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Clarence Middle School

November 20, 2007

Dear Dr. Coseo and the TEPS Committee,

The Professional Improvement Program has once again provided me with an opportunity to grow mentally as an educator. Attending the 112th Annual Conference of the Science Teachers Association of New York State in Ellenville, NY was enriching, exciting, and worthwhile.

A feeling nostalgia washed over me as I walked with backpack in tow to my various seminars. I felt like I was back on a college campus, searching long hallways for the locations of my classes. My instructors had different styles, but their passion for science always came shining through. It was refreshing to get a chance to work with so many educators that were excited to be teaching science and so willing to share information. I return home energized and full of new ideas. Some of the new information I can infuse immediately and some I am excited to develop over time.

Surprisingly, browsing through the exhibit area was also equally rewarding. Many vendors were available to share the latest and greatest technology, games, books and other resources. Along with my colleague, Kate Wright, we were able to gather over 30 new student readers that could be used with each of the sixth grade science units, as well as games and activities for ourselves and other teachers. Using our knowledge of science, Kate, Angela Riordan (Clarence High School Chemistry Teacher) and I were also able to win first place in a game where the top prize was \$1000 worth of technology for our classrooms! The sponsor, EduWare, awarded us with an Interactive Classroom System with 16 remote clickers for the students and a one-subject school site license, which will allow us to review science concepts in an exciting way.

Without your help, I would not have been able to participate in such a valuable experience. I look forward to attending, and possibly presenting at, this conference again in the future.

Sincerely,



Christine Hanlon
6th Grade Science Teacher



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-Together we make learning a way of life.-

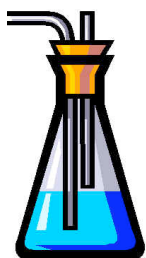
November 28, 2007

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The theme for this year's Science Teachers Association of New York State was "inquiry approach to teaching science with an interdisciplinary focus especially with a connection to math and language arts." This theme is fitting to my own teaching style, as I am mindful to connect my instruction of science concepts to language arts, math and technology as often as I can, and as much as my available resources allow. By disregarding that we live in an integrated society, an educator cannot provide a child with the skills needed to seek knowledge, make connections, and function in a relevant manner. By collecting numerous resources, attending seminars and pooling my knowledge with science educators from around the state, I bring back to Clarence Middle School many fitting tools with which to make instruction more meaningful and exciting for students.

Seminar	Summary of the Seminar	Applications
<p>Go! Easy On the Elementary and Middle School Kids Presenter: Verle Walters</p> 	<p>In this seminar, I was able to use the latest software and technology offered by Venier. A guided exploration showed me just how easy the USB data collection devices were to use. Temperature, motion and pressure were brought to life in three engaging experiments. Data was collected and transposed right before my eyes on the computer into readable tables and graphs.</p> <p><i>*Technology & Learning Award of Excellence(2005)</i> <i>*Teachers' Choice Award (2007)</i></p>	<p>Currently, during the <i>Newton's 3 Laws of Motion</i> unit, students experiment with the motion of a toy wooden car, rubber balls, etc. Their direct observation and measurement with rulers/meter sticks is the only way to gather data. With the Go! Motion collection device connected directly to a computer, students would be able to gather real data about the motion of their objects and make more accurate scientific conclusions.</p> <p>Cost: \$99 This is something I will be looking into purchasing for next year in order to support my personal initiative to increase the use of technology and build up the supply of existing software/materials.</p>
<p>Scientist Interviews Presenters: Alethea Lynch and Christine Boyer</p> 	<p>This workshop focused on developing research skills through interviewing. Children learn to develop meaningful questions. They gather information about a type of scientist they'd like to learn more about. A local scientist (Ornithologist, Pilot, etc) is invited to the classroom or a phone conference is made. Students gain a new and unique perspective from posing questions to the real scientists in the classroom.</p>	<p>Currently, I start the year with an activity called "What is a scientist?" Students draw an image of what a scientist looks like. We graph the results and come to the conclusion that many people think a scientist is an older man, wearing a lab coat, using flasks and flames, with messy hair. This creative extension activity would bridge nicely with the next lesson about different types of questions scientists ask. By infusing language arts skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening in a few new lessons, it would be easy to bring new life into my current September activities. I am excited to develop this concept over the next several years which will allow students to establish connection with community</p>

		professionals and increase the students' ability to communicate with adults.
Seminar	Summary of the Seminar	Applications
<p>Roller Coaster Physics Presenters: Melanie Belgiovene and James Allen</p> 	<p>At this seminar I was given a complete copy of a long term project to implement during the Physics component of sixth grade science that covers many of the concepts I teach . Newton's Three Laws, energy, forces, inertia, mass, and gravity are all reinforced in a meaningful way using everyday household objects, such as paper towel rolls, tape, clay, etc.</p>	<p>Although this project was prepared for eighth grade students, with some minor adjustments, many of my sixth grade students could complete this project with success. I am excited to challenge some of my more advanced students this year to try it, and then possibly open it up to all students in the upcoming years.</p>
<p>Scientific Literacy and YOU: Helping Students Be Successful! Presenters: Diana Blahyj and Heather Nettin</p> 	<p>In this double workshop, I was given new ways to help my students become more scientifically literate in the classroom. Research based literacy strategies were discussed and analyzed for use in all content areas.</p>	<p>Over 20 different literacy enhancing strategies were presented, many of which could be infused easily in lessons that I currently teach. Additionally, since the Critical Thinking Teachers send out newsletters of the strategies they're currently using, I have found that several of these teaching tactics would be beneficial to them and their students. This tool-box of ideas will certainly help students to understand what it means to "be thinking while reading."</p>
Exhibits	Representatives of Over 100 Companies, STANYS store and NSTA Booth	During this time, I was able to peruse over 100 booths stocked full of free resources. In addition to collecting 30+ free students readers that match the sixth



grade science units, some environmental activities for our current house theme: “Go Green” to pass out to each sixth grade homeroom teacher and a free practice 6th grade math state assessment for the math teachers.