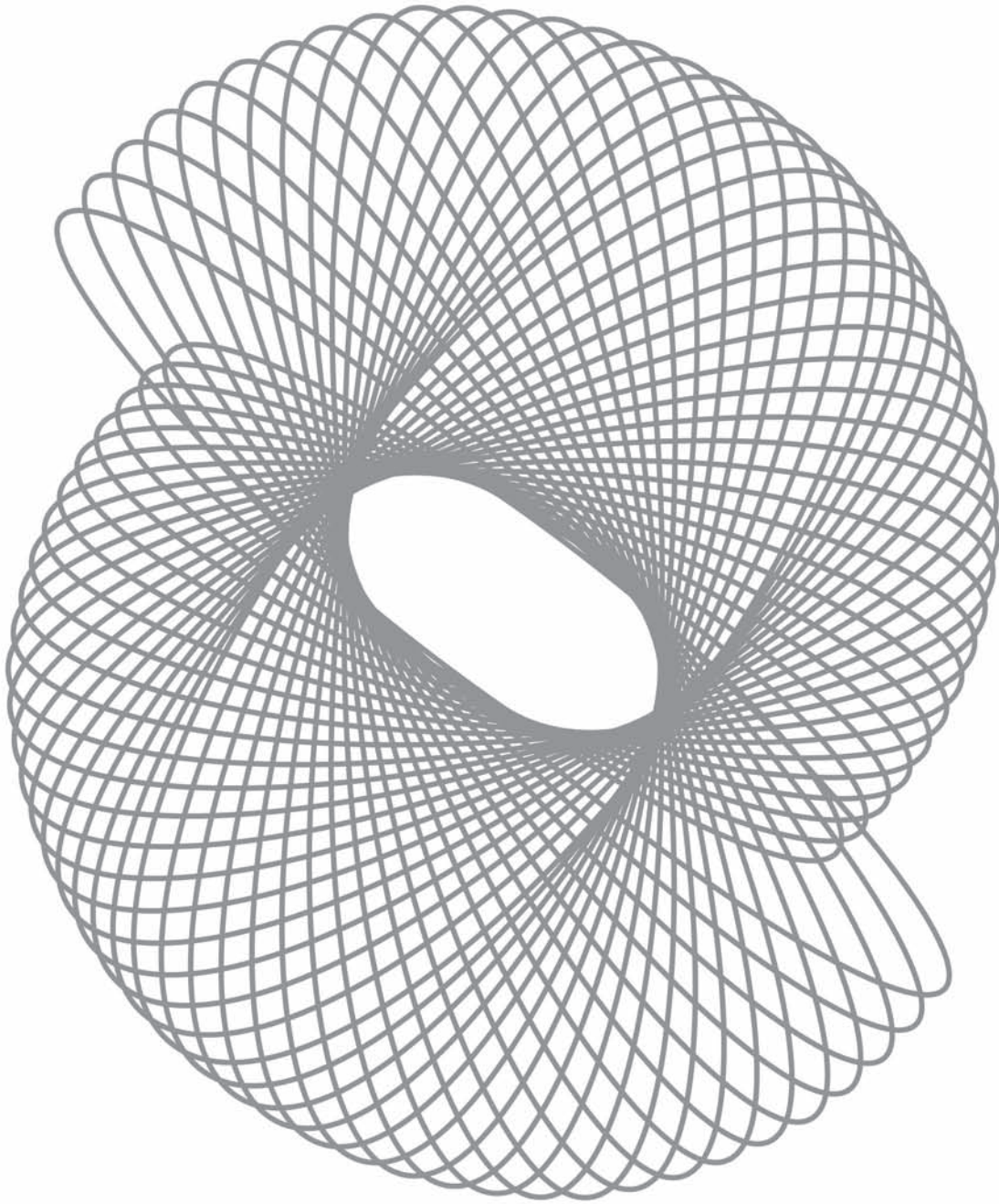


LINKING LEADERS

Community for Change:

Celebrating Ten Years



nasa

science

technology

engineering

mathematics

education

nassmc

LINKING LEADERS HISTORY

The Education Challenge

In the mid 1990's, worrisome gaps were identified in the mathematical, scientific, and technological literacy of the U.S. population. Issues such as the under-representation of women and minorities in technical fields, student performance on international assessment instruments, and student readiness for the workplace emerged as critical weaknesses of the U.S. system. In conjunction, state educational standards for almost every subject became a nationwide trend.

The Perfect Partnership

During this time, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) Educational Office concluded that a monolithic, one-size-fits-all model was inappropriate and ineffective for supporting technical education across America. NASA's education leadership sought to support the source of a coherent voice for the states' improvement agendas.

The National Alliance of State Science and Mathematics Coalitions (NASSMC) provided NASA with the perfect partnership opportunity. Initially formed in 1994, NASSMC grew out of a project sponsored by the Mathematical Sciences Education Board of the National Research Council. The purpose of NASSMC was to bring state coalitions of business, education, and policy leaders under one national umbrella. NASSMC set out to develop strategies to strengthen existing coalitions while at the same time building new ones.

Linking Leaders Emerges

The Linking Leaders program was established by NASA in collaboration with NASSMC. This partnership provided the ideal vehicle to support the separate and diverse reform efforts of individual state coalitions as a strategy for systemic change. NASA's commitment to education is based on the support of each state's education vision. If the sectors of education, state government, and business share a collective vision, then NASA resources can be aligned to support it. On the other hand, if education, policy, and business leaders are all working hard but at cross-purposes to improve education, then the vector sum of their efforts may be zero.

Linking Leaders for Systemic Reform was launched in 1995 and the first Linking Leaders Workshop was held in Cleveland, Ohio in 1996. With the assistance of NASA funding, NASSMC has extended the Linking Leaders program to twenty-three states. In addition to building new coalitions, the program has evolved in recent years to offer specialized support and technical assistance to the older, more well-established coalitions. Now called Linking Leaders for Systemic Improvement, the program has changed the dynamics of NASA's interaction with the states and has led directly to the establishment of coalitions in four states where no organization existed prior to the NASSMC/NASA presence.

From Linking Leaders I in 1996 to Linking Leaders IX in 2004, the program has been conducted in the states of Alabama, Colorado, Florida, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Maryland, Minnesota, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

NASSMC HISTORY

The National Alliance of State Science and Mathematics Coalitions (NASSMC) is an umbrella organization for state coalitions of business, education, and public policy leaders united for the improvement of mathematics, science, and technology education (MSTE) for all students. NASSMC is a network of thirty-seven state coalitions and serves as the national advocate for its member organizations.

Vision and Goals

A non-profit association, NASSMC works state-by-state in pursuit of its vision that all U.S. students will have the necessary knowledge of, understanding of, and skills in mathematics, science, and technology, so they can be productive in their personal, work, and civic lives. The nation will have a competent and competitive workforce that continues to meet the challenges of the global economy. NASSMC's member coalitions work to bring coherence and added value to the separate efforts of many individuals and organizations. Coalitions pursue goals not achievable by any one organization or sector working alone. All Americans need and deserve to receive the best possible education in mathematics, science, and technology for their personal and civic lives.

To this end, NASSMC performs a variety of beneficial activities:

- Helping each coalition develop a state-specific strategy to improve mathematics, science, and technology education;
- Linking state coalition leaders to each other and to major national initiatives;
- Serving as the national ears and voice of its member coalitions;
- Providing a national forum for the discussion of critical issues relevant to continuous and systemic improvement of mathematics, science, and technology education; and
- Supporting timely dissemination of information relevant to the continuous and systemic improvement of mathematics, science, and technology education.

NASSMC's Development

NASSMC evolved from a 1989 project of the Mathematical Sciences Education Board of the National Research Council. For five years, the project focused on developing coalitions of state-level leaders committed to promoting adaptation and implementation of new state standards for school mathematics and later, science based upon national models. In 1994, directors of the state coalitions initiated by the project decided to establish NASSMC as a national nonprofit organization with headquarters in Washington, DC. At the direction of its Board, NASSMC adopted a larger mission of supporting its member coalitions in the promotion of systemic improvement of mathematics, science, and technology education for all students in grades K-16.

In pursuit of its mission, NASSMC has designed and executed projects testing processes and materials for strengthening the structure and programs of its member coalitions. In collaboration with the Education Commission of the States and the NASA, it has developed a state-based model for working with business, education, and policy leaders to address continuous improvement in school mathematics, science, and technology. NASSMC also established the NASSMC Briefing Service, an Internet-based service providing leaders across the nation with concise and timely information about programs, research results, and public opinion relating to mathematics, science, and technology education.

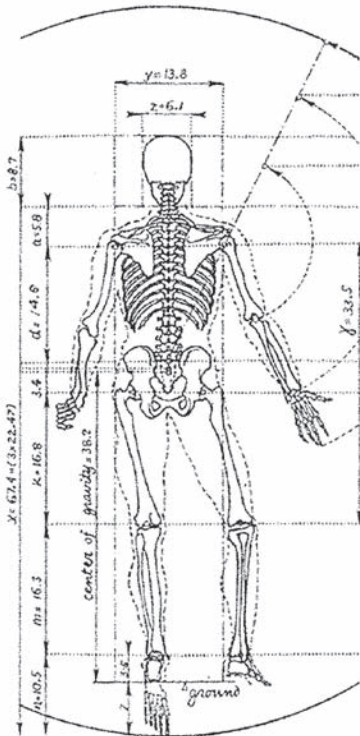
In August of 2002, NASSMC moved its offices to the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) Building at 1840 Wilson Boulevard, in neighboring Arlington, Virginia. In this new location, NASSMC works in close proximity to the Triangle Coalition for Science and Technology Education and with the programs and operations of NSTA. The organization continues, through the efforts of its member coalitions, to support comprehensive and coordinated change in mathematics, science, and technology education and to promote public awareness and understanding of the need for such change.

VITAL STATISTICS

Linking Leaders Class
1999

Coalition Milestones
Founded - 1999

Website URL
www.wiscience.net



The Wisconsin Science Network (WSN) grew from earlier efforts of the Center for the Advancement of Science Education to coordinate and inform education, agencies, and businesses about the issues in science education. There was a hiatus of efforts when the Center closed.

The Linking Leaders Project provided the impetus to bring people together to form a new coalition. While the name of the coalition changed several times it was finally named the Wisconsin Science Network to better reflect coalition activities.

The WSN exists to facilitate a statewide effort in support of science and technology education. It is an education, agency, and business partnership - a proactive organization that is catalytic, analytic, and programmatic. WSN has two major areas of effort: connecting people (electronically and through conferences and publications) and developing and supporting educational leaders (through professional development and recognition).



FEATURE STORY: E-MEMO'S SPREAD THE WORD

The Wisconsin Science Network electronically links teachers in both public and private K-16 schools, to representatives of organizations, agencies, and businesses, in order to facilitate statewide communication. Information about events, opportunities, and directions in science education, as well as brief papers focusing on selected themes, are sent weekly to participants via the electronic WSN E-News. Past themes have included reading in science, assessment, and science safety. Participants (called Points of Contact) distribute information to their colleagues and provide data and feedback to WSN about the impact of policies concerning science education.

Presently over 3,000 individuals are in the network representing 62% of the public and private Wisconsin

schools. A note received from a "point of contact" best indicates the endeavors success:

"Receiving these E-Memos on a regular basis has enabled me to enhance the opportunities for my staff to enrich their professional/academic base in science, and in turn create enriched lessons for their students. I have participated in the WREN program and am currently developing lessons for next year where my students will be testing water samples on the Black and Mississippi Rivers for bacterial counts. These hands-on experiences would not be affordable to us or available to our students had I not been made aware of the free program in one of the e-memos. I regularly forward these memos to my entire staff. I truly appreciate being able to have your service as a clearinghouse of sorts for science topics. I don't have the time to do this myself. Thanks for all that you do!"

COALITION RESULTS



In November of 2004 WSN joined with the Space Science Center of DePaul University, the University of Wisconsin-Fox Valley, and the Department of Public Instruction to host a working conference on the status of earth and space science education in Wisconsin. This event involved fifty individuals from business, informal and K-16 education, and government agencies. The working conference provided the base for a more detailed study that will be used in an action conference to make recommendations for improvement.



In 2005 WSN will complete a study of the status of K-12 science education in Wisconsin with special emphasis on earth and space science.



WSN is a partner in several statewide projects including: 1) A four-year, NSF-funded Retention and Renewal project providing selected teachers with content enhancement and mentor training - each participant working with a similar content mentee in their school; 2) a state MSP grant bringing together middle school teachers of science and mathematics for content enhancement; and, 3) a state MSP grant working with teachers that lack a major or minor in physics.



WSN selects 80 teachers from around the state and each year brings them together at a conference to address topics related to science. The teachers are also electronically linked to share experiences during the year.

FUTURE GOALS

WSN has identified several goals for the years ahead:

- 1) Develop guidelines for selecting and replacing board members and specific guidelines for responsibilities to their constituents.
- 2) Develop, implement, and maintain a fellows program of twenty individuals that provides a cadre of expertise for WSN and represent excellence in science education.
- 3) Maintain cadre of at least twenty-five Key Leaders recognized for their leadership activities.
- 4) Establish a Point of Contact in 80% of all schools as reported on the NSTA website.
- 5) Develop fifteen state partners that include appropriate agencies, groups, and businesses.
- 6) Continue to develop and maintain the WSN program: sending one email per week to all participants in the network; developing and continuing an annual conference for members featuring a cutting edge topic; and developing an outside funding source to maintain web-based activities.

CONTACT INFO

LeRoy Lee
Executive Director, WSN

804 Brook Street
DeForest, WI 53532
(608) 846-9377
lrlee@centurytel.net



MEMBER AFFILIATIONS

Board Members

Joel Anderson
Wisconsin Elementary
Science Teachers

Rhulene Artis
MUSI; retired

Dale Basler
Wisconsin Society
of Science Teachers

Melinda DeCoriolis
Sally Ride Academy

Al Hovey
Learning Point Associates

Jim Larson
Wisconsin Association of
CESA Administrators

Shelley Lee
Wisconsin Dept. of Public
Instruction

Pat Marinac
Wisconsin Science Ed.
Leadership Association

Melody Orban
NSTA

Jim Perry
Univ. of Wisconsin - Fox
Valley

Julie Stafford
Wisconsin Educational
Partnership Initiative

Sue Whitsett
State Coordinator, BioNet

LESSONS LEARNED

Following presentations at a NASSMC conference and conversations with other participants, WSN was able to participate in the launch of the one NASA Explorer School in Wisconsin and to start a program of encouragement of applications from other schools.



NASSMC Staff & Contact Info

Jim McMurtray
Executive Director
jmcmurtray@nassmc.org
(703) 516-5973

Jessica Venable
Program Officer
jvenable@nassmc.org
(703) 516-5974

Deborah Jones
Senior Program Officer
dtjones@nassmc.org
(703) 516-5971

Jane A. George
Program Officer
jgeorge@nassmc.org
(703) 516-5972

Write, telephone, or send a fax to
NASSMC's headquarters office:

NASSMC
1840 Wilson Blvd., Suite 200
Arlington, VA 22201-3000
(703) 516-5970
(703) 516-5979 (fax)
info@nassmc.org