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Week of June 8, 2009

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A Forum on "Informal" Science Education

Students encounter science every day, outside formal classroom settings. These informal experiences—which occur in zoos, museums, on walks through the park, even in computer games—offer the potential to increase students' understanding and love of science, a [study](#) released earlier this year found.

At 1:00 pm on June 9, *EdWeek* is hosting an online chat on informal science education, which will allow readers to submit questions to researchers who've studied the topic extensively. The guests will be [Philip Bell](#), of the University of Washington, and [Heidi Schweingruber](#) of the National Research Council. Both of them worked on the aforementioned study, titled *Learning Science in Informal Environments: People, Places and Pursuits*."

So get your questions ready. You will be able to access the chat through *EdWeek* home page, under "[Featured Events](#)," and through [this link](#).

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Women Are Seen Bridging Gap in Science Opportunities

The prospects for women who are scientists and engineers at major research universities have improved, and the achievement gap between boys and girls in mathematics is almost non-existent, a panel of the National Research Council concludes in a new report.

- Read more in this [New York Times article](#)
- Read more about the reports [here](#) and [here](#)

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Professional Learning Communities in Science: Designs, Tools, and Resources for Improving Student Learning

Science Teachers and Administrators: Join NSTA Aug. 3–5 in Orlando, Florida, for a three-day summer institute designed to help teams of educators learn how to develop, support, and implement a science-focused Professional Learning Community (PLC) that has continuous improvement in science teaching and learning at its core. A team of national presenters led by Susan Mundry and Kathy Stiles will introduce the concept of PLCs, examine different structures for PLCs, and demonstrate different science-specific tools and strategies to use within a PLC. For more information, to register, or to view a draft agenda, [click here](#).

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NSTA Board Adopts Position Statement on International Science Education

The NSTA Board of Directors recently adopted an NSTA position statement promoting and encouraging international science education because of its ability to improve the teaching and learning of science. The statement gives recommendations for teachers of science; science teacher educators; school leadership; policy makers; and science-related organizations, associations, agencies, and businesses to embrace and support international science education. This new statement replaces a previous version adopted in 1996.

NSTA wishes to thank the [position statement panel](#) who developed the new statement.

- [View and download the new position statement](#)
- [View all NSTA position statements](#), on topics ranging from laboratory science to the nature of science

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Develop Your Content Knowledge on Force and Motion

Intimidated by inertia? Frightened by forces? Mystified by Newton's Laws of Motion? NSTA's [Force and Motion](#) is the perfect online course for grades 3–9 science teachers interested in learning more about the topic or for those who would like a refresher course this summer to build content knowledge. Covering the concepts of speed, velocity, acceleration, force, mass, weight, and Newton's Laws of Motion and their applications, participants will attend the online class from 9:00 am to 10:30 am ET on these dates: 6/23, 6/25, 6/30, 7/2, and 7/9.

The presenters will guide participants through easy-to-understand explanations and facilitate discussions that will enhance their knowledge of common physical science concepts. In addition, participants contribute to asynchronous weekly discussions, and complete suggested reading assignments from the *Force and Motion* e-book, journal articles, and/or NSTA's *Force and Motion* SciPack and SciGuide. Participants should plan to spend 25–35 hours on this online course including the time spent attending the live web sessions. For more information, please visit the [NSTA Learning Center](#).

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Watershed Investigations: 12 Labs for High School Science

Teachers who cover any experiment-based environmental science curriculum will want to use the 12 labs covered in NSTA's new publication designed for hands-on ecology learning. The inquiry-based activities are geared for upper grades but have been easily modified and tested on 9th grade earth science students with great success. The experiments provide a foundation for studying the relationships between human impact and local hydrology, and the text comes with lesson plans that meet many required state and national standards. Together with the labs is background and reference information, rubrics, lists of materials required, student handouts and answers to student handout questions. Students who conducted the classroom-tested labs were found actively examining the data, developing hypotheses, analyzing and drawing conclusions. Those are critical thinking skills teachers want their students to own. To examine a sample chapter, visit the [NSTA Science Store](#).

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ExploraVision Awards Program Offers K–12 Students Opportunity to Shine in Science

Join us on Tuesday, June 16, 6:30 to 8:00 pm Eastern time, for a free web seminar on the Toshiba/NSTA ExploraVision Awards program. This web seminar will be led by teachers who have coached regional and national winning teams in recent years. Learn what the impact on student interest in science is after participating in the awards program and how teachers have had great success in motivating and guiding students in this endeavor. Now in its 18th year, ExploraVision encourages K–12 students at all levels of interest, skill and ability to create a vision of future technology by combining their imaginations with the tools of science. During these live web seminars, presenters will answer participants' questions. [Register today](#).

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Explore the Solar System and More—Online Courses from the American Museum of Natural History

Sign up today for our newest course ***Water: Environmental Science*** and **receive \$200 off the course cost!** At the end of the session, Water course participants will be asked to complete a short evaluation that will help us refine the course experience.

Registration closes June 22 for the second summer session of *Seminars on Science*, so sign up today! *Seminars on Science* courses connect classroom teachers with scientists engaged in current, real-world research. Each course is authored by leading scientists in their fields and is then co-taught by an experienced researcher affiliated with AMNH.

The Solar System, winner of Learning Magazine's 2009 Teachers Choice Award, explores our local neighborhood in space, from its extreme environments to its impact on the evolution of life on Earth. Authoring scientist **Neil deGrasse Tyson** is famous for making the vastness of space exciting and understandable, whether through his best-selling books like *The Pluto Files*, his PBS miniseries *Origins*, or his numerous teaching and speaking engagements around the world. Dr. Tyson studies the biggest things our universe holds, from the formation of galaxies to the destruction of stars. **Dr. Denton Ebel**, co-author of *The Solar System*, has spent his career studying how metal ores in their various states—from gas vapors to solid rock—have shaped the creation of planetary bodies. As curator of the Arthur Ross Hall of Meteorites at AMNH, Dr. Ebel is dedicated to learning what these visitors from space can tell us about our origins.

In addition to *The Solar System*, all of our most popular courses are also available for the summer, including *Earth: Inside and Out*; *The Ocean System*; *Genetics, Genomics, Genethics* and *Evolution*.

Designed for K–12 educators, each six-week course is led by an experienced classroom teacher and a research scientist. In-depth readings and assignments paired with rich web-based discussions assure

that educators come away from each class with a deeper understanding of both the science and the tools of scientific inquiry. Each participant receives a CD of course resources suitable for classroom use.

Please see the website for the full course listing. Free sample resources for each course—including essays, videos and interactive simulations—are available online at learn.amnh.org.

Summer Session Two runs July 6–August 16. **Registration closes June 22.** For more information and to register, go to learn.amnh.org or call 800-649-6715.

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Serve on NSTA's Board and Council

Are you looking for a challenging leadership position that impacts local, state, and national science education? You can make a difference in science education by choosing to serve on NSTA's Board and Council. This is an excellent means to create systemic change in science education. Let your voice be heard. We are currently accepting applications for the **2010 NSTA election**.

NSTA Board of Directors offices to be filled in the 2010 election are;

President—Term of office: Three-year commitment from June 2010 through May 2013
(Year one as President-Elect; year two as President; year three as Retiring President);

Division Directors—term of office: three-year commitment beginning June 2010 through May 2013.
NSTA seeks directors for these divisions:

- College Level Science Teaching
- Coordination & Supervision
- High School Level Science Teaching

NSTA Council offices to be filled in the 2010 election are **District Directors**—term of office: three-year commitment beginning June 2010 through May 2013. The districts involved are:

- District III—Delaware, District of Columbia, Virginia
- District V—Alabama, Canal Zone, Florida, Georgia, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands
- District IX—Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota
- District XI—Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska
- District XV—Idaho, Montana, Wyoming
- District XVII—Alaska, Oregon, Washington

Submission deadline is **October 15, 2009**. You can apply online or download an application at www.nsta.org/nominations. Questions? Call 703-312-9217.

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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 June featured book, [Exemplary Science in Informal Education Settings: Standards-Based Success Stories](#).

Click on the logo to explore the summer of 2009 professional development opportunities.

Professional development courses in your future?
Online options give you a world of choice.
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