orlando, Florida, August 5–9, 2009, at the Buena Vista Palace Hotel, within walking distance of the downtown Disney Marketplace offering an array of venues for nightlife, entertainment, cafes, and shopping.

For additional details or to register, contact Arlene Elrod at 256.517.1786 or by e-mail at daelrod@ix.netcom.com.

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Free Shipping in the NSTA Science Store—for a Limited Time

You can score free shipping on orders of \$50 or more from [NSTA's Science Store](#) if you order by midnight on **Friday, May 1, 2009**. Browse the newest books from NSTA Press, including [Uncovering Student Ideas in Science, Volume 4](#); [More Everyday Science Mysteries](#); and [The Biology Teacher's Handbook](#). To qualify for free shipping on your order, be sure to use promo code **SPFS09**.

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NSTA Adopts New Position Statement—*Parent Involvement in Science Learning*

The NSTA Board of Directors has voted to adopt a recently revised position statement bringing attention to the important role that parents and other caregivers play in their children's science learning at home, in school, and throughout the community. The statement—*Parent Involvement in Science Learning*—encourages parents to be actively involved in their children's science learning because it is crucial to their children's interest in and ability to learn science.

NSTA wishes to thank the members of the [position statement panel](#) who worked over recent months to develop the statement.

- [Position Statement: *Parent Involvement in Science Learning*](#)
- [All NSTA position statements](#)

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Professional Development from Montana State University

Stay ahead of your class this summer with an online science course from Montana State University! MSU's National Teachers Enhancement Network (NTEN) offers 13 online courses in astronomy, biology, chemistry, earth science, education, land resources and environmental science, math, nutrition, and physics. Courses start between May 11 and June 22.

Headlining this summer's offerings is NTEN's powerful course *Comparative Planetology: Establishing a Virtual Presence in the Solar System*. Co-taught by Dr. Eric Brunsell of MSU's Master of Science in Science Education (MSSE) program and Jason Marcks, executive director of Space Education Initiatives, this graduate-level course is designed to launch K-12 grade teachers and their students into the intriguing

world of space exploration. Like all NTEN courses, this course is based upon inquiry-based activities and investigative questions like how the study of other worlds (planets, moons, asteroids, and comets) teaches us about our own, and, how these worlds interact, forming mini-systems within the Solar System. By taking advantage of NASA's virtual presence in the Solar System, course participants will learn about the "new" Solar System and how to engage their students in the wonder of exploration.

Visit www.scienceteacher.org for NTEN's Summer 2009 professional development course listings, or call 800-282-6062. NTEN is a program of Montana State University and most courses offer MSU graduate credit. Courses can lead to a Master of Science in Science Education online degree. See the [MSSE web page](#) for details. NSTA members receive a 10% discount on select courses.

And Don't Forget...

Visit our member services web page to ensure that NSTA has your current [contact information](#). And when the time comes to renew—select the "Autorenew" option!

Visit the [NSTA Science Store](#) for an outstanding array of bestselling books and teaching resources. Receive 30% off the price of the April featured book, [Dig In: Hands-On Soil Investigations](#).

NSTA is offering more [Web Seminars](#) in the months ahead. Visit the website for more information and to register to attend these FREE professional development opportunities.

Professional development courses in your future?

Online options give you a world of choice.

Take a look at these groups offering [courses](#) for science educators!

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1840 Wilson Boulevard
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