

Archived Information

National Science Resources Center

The operations and program activities of the National Science Resources Center is supported by the Smithsonian Institution and the National Academies. The NSRC, through its three Centers of Excellence, works to build awareness for a new vision of effective science learning and teaching.

Curriculum Development Center

The NSRC has developed two comprehensive, inquiry-based science curriculum programs for K-8 students: 24 units for grades K-6 – Science and Technology for Children[®] (STC), and 8 units for grades 6-8 – Science and Technology Concepts for Middle Schools[™] (STC/MS), completed in September 2002.

Professional Development Center

Through the work of the Professional Development Center, which is informed by research and best practices, teachers gain a conceptual understanding of the science content and pedagogy needed to teach inquiry science effectively. Teachers learn to assess what students know, to engage them in scientific investigations, and to show them how to apply their knowledge and skills to new situations.

Leadership and Assistance for Science Education Reform (LASER) Center

The LASER Center uses the NSRC theory of action and offers a portfolio of services and products to help school districts, academic institutions, and state departments of education plan, implement, and sustain effective science programs. The LASER Center builds on almost two decades of NSRC experience to improve science education with hundreds of school districts.

Plans for this Year

The Curriculum Development Center is underway with the revisions of the STC curriculum. By June 2004, the CDC will revise the teacher guides and produce a set of readers for each of the 24 STC units.

The Professional Development Center's initial focus will be on STC/MS. The center has already developed 2-hour overview and awareness workshops for each of the eight STC/MS modules and trained 40 consultants to deliver these workshops. The Center is currently developing 3-day introductory curriculum implementation courses for each of the eight STC/MS modules and will hold a minimum of eight workshops to train master teachers, teacher leaders, and PD Center consultants to deliver the courses. As consultants are trained, the PD Center will organize and implement the courses in venues throughout the country. The center is also developing 1-day courses on "The Nature of Inquiry" and "Introduction to Probeware Applications." The PD center is also continuing development of an STC and STC/MS Users Group as part of a first phase of creating a national community of teachers using these curricula. The PD Center hosted the 2nd annual meeting of the Users Group at NSTA and is currently developing a forum for exchanging information and ideas on the new NSRC web site.

The LASER Center will continue to work with school districts, academic institutions, corporations, and museums to plan, implement, and sustain effective science education reform programs. Its goal is to move districts toward self-sufficiency while remaining available for advice and support. The Laser Center will also be actively seeking ways to become self-sustaining in the near future.

The mission of the NSRC development staff is to secure the resources necessary to support the programmatic goals of the three Centers of Excellence. During the next year, the NSRC will work to diversify its current funding base through the active solicitation of new gifts, grants and in-kind support from private corporations and foundations supporting science education, and to provide professional development opportunities for program staff on fundraising, project budgeting, and training related to the financial management of gifts and grants.