

Changing the Course of K–16 Science Education
Translating Policies and Research into Effective Programs for School Districts and States

***National Leadership Development and Strategic Planning Symposium on K–16
Science Education for State Teams***

September 30 – October 2, 2007

Amid the increased attention to science education in the United States, national education leaders convened this fall in Washington, D.C., to learn about research and discuss strategies for implementing best practices in K–16 science education. The *2007 National Leadership Development and Strategic Planning Symposium for State Teams* brought together leadership teams from 18 states: Alabama, Arizona, Delaware, Georgia, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Utah, Virginia, Washington, and West Virginia. The participating teams met for two and a half days to bolster their state educational programs and strengthen their statewide strategic partnerships.

This national symposium was hosted by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), the James B. Hunt, Jr. Institute for Educational Leadership and Policy, and the National Science Resources Center (NSRC) of the National Academies and the Smithsonian Institution. The symposium represented the first part of the leadership development component of the CCSSO/Smithsonian partnership, and was sponsored by generous contributions from Intel, DuPont, and IBM.

Central to the Symposium was the NSRC Theory of Action, which states that educational practices should be based on research and knowledge of best practices, and should generate a shared vision for science education among key leaders. This vision should include strategies for addressing five essential areas of education: research-based instructional materials; ongoing professional development for teachers; continuing assessment; classroom materials support systems; and administrative and community support for the program. States and regions that are successfully implementing programs that encompass these five areas show significant academic gains for their students and growth in productive partnerships among business, academia, government, and K–12 education.

Many states and regions throughout the country are already implementing the NSRC Theory of Action. Symposium participants had the opportunity to learn from two such states that have been doing this work for a decade or longer—Washington State and Delaware. Washington began its work with 15 school districts, under the umbrella of the LASER (Leadership and Assistance for Science Education

Reform) program. Today, Washington LASER has nine regional hubs and serves about 70 percent of the state's school districts. The NSRC partnership with Delaware began in 1995. Today, every school district in the state operates science programs that follow the NSRC model. Delaware student achievement scores in science have risen significantly in recent years, and the state is closing the achievement gap.

As a result of the fall 2007 symposium, the CCSSO and the NSRC will continue their partnership and work with the participating states to implement the strategies discussed at the meeting. The next step will be to discuss with each state leadership team the opportunities for planning and partnerships in their state. Any states that were unable to participate in the Symposium this year are also invited to contact the CCSSO or the NSRC to learn more about how they can get involved.

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