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Week of August 31, 2009

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Schools and the Stimulus: How America's Public School Districts Are Using ARRA Funds

A survey released last week by the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) of 160 school administrators finds that while school leaders “appreciate the opportunity the federal stimulus funding (ARRA) represents, a lack of flexibility in the funding and a need to fill federal, state, and local budget shortfalls are sizeable obstacles that many districts have been unable to overcome in their efforts to save jobs and effect change.”

When asked how their districts are using funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (stimulus) funds to bring about education innovation and reform (a prerequisite states must agree to before accepting the funding) two thirds of respondents said they are either filling funding gaps or the ARRA funds represent only marginal growth in funding levels. While districts are using the one-time funds to save teaching and staff positions, less than half of respondents reported being able to save core subject teaching position as a result of ARRA dollars.

- [Read the executive summary](#) of the AASA report *Schools and the Stimulus: How America's Public School Districts Are Using ARRA Funds* (PDF)
- [Read the entire report](#) (6 pages) (PDF)

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The Conrad Foundation Opens Registration for the 2010 Spirit of Innovation Awards

The Conrad Foundation today announced that it has opened registration for the 2010 Spirit of Innovation Awards. The Spirit of Innovation Awards is an annual competition that challenges teams of high school students to create innovative products for use in one of four categories: aerospace exploration, space nutrition, renewable energy and green schools. Teams and their coaches will compete for more than \$100,000 in cash prizes; be designated as Pete Conrad Scholars; have the opportunity to commercialize their products for general market use; and receive annual memberships to the Conrad Foundation, Sigma Xi, the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA), and the National Science Teachers Association—the Foundation’s official education advisor. For more information about the program, visit

www.conradawards.com. Applications must be submitted no later than **December 15, 2009**, to be considered.

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Back to School: Improve Your Knowledge of Physical Science

Teachers, grades 3–9, will love this online short course on **Light** offered via NSTA's live web sessions beginning Tuesday, October 13, 2009 and on the following four consecutive Tuesdays, under the guidance of Dr. Matt Bobrowsky. The dates are: 10/13, 10/20, 10/27, 11/3, and 11/10, and the course is held from 8:00 pm to 9:30 pm Eastern Time. Participants will strengthen their physical science concepts through synchronous learning for an hour and a half each week.

The virtual classroom of students, the instructor Dr. Bobrowsky, and NSTA staff will share comments about the topic and post and answer questions. Follow-up weekly discussions are posted on the course forum, and self-paced completion of corresponding course materials (SciPack, SciGuide, e-book, journal article, and book chapter) all contribute to boosting knowledge of the subject.

Fees include all materials:

Member rate: \$326.59

Nonmember rate: \$371.01

Two graduate professional development credits from the University of Idaho can be earned for an additional fee. If taken for credit, the participants will receive a letter grade. For more details and to register, visit the [NSTA Learning Center](#).

For questions, write ptingler@nsta.org.

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Call for Conference Session Proposals

Have a good idea? Submit an online proposal for an NSTA conference and share your teaching experience with our attendees! Visit www.nsta.org/conferences to submit your proposal for our 2010–2011 conferences. In 2010–2011 NSTA will hold conferences in the following locations:

2010 Area Conferences on Science Education

Proposal Deadline: January 15, 2010

Kansas City, Missouri

October 28–30, 2010

Baltimore, Maryland

November 11–13, 2010

Nashville, Tennessee

December 2–4, 2010

2011 National Conference on Science Education

Proposal Deadline: April 15, 2010

San Francisco, California
March 10–13, 2011

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ExploraVision Excites and Motivates Your Students

Are you a teacher looking for ways to motivate your students? Are you a teacher trying to find ways to make science lessons exciting? Are you looking to add some excitement into your classes? Then the ExploraVision Awards competition is for you! Toshiba and NSTA have partnered for the last 18 years to bring this competition to students to help excite and motivate them toward science. The competition gives students a chance to use their imaginations for any subject that interests them. And winners will receive lots of cool stuff from Toshiba as well as a chance to win money for college! For more information and an application, visit www.exploravision.org.

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Phoenix 2009: Rising Through Rigor, Relevance, and Relationships

If you're a science educator or administrator, [NSTA's Conference on Science Education in Phoenix](#), scheduled for Dec. 3–5, is an event you won't want to miss. With a new interest in science education to better prepare our children to compete in the global market, educators will need to pursue the best professional development to bolster content knowledge, learn assessment and inquiry strategies, and test the newest classroom tools and techniques. Featuring more than 400 sessions, workshops, presentations, and symposia, the conference is for teachers in every grade band and from every discipline.

- **Daylong programs**—Biology Day, Chemistry Day, Physical Science Day, and Physics Day.
- **Activities from Across the Earth System**—Hands-on, inquiry-based activities spanning the five "spheres" of Earth system science. Handouts! (Elem–High School)
- **The School Water Audit Project: Authentic and Integrative Project-based Learning**—engages learners in science, literacy, and mathematics to determine the amount of water used in their school and to implement conservation. (Elem–High School)
- **Facing the Future**—Explore sustainability issues and the incorporation of literacy in the science classroom through hands-on, inquiry-based activities. CD-ROM provided.
- **Activities from Across the Earth System**—Educators and scientists share their repertoire of hands-on, inquiry-based activities spanning the five "spheres" of Earth system science. Handouts! (Elem–High)
- **Ice Core Records: From Volcanoes to Stars**—Use absolute and relative dating techniques with high-resolution ice core data and historic volcanic eruptions to correlate and date supernova events from nitrate anomalies. (High–College, Informal Educators)
- **Ira Flatow (Host, NPR's *Science Friday*®): Talking Science in a Science-Challenged World**—Mixing Flatow's passion for science with a tendency toward being "a bit of a ham," Flatow describes his work as the challenge "to make science and technology a topic for discussion around the dinner table."
- **Lost Dutchman State Park Moonlight Hike**—Located in the Sonoran Desert 40 miles east of Phoenix, the park derives its name from the fabled Lost Dutchman Mine. (Ticketed)
- **Networking with your peers and the experts**
- **The Exhibition Hall**—Bring a tote to carry home the many giveaways from top companies.

And there is much more to explore. Visit www.nsta.org/phoenix to get details or to register.

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