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Week of May 4, 2009

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NSTA Launches Professional Networking Website for Science Educators

If you ever needed to share a teaching challenge, talk to a teacher in your discipline teaching your grade band, or gather suggestions about resources on assessment from someone who has used the resource and can recommend it, you'll want to join the new online

NSTA Communities. This website brings together science education professionals to interact, mingle, share activities and resources, form groups, offer advice, and get help from the community members. Visit www.nsta.org/communities to create your profile and expand your professional network. You may make a friend, offer your expertise, find a mentor, and help build a community with those sharing a passion for science education.

The NSTA Communities site is open to NSTA members as well as New Orleans conference attendees and presenters.

For a visual introduction to the NSTA Communities, view the archived web seminar in the Communities "foyer" (www.nsta.org/communities).

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News Roundup: NAEP Math and Reading Scores Up, Cash-strapped Schools Cancel Field Trips

Last week the National Center for Education Statistics released the 2008 NAEP Long-Term Trend Reading and Mathematics Assessments. The Long-Term Trend NAEP provides national-level results for both public and private school students, assessed by age rather than grade, at ages 9, 13, and 17. The overall average mathematics scores for 9- and 13-year-olds were higher in 2008 when compared to all previous assessments. However, there was no significant change in the scores of 17-year-olds in comparison to either 2004 or 1973. Overall, the national trend in reading showed improvement from 2004 to 2008 for students at all three ages (9, 13, and 17).



- Learn more about the [NAEP report](#)
- Read the [Washington Post article](#)

USA Today reports that a growing number of schools faced with cutbacks and layoffs are being forced to eliminate field trips because of rising costs of gas, admission fees, and other factors.

- Read the *USA Today* article "[Cash-strapped schools cancel field trips](#)" by Greg Latshaw

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22 Teams of Middle School Students Named Finalists in National Green Community-based Competition

Twenty-two teams of U.S. middle school students have been named state finalists in the inaugural ***Siemens We Can Change the World Challenge***. NSTA, Siemens Foundation and Discovery Education have partnered on this web-based national competition to encourage middle school students to team up and "go green" by implementing environmental change in their local communities. From these 22 state finalist teams, two national winning teams and one grand prize-winning team will be chosen and announced on May 18, 2009. Over 2,000 students participated in the inaugural year of the *Siemens We Can Change the World Challenge* and state finalist projects covered topics such as e-waste recycling, ecosystem restoration and water conservation. To enter the *Siemens We Can Change the World Challenge*, teams of two to three students in sixth through eighth grade, under the mentorship of a teacher or adult supervisor, were asked to identify an environmental issue in their community, research the issue using scientific investigation, and create a replicable green solution using web-based curriculum tools powered by Discovery Education.

As a state finalist team, each student member will receive an eco-friendly prize pack, which includes a recycled messenger bag, a solar charger, a recycled USB drive, a recycled journal, a reusable water bottle and other sustainable supplies. In addition to the prize pack, the team's adult advisor will receive a free one-year membership to the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) and a one-year subscription to Discovery Education Science, the digital resource library designed to deepen understanding of science. A complete list of the state finalists can be found at www.wecanchange.com.

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Have You Used Hubble in Class? You May Be a "Top Star"

Throughout Hubble Space Telescope's lifetime its mission has inspired and promoted education. The final Hubble servicing mission (2009) and the celebration of Hubble's 20th anniversary (2010) are key mission milestones, and both enrich activities for the 2009 International Year of Astronomy (IYA).

U.S. formal (K-12 and college) and informal educators are invited to submit their best examples of using NASA's Hubble Space Telescope for science, technology, engineering or mathematics education. Those selected as Top Stars will receive national recognition and awards.

From May 2009-January 2010, IGES will accept and review entries from U.S. educators of their best examples of using Hubble for STEM education. The contest is open to individuals, and teams of up to four people, who are U.S. citizens and are at least 21-years-old. IGES and NASA employees are not eligible.

Visit the [Top Stars website](#) for details.

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NCTAF: New Approaches to Teacher Development Needed

According to a new report from the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF) and a national survey of teachers and principals, the nation stands to lose half of its teachers to retirement over the next decade. The report finds that over 50 percent of the nation's principals and teachers are Baby Boomers. To help prevent these losses, the report argues for the development and adoption of a new approach to teacher development that mobilizes learning teams comprised of new teachers, teacher mentors, and teacher retirees.

[Learn more](#) about *Learning Teams: Creating What's Next*, including the percentage of public school teachers over 50 in your state.

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Summer Study: Enhance Your Knowledge of Physical Science

[Register](#) to attend the NSTA Online Short Course: *Energy*

For grades 3-9 teachers, NSTA's online short course *Energy* offers a painless refresher in physical science concepts. Available directly from your computer, the short course combines asynchronous learning with live web sessions to help you master this science content. The course runs Monday June 15, 2009 from 9:00 am to 10:30 am through the next four consecutive Wednesdays, ending on July 8, 2009 (6/15, 6/17, 6/24, 7/1, 7/8). Don Boonstra, an educator with over 30 years of experience in professional development for science teachers, will guide the discussions.

Participants will join the virtual classroom along with the instructor and NSTA staff to ask questions and have discussions about the topic. Follow up weekly discussions are posted on the course forum, and self-paced completion of corresponding course materials (SciPack, SciGuide, e-Book, and Journal articles) all contribute to boosting your knowledge of the subject.

An elementary teacher from Florida said, "Being able to ask questions through the chat window throughout the presentations and having my questions answered so quickly was very helpful. I liked working with and learning from the other participants. The presenter was very knowledgeable both about energy and how to effectively present it to students."

Member rate: \$323.50

Nonmember rate: \$368.50

Fees include all materials

Two graduate professional development credits from the University of Idaho can be earned for an additional fee. For more details and to register, visit the [NSTA Learning Center](#). Questions? E-mail Paul Tingler at ptingler@nsta.org.

[Register](#) to attend the NSTA Online Short Course: *Force and Motion*

Teachers will love this online short course on *Force and Motion* under the guidance of Dr. Matt Bobrowsky. If you're teaching grades 3-9, you can build your background in physical science concepts through NSTA's live web sessions (5) beginning Tuesday, June 23, 2009, and continuing on the following dates: 6/25, 6/30, 7/2, and 7/9. The course is held from 9:00 am to 10:30 am Eastern time. Dr. Bobrowsky, NSTA staff, and the virtual classroom of students will pose and answer questions and share comments about the topic. Follow up weekly discussions are posted on the course forum, and self-paced completion of corresponding course materials (SciPack, SciGuide, e-Book, and Journal articles) all contribute to boosting knowledge of the subject.

Consider a comment from a middle school teacher from Oklahoma. "Our presenter was great and very knowledgeable. He did a great job. I had many misconceptions that have been corrected."

Member rate: \$323.50

Nonmember rate: \$368.50

Fees include all materials

Two graduate professional development credits from the University of Idaho can be earned for an additional fee. For more details and to register, visit the [NSTA Learning Center](#). Questions? E-mail Paul Tingler at ptingler@nsta.org.

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