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Message from the President

At this time of high-stakes testing and increased accountability, we shouldn't worry about the tests. The stakes are much higher than the average citizen might realize.

Findings of various international science assessments show students from the United States performing as low as 21st among the top 40

countries on the planet. We are hard-pressed to find a major assessment where our students score in the top 10. To me, the scariest part about these tests is that they test the higher order thinking skills of students rather than content knowledge. If our students were behind others in their knowledge of scientific terms, that would not be that difficult fix. But, the fact that our students are deficient in the basic skills needed to solve problems and explain scientific principles, is very scary. Two-thirds of our students seem to do fine with defining science vocabulary, but fall short in being able to recognize or describe applications of those same concepts. This is pretty amazing, since we do spend an inordinate amount of time developing the science vocabulary of our students.



The reason that all of this is so terrifying to me is that these are but a few of many indicators that our students are not developing the skills necessary to continue to be world leaders in solving environmental problems, making medical advances, developing important technology and maintaining a top spot in the global economy. The solution to curbing this trend is very complicated, but does it mean that we are not working hard enough? I see teachers working hard everywhere I go. If we do what we have always done, we will surely get the same results that we have been getting! We must find ways to work smarter, not harder! I also see science teachers doing many great things!

The first thing that we can do is to share classroom successes that we have had and lessons that we have learned. All of us have some things that we do very well and others where we could do better. We need to share ways that we have been able to get a high percentage of students to achieve certain skills in an area of science. We also need to seek out ways to teach science in areas where we have struggled. It is imperative that we remain as open about getting ideas and constructive feedback as we are about giving advice.

Dates to Note

June 26-28	DPI Middle Grades Summer Leadership Institute - Asheville
July 12-14	DPI Middle Grades Summer Leadership Institute - Raleigh
July 10-14	DPI High School Summer Science Leadership Institute
July 24-28	DPI Elementary Summer Science Leadership Institute
July 31	NCSTA Awards

Nominaton Deadline

- October 9-10 [Elementary Education Conference](#)
- November 2-5 [Environmental Educators of NC Conference](#)
- November 9-10 [NCSTA Professional Development Institute](#)

NCSTA Seeks Science Leaders

NCSTA is accepting nominations for leadership positions in the organizations. President-elect, Treasurer, and District Directors for districts 1, 3, 5, and 7 are up for election. [Submit a nomination for yourself or a colleague!](#)

Recognize an Outstanding Teacher Today!

Help us recognize outstanding teachers by nominating a colleague for an NCSTA award. Awards are given for each elementary, middle and high school for each district as well as student teachers and overall awards. Visit the [Awards web page](#) for details on nominating today using our new online form. The deadline is July 31.

Apply for a Study Grant

Would you like to participate in a professional development opportunity but don't have the funds to register? Consider applying for a study grant. The grant is awarded 4 times a year. The most recent winners are Susan Lassiter of Caswell County and Dianne Ellington of Craven County for their professional development opportunity, Yellowstone in Winter, sponsored by the Museum of Natural Sciences in Raleigh. [Details and application are available online.](#)

Wanted: Photos and Conference Programs

The NCSTA History & Records committee would like your photos and programs from past NCSTA conferences. Please mail them to Fannette Entzminger at 107 Greenwood Drive, Greenville, NC 27834. Items will be returned after they have been scanned or copied.

Editor's Note:

You may also download a [printer-friendly version](#) in pdf format of each article.

Submission Information

I am encouraging all of you to share your ideas with the teachers within your school, openly discuss your methods, and jointly plan your instruction and evaluation. Next, share ideas across your district. Then, offer to work with other science teachers to plan professional development activities. Please come to the NCSTA Professional Development Institute (PDI) in November to share those great ideas with science teachers from all over the state. You will have opportunities to share labs, demonstrations, techniques, or a successful classroom activity. Teachers will be explaining how they can get students to apply science concepts rather than memorizing terms. They will show how they can use every minute in the class period to get students to design their own experiment to solve practical problems. Teachers will show how they use models or demonstrations to make a scientific concept more concrete for students. While you are there, you will be able to see hundreds of science educators who are willing to give you their most valuable gifts. Don't miss this opportunity! Make it a yearly event!

A few requests:

1. [Reward a deserving science educator by nominating her/him for one of the many awards that will be offered by NCSTA at the PDI.](#) The deadline is July 31st.
2. [Submit a nominations for NCSTA officer or District Directors for districts 1, 3, 5, and 7 by July 31st.](#)
3. [Sign up to present an idea or share a program and the fall Professional Development Institute in Greensboro.](#)

An important announcement:

Our PDI Planners have made an arrangement with the Koury Convention Center to reduce the nightly costs, so that each of two teachers sharing a room can get the price down to the "state rate". If we have enough lodging rooms occupied by PDI participants at the headquarters hotel, then NCSTA will be able to maintain the low registration costs from year to year. If we do not make our goal, then our room rental costs will increase as will future fees to our members. **Please help us to continue to offer the best deal in science professional development.**

See you in Greensboro at the NCSTA PDI, November 9-10, 2006!

Past Presidents Profile:

Dr. Linda Stroud, of region 3, in her retirement has written a book on lab safety. Linda was president of NCSTA in 1993 and worked numerous years with Wake. Co. Schools at Broughton HS teaching Chemistry. She now conducts safety training for school systems and helps write chemical hygiene plans. You may visit her web site at www.sciencesafetyconsulting.com.