President’s Newsletter Message

Randy L. Bell, ASTE President

Countdown to Clearwater!

We just completed a productive summer board meeting at the site of the 2012 conference in Clearwater, Fl. Conference co-chairs Dana Zeidler, Allan Feldman, Malcom Butler, and Ben Herman are working with Executive Director Eugene Wagner to ensure that the conference is a rousing success. Those of you who attended the 2007 conference will attest to the beauty of Clearwater Beach. For the rest, I can assure you that you will thoroughly enjoy both meeting with your colleagues and playing in the surf. If you need to see for yourself, visit the conference website at http://theaste.org/meetings/2012conference/index.htm. There you’ll find images of the venue, including the hotel, beach, and outdoor patio. While you’re there, you can submit a proposal to present at the conference (due by July 4th, 2011). You can also register for your hotel stay. Thanks to the negotiations of your conference team, you are eligible for the conference rate ($139/night) for 3 days prior and 3 days past the actual conference dates of January 4-7, 2012. This extended conference rate is subject to availability, so plan to register early!
There were a few other items of business I’d like to highlight. First, your Publications Committee has been hard at work selecting research published in ASTE journals for the upcoming “Summer Reading List for Teachers” feature in the NSTA publications Science and Children and Science Scope. The purpose of the list is to guide teachers to science education research that is both relevant and interesting to practitioners. A total of 10 articles were selected, with 4 from our own JSTE and ESE. Don’t miss it, and be sure to share the list with your students and teachers!

You may have heard about the effort to repeal The Louisiana Science Education Act, which allows teaching nonscientific ideas in science classrooms on the grounds that it promotes critical thinking. The 2008 law encourages teachers to introduce supplemental materials into science instruction on matters “including, but not limited to, evolution, the origins of life, global warming and human cloning.” Your board voted to support the efforts of State Sen. Karen Carter Peterson, who authored a bill to repeal the 2008 law. To this end, we sent letters of support to both Senator Peterson and the National Center for Science Education. Thanks to ASTE member Ian Binns (LSU) for alerting us to this opportunity to support science education in Louisiana schools!

Finally, I would like to extend a warm welcome to our new Executive Director and Director of Electronic Services. Robert Hollon (University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire) was selected by the board to fill the position of Executive Director at the end of Eugene Wagner’s term in 2012. Anna Lewis (University of South Florida) will take over the duties of Director of Electronic Services. Both are already working with Eugene so that they will be able to seamlessly ease into their new roles. Be sure to thank Bob and Anna for taking on these important responsibilities, and Eugene, for his continued leadership and service!

In another item of business, board members Kathy Trundle and Richard Hechter are working to develop Standard Operating Procedures for a 3-year term for the Chair of the Committee of Regional Units. Currently, the “Senior Regional Representative” serves as the chair for this committee, which consists of one voting member from each regional unit. However, this term is for 1 year as opposed to the 3-year term of other committee chairs. By including a longer term for the chair, the leadership of the Regional Units Committee will parallel that of other committees, and allow for greater continuity and communication. Also, board member Joanne Olson has spear-headed efforts to change the designation and associated Standard Operating Procedures of the Technology Committee to those of a forum. The request to make this change originated with the members of the committee, who believed their structure and responsibilities were more aligned with ASTE forums.

Those of you who attended the 2007 conference will attest to the beauty of Clearwater Beach
What’s Ahead for No Child Left Behind: Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)

This year many believe that Congress will begin work to reauthorize (rewrite) the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the federal education law commonly known as No Child Left Behind. What does this mean for science education and educators? Hate it or love it, policymakers are crafting a new ESEA law that will continue to have an impact on the science classroom.

Politics is all about “what you have that you don’t want to lose and what you don’t have but would like to gain.” Constituents who are knowledgeable about an issue, passionate about their cause, and know when and how to interact with their Member of Congress can be very effective. Any real change that can and will come to STEM education policy will come from individuals within the STEM education community and the influence we can bring to the policy decisions that are made.

With this in mind, who can carry the message about quality science education to elected representatives better than teacher educators and teachers? ASTE members can educate federal policymakers on the role of science and science education in public policy, and advance specific recommendations on issues affecting teachers, pathways to teaching, and many more.

Your voice does matter. Members of ASTE can also provide members of Congress with real life success stories from your district. You can demonstrate the impact a specific issue may have on the member’s state or district. Members of Congress need this information when they make their decisions, and a few intelligent and informed e-mails from constituents can sometimes tip the balance on an issue.

Now is the time to seek out opportunities to interact with federal legislators, both in Washington, DC and in the home state/district. Consider attending “fly-in lobby days,” “meet and greets,” and/or legislative briefings that provide you with the chance to interact with legislators. (NSTA and six other STEM organizations are sponsoring a July K-12 STEM Policy Conference, more information can be found at [http://stemedconference.eventbrite.com](http://stemedconference.eventbrite.com).)

NSTA and the STEM Education Coalition ([www.stemedcoalition.org](http://www.stemedcoalition.org)) can help you learn about the existing policy, legislation, and funding resources that are important to science and science education. We can provide key advice about the political process, help you to identify the key issues that you want to address, and help you to also develop a succinct message that expresses what you want to convey. (See sidebar on key messages for ESEA)

Advocating for an issue is essential to legislative success. By cultivating relationships with your elected officials, you are establishing yourself as an authority on a specific issue. Our elected leaders want the best information to do their jobs, and in many cases they will turn to the individuals who have the knowledge they need to assist in the development of policy. Become one
What’s Ahead for No Child Left Behind Cont.

of those individuals. Watch for more information from NSTA and the STEM Education Coalition in the coming months and work with us to help craft a federal education law that will best meet the needs of science education.

Jodi Peterson
Assistant Executive Director, Legislative Affairs
National Science Teachers Association
Chair, STEM Education Coalition (www.stemedcoalition.org)
jpeterson@nsta.org

These are the issues the NSTA and the STEM Education Coalition will be working to achieve in the next ESEA.

- Inclusion of student performance in science alongside math and reading as a required element of the accountability system.
- Federal support for ongoing collaborative state efforts to implement “common core” or other high-quality standards in math and science.
- Robust dedicated support for effective Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) educator professional development and preparation and educational innovation activities under Title II.
- Integration of STEM-focused curriculum, projects, and programs as priority investments for ESEA programs that support classroom teaching and learning as well as out of school experiences such as afterschool and summer programs.
- Targeted efforts to promote STEM subject master teachers and teacher specialists.
- Competitive grant programs to promote more aggressive state adoption and expansion of high-quality, rigorous STEM programs, so long as such efforts do not compromise existing formula-funding streams that also support high-quality STEM activities.

Mid-Atlantic ASTE Regional News

The Mid-Atlantic ASTE Regional Group invites you to attend our 2011 Fall Conference. Join us September 30-October 1 at Carter Caves State Park in beautiful eastern Kentucky. Conference proposal forms and registration information will be available at www.ma-aste.org.

Contact the co-chairs, Elizabeth Roland (e.roland@moreheadstate.edu) or Melissa Shirley (melissa.shirley@louisville.edu), for more information or with any questions.
Northeast ASTE Regional News

The 2011 ASTE Northeast Region conference will be held on October 26-28 at Black Rock Forest in Cornwall, New York.

Information about Black Rock Forest is available online at: http://www.blackrockforest.org

ASTE Equity Committee Updates

The ASTE Equity committee met in Minneapolis at the ASTE meeting and was led by Hedy Moscovici who was finishing her term as chairperson of the equity committee. The Equity committee wishes to publicly thank Hedy for the support and dedication to ASTE and equity. Thank you, Hedy!

Our committee encourages our membership to invite our colleagues who are on faculty at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) to contribute to our regional and national meetings. In addition to inviting them to submit proposals, it is especially important to facilitate the introductions of our colleagues to ASTE members, as first visits are often times intimidating.

The committee is working to involve as many people as possible in the workings of ASTE. This includes investigating more support for persons with physical challenges such as hearing or vision difficulties. Possible support can include CART service during keynote addresses which will benefit those with hearing impairments as well as those of us who simply find it more difficult to hear in public places. The practice ASTE has begun of placing a PDF on the website for the conference program and other documents is extremely helpful as many computer readers can read PDF aloud for those with visual impairments. Thank you to the Board of Directors for listening to our suggestions for making ASTE as accessible as possible.

Lisa Martin-Hansen, Equity Committee Chairperson

National and International Conference Announcements

The 2011 North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) annual conference will be held October 12-15 in Raleigh, North Carolina. The NAAEE two-day Research Symposium is held two days earlier on October 10-11. Information available at: http://www.naaee.net/conference

The 2011 National Council for Geographic Education (NCGE) annual meeting will be held August 1-7 in Portland, Oregon. Information available at: http://www.ncge.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3318

The International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) annual meeting will be held June 26-29 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Information available at: http://www.isteconference.org/2011/
Updated Call for Newsletter Editor

The Publications Committee continues to seek applications for Editor or Co-Editors for the ASTE Newsletter. The deadline for submitting applications has been extended to August 1, 2011.

The ASTE Newsletter Editor or Co-Editors’ role, which is highly valued service to ASTE, includes membership on the ASTE Publications Committee and attendance at the ASTE annual meetings. Note that our annual meetings will be located in great places in January for the next 3 years – Clearwater Beach, Charleston, and San Antonio. The ASTE Board of Directors will contribute to the Editor’s travel expenses to defray costs to attend these meetings.

The ASTE Newsletter plays many important roles to our organization by:

- providing information about the Association and its activities to members and interested others,
- centralizing all ASTE announcements and news items in one location, and
- serving as an archive of ASTE activities.

The current editor’s term of service ends next year, and the organization needs an ASTE member or members to fill this important position. Filling the position early allows for an overlap in terms with the current editor – you will not be on your own in the beginning. Please consider contributing to this essential service for ASTE.

Contact Todd Campbell (todd.campbell@usu.edu), ASTE Newsletter Editor, regarding information about the expectations for this role, and contact Kathy Cabe Trundle (trundle.1@osu.edu), Chair ASTE Newsletter Editorial Search Committee, for information about applying for the position.

For complete information on the submission process, see the following: 
http://theaste.org/memberresources/announcements/newsletter.htm
International ASTE Conference  
Clearwater Beach, Florida  
January 4 - 7, 2012

We are excited to have The Association for Science Teacher Education (ASTE) return to the west coast beaches of Florida! The ASTE 2012 International Conference theme, *Promoting Democratic Decision-making and Discourse through Science Teacher Education*, aims to highlight the fundamental importance that community, discourse, dissent and tolerance have for the activity of science and science teacher education. The program committee encourages the submission of proposals that highlight our commitment to empowering teachers and their students by exercising evidence-based reasoning and becoming engaging in the democratic process though policy, activism and scientific inquiry. In doing so, we hope to extend our international community boundaries as a professional society.

We will continue the successful tradition of the Minneapolis conference by having *syllabus sharing* as a presentation option to our robust program of papers, posters, round-table discussions, experiential sessions and themed paper sets. All of these presentation formats are designed to engage conference attendees in discussions of high quality evidence-based practices. The concurrent sessions proposal submission form is available at [http://theaste.org](http://theaste.org). Proposals must be submitted no later than July 4th, 2011 in order to receive full consideration for inclusion in the conference program. We look forward to your submissions.

Sunny and warm regards,  
Dana Zeidler, Allan Feldman, Ben Herman, Malcolm Butler  
University of South Florida  
2012 ASTE Program Committee/Co-conference Chairs

*Syllabus Sharing at the ASTE 2012 Annual Meeting in Clearwater Beach, Florida*

Join your colleagues in Clearwater Beach in January for the "Syllabus Sharing" interactive poster sessions to get valuable ideas for your science methods courses. Several of the featured courses have been taught for years and refined over that time to maximize their effectiveness. Some have passed NCATE and similar review processes. This sharing is a tradition going back to our first ASTE conference. Learn about activities, textbooks, field experiences, scoring rubrics, and many other resources that can be used in your own methods courses for science teachers. You can submit "Syllabus Sharing" interactive poster sessions for the conference using the ASTE conference proposal form. Deadline is July 4.
Four Urban Districts Score Higher in NAEP Science Than Large Cities Nationally; Eight Districts Score Lower
Seventeen Districts Take Part in 2009 Nation’s Report Card Measuring

(BOSTON) – Results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) — also known as The Nation’s Report Card — show that most of the 17 urban school districts that participated in the 2009 science assessment scored lower than the national average for public school students. However, when compared to their respective peers attending public schools in large cities, scores for both fourth- and eighth-graders were higher in four districts and lower in eight districts.

The 2009 NAEP Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA) in science was administered by the National Center for Education Statistics, and tested representative samples of between 900 and 2,200 fourth-graders and eighth-graders in each of the following 17 districts that volunteered to participate:

- Atlanta Public Schools
- Austin Independent School District
- Baltimore City Public Schools
- Boston Public Schools
- Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools
- Chicago Public Schools
- Cleveland Metropolitan School District
- Detroit Public Schools
- Fresno Unified School District
- Houston Independent School District
- Jefferson County Public Schools (Louisville, Ky.)
- Los Angeles Unified School District
- Miami-Dade County Public Schools
- Milwaukee Public Schools
- New York City Department of Education
- Philadelphia, School District of
- San Diego Unified School District

Assessment questions measured students’ knowledge and skills in physical science, life science, and Earth and space sciences. The results are reported as average scores on a 0–300 scale and as percentages of students performing at or above three achievement levels: Basic, Proficient and Advanced. Results from each district are compared to results for public school students in the nation and to the results for students in large cities (cities with populations of 250,000 or more that may or may not include a TUDA district). Demographic distinctions are particularly pronounced in TUDA districts and other large cities that feature high proportions of students from minority ethnic groups, English language learners and students eligible for the National School Lunch Program.

Average scores in most of the 17 urban districts that participated in the 2009 assessment were lower than the national average of 149. However, there were a few exceptions. At grade 4, the average scores in Austin, Charlotte and Jefferson County were not significantly different from the nation, while the scores in the remaining 14 districts were lower. At grade 8, only Austin had an average score that was not significantly different from the national average, while scores in the remaining 16 districts were lower.

David Driscoll, chairman of the National Assessment Governing Board, which sets policy for
NAEP Science Cont.

NAEP, called the overall results disappointing, especially considering the scientific underpinnings of so many growing employment fields. “It is simply unacceptable that we are not comprehensively educating many schoolchildren in urban districts on the basics of science, let alone to the highest levels needed for our nation to be competitive,” Driscoll said.

When compared to the average score for fourth-graders in large cities, scores were higher in Austin, Boston, Charlotte, Jefferson County, Miami-Dade and San Diego; not significantly different in Atlanta, Houston and New York City; and lower in the remaining eight districts. At grade 8, scores in Austin, Charlotte, Houston, Jefferson County and Miami-Dade were higher than the score for large cities; the score in San Diego was not significantly different; and scores for the remaining 11 districts were lower.

Although no TUDA district had a higher percentage of students performing at or above the Basic level in comparison to the percentage for the nation, six districts at grade 4 and five districts at grade 8 had a higher percentage at or above Basic than the percentage in large cities. In Austin, the percentages of eighth-graders performing at or above Proficient and at Advanced were higher than the percentages for large cities and the nation.

There was also some good news related to the performance of some of the racial/ethnic groups in several districts. Among the 14 districts that scored lower than the nation overall at grade 4, scores for at least one racial/ethnic group in Atlanta, Boston, Houston, Miami-Dade and San Diego were higher than the score for their peers nationally. Of the 16 districts that scored lower than the nation at grade 8, Charlotte, Houston and Miami-Dade all had at least one racial/ethnic group with higher average scores.

Still, the report reveals significant achievement gaps among racial/ethnic groups. For the 16 districts with samples of White and Black students large enough to report results at grade 4, score gaps between the two groups ranged from 26 points in Philadelphia to 56 points in Atlanta. Among the 14 districts with large enough samples at grade 8, the White–Black gap ranged from 27 points in Philadelphia to 43 points in Houston.

The NAEP science framework, which describes the knowledge and skills that should be assessed, was recently updated to incorporate new advances in science, research on science learning and components from international science assessments. Because of the changes to the assessment, the results from 2009 cannot be compared to those from previous assessment years. However, they provide a current snapshot of what the nation’s fourth- and eighth-graders know and can do in science that will serve as the basis for comparisons on future science assessments.

The Governing Board applauded the TUDA districts for volunteering to participate. “These school districts should be commended for their commitment to seek data that can be used to improve science achievement,” said Driscoll. In 2011, the Dallas (Texas) Independent School District, Hillsborough County (Fla.) Public Schools, and Albuquerque (N.M.) Public Schools will join the TUDA program, along with the District of Columbia, which will bring the program’s total participation to 21 districts. The District of Columbia participated in the 2009 reading and
NAEP Science Cont.

mathematics urban district assessments but could not participate in the urban science assessment because samples for reading and math assessments included nearly all of the district’s fourth- and eighth-graders.


The National Assessment Governing Board is an independent, bipartisan board whose members include governors, state legislators, local and state school officials, educators, business representatives, and members of the general public. Congress created the 26-member Governing Board in 1988 to oversee and set policy for NAEP.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is the only nationally representative, continuing evaluation of the condition of education in the United States. It has served as a national yardstick of student achievement since 1969. Through The Nation’s Report Card, NAEP informs the public about what America’s students know and can do in various subject areas, and compares achievement between states, large urban districts, and various student demographic groups.

ASTE Newsletter

Published four times a year by the Association for Science Teacher Education. All members are invited to submit items.

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Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

Margaret Mead