

# A Moment of Science from ISTA

Idaho Science Teaching Association President's Newsletter

March 2024

THE SPRING & SUMMER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EDITION!

Happy Spring Equinox!



*Nature does not hurry, yet everything is accomplished - Lao Tzu*

*A GIFT FROM GREENSPIRITARTS.COM*

## A Word (or two) From Your ISTA President!

I hope this message finds you well amidst the challenges and triumphs that come with being dedicated educators. As we navigate the ever-evolving landscape of science education, it is crucial to pause and reflect on the well-being of our community. Today, I want to address a pressing

concern that affects us all – teacher burnout – and emphasize the importance of self-care to reinvigorate ourselves so that we can continue to inspire grit in our students.

Teaching is undoubtedly a rewarding profession, but it can also be demanding and emotionally draining. The dedication we pour into our classrooms each day can sometimes lead to neglecting our own well-being. It is crucial to recognize the signs of burnout and take proactive steps to prevent it. As the President of the Idaho Science Teaching Association, I encourage each one of you to prioritize self-care and find moments of rejuvenation.

Here are a few strategies to combat burnout and nurture resilience:

1. **Build a Supportive Community:** Foster a sense of camaraderie within our association. Share experiences, challenges, and triumphs with fellow educators. A supportive community can provide a valuable network for advice and encouragement.
2. **Set Boundaries:** Establish clear boundaries between work and personal life. It's important to disconnect and recharge during non-working hours. Creating a healthy work-life balance is essential for long-term sustainability in our profession.
3. **Embrace Professional Development:** Continuous learning can reignite our passion for teaching. Attend workshops, conferences, and engage in ongoing professional development to stay updated on the latest advancements in science education.
4. **Practice Mindfulness:** Incorporate mindfulness techniques into your routine. Whether it's meditation, deep breathing exercises, or moments of reflection, these practices can help alleviate stress and improve mental well-being.
5. **Celebrate Successes:** Take time to acknowledge and celebrate your achievements, both big and small. Recognizing the positive impact you have on your students and the community can be a powerful motivator.

Inspiring grit in our students begins with cultivating it within ourselves. When we prioritize self-care and model resilience, we create an environment that fosters determination, perseverance, and a love for learning. Our students look to us not only as educators but as role models who exemplify the values we hope to instill in them.

Let's embark on this journey together, supporting one another in our pursuit of excellence. By taking care of ourselves, we can continue to shape the future of science education in Idaho and empower our students to embrace challenges with grit and determination.

Thank you for your dedication to science education and for being an integral part of the Idaho Science Teaching Association.

Warm regards,  
Tanya Elmer  
President  
Idaho Science Teachers Association

# FULL STEAM AHEAD

Future-Ready Minds, Discourse in Motion,  
Connections That Ignite!

## Save The Date!

August 1st-2nd, 2024

Coeur D'Alene High School  
- Coeur D'Alene Idaho

### Mark Your Calendars!

ISTA, ICTM, and the IdEEA are once again partnering to bring some high quality professional development to Idaho educators in August. More details to come soon!



## BUILDING a CULTURE of STEM

IDAHO ECOSYSTEM 2024 CONVENING  
April 11-12, 2024 | Nampa, Idaho



### Idaho EcosySTEM Convening

Save the date, spread the word, and let's build a culture of STEM together! Join us April 11-12, 2024 for the 4th annual EcosySTEM Convening at the Nampa Civic Center in Nampa, Idaho.

For more information, please visit [the Idaho EcosySTEM's website](https://www.idahoecosystem.org).

[Register today!](#)



## **i-STEM Registration is Open!**

i-STEM is a summer professional development opportunity for educators (PK-12) working in both classroom and informal settings. During the Institute, participants attend a strand on project-based, hands-on learning in a chosen content area, as well as general sessions tied to the Institute theme. Strand topics vary by location and can be accessed at [the Institute links on the iSTEM website](#). Each participant will receive a kit of instructional materials unique to their strand, so that they can implement what they have learned in their own teaching environments.

June 10-13, 2024 @

[College of Western Idaho](#)

June 10-13, 2024 @

[College of Eastern Idaho](#)

June 11-14, 2024 @

[College of Southern Idaho](#)

June 17-20, 2024 @

[North Idaho College](#)

June 24-27, 2024 @

[Lewis-Clark State College](#)

June 25-28, 2024 @

[Idaho State University](#)



## EXTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Idaho STEM AC and Workforce Development Council

### **Summer Externship Benefits:**

*Idaho businesses partner with educator to host an in-depth summer work-based professional learning experience.*

**Externs** work 200 hours at host sites, learning firsthand how STEM/durable skills are applied in the workplace, so they can better educate their students on potential STEM pathways- All while earning professional development credits AND \$5000.

**Site hosts** give back to the community and benefit from new perspectives, and an extra hand.

*Both gain additional value from local professional networks.*

### **APPLY TO BECOME A HOST OR AN EXTERN**

**<https://stem.idaho.gov/apply/stem-externships/>**

**Email [extern@stem.idaho.gov](mailto:extern@stem.idaho.gov) for more information**

### **Summer Externships for STEM Educators**

Attention K-12 public school teachers! (also, College and Career Advisors or college level educator): Check out this PAID summer externship opportunity--

Ready for a professional development that provides firsthand STEM/durable skills to share with students? Work-based learning connections are strengthened with local organizations and businesses showcasing professional applications of skills and concepts taught in educational programming...also earn PD credits and \$5000!!

Consider applying to host if you're an employer, or apply as an extern! Visit [the Idaho STEM Action Center's website](https://stem.idaho.gov) for more details!



## Think-Make-Create Lab Trainings

Think Make Create Lab Trainings are rolling out across the state. You don't want to miss this great learning and networking opportunity!

Idaho Science Coach and ISTA Board Member, McKenzie Sonderegger got to join in the fun at the FREE TMC Training in Twin Falls earlier this week. There are several more events coming up this spring around Idaho, [register now on the Idaho Out of School Network's website!](#)

April 25, 10 am to 3:30 pm, YMCA Camp at Horsethief Reservoir near Cascade

May 3, 10 am to 3:30 pm, Fairfield

May 9, 10 am to 3:30 pm, Pocatello

May 10, 10 am to 3:30 pm, Lemhi County Extension Office, Salmon, ID

May 15, 9:30 am to 3 pm, Lewiston

May 16, 10 am to 3:30 pm, Boundary County Extension Office, Bonners Ferry

May 31, Payette



## Choose Your Own Learning Adventure with a new PD opportunity through NNU!

Idaho is an amazing state. It is a great place for exploration and adventure. During this course you'll choose your own path to learn about exciting opportunities and educational resources available to educators. Your final assignment will be to take what you have learned back to your classroom to enrich your students' learning with authentic Idaho experiences.

Examples of learning adventures:

- Take short classes from programs like Project Learning Tree, Project WILD, or Project WET.
- Work with one of our amazing Idaho state science coaches.
- Visit an Idaho State Park or local park.
- Participate in a ranger- or docent-led program.
- Visit a museum, zoo, botanical garden, or nature center.
- Check out a teaching kit, trunks, or other teaching resources from local providers.
- Participate in a service project or do volunteer work.
- Does it help you experience Idaho and enrich student learning? Then it counts!

For more information, check out [the NNU course description](#) OR check out [the blog post from our partner organization](#), the Idaho Environmental Educators Association.

# ASHG 2024 DNA DAY ESSAY CONTEST



## Annual DNA Day Essay Contest

ASHG is proud to support National DNA Day through the [Annual DNA Day Essay Contest](#). DNA Day commemorates the completion of the Human Genome Project in April 2003 and the discovery of the double helix of DNA in 1953.

This contest is open to students in grades 9-12 worldwide and asks students to examine, question, and reflect on important concepts in genetics. Essays are expected to be well-reasoned arguments that indicate a deep understanding of scientific concepts related to the essay question. They are evaluated by ASHG members through three rounds of scoring.

- Early January, 2024: Submission site opens
- March 6, 2024: Submission site closes
- April 25, 2024: DNA Day! Winners and Honorable Mentions announced

## March Mammal Madness Explained



**MIMM EXPLAINED**

## March Mammal Madness

Since 2013, March Mammal Madness asks the question “Who Would Win?” when two animals encounter each other in an absurdly complex and wonderfully nerdy way... a simulated tournament within a structured game universe!!! For more information about how you and your students can participate, check out [the MMM Library Guide](#) on the Arizona State University website!



# Discover Plate Tectonics

**GEO**  
*etc*  
www.geoetc.com

Are you looking to increase your confidence to teach about Plate Tectonics? Are you looking for classroom activities and ideas to help you get concepts across to your students? Are you looking for a professional learning experience in a topic you enjoy that will give you hours towards accreditation? Do you like to learn at your own pace, be able to go back through materials again, read or listen to materials and generally participate in an easy-to-use process?

Check out [this great resource](#) from Geoscience Education & Outreach for teaching tectonic plates to students!



## Build Scientific Understanding of Gene Engineering with High School Students!

Enhance concepts of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) by addressing misunderstandings and providing solid, reliable information on gene engineering by obtaining the FREE Curriculum

Please note that this is a research study and that information will be collected for research purposes. For more information please contact 4-H Extension Educator Jennifer Cushman at [Jennifer.Cushman@uconn.edu](mailto:Jennifer.Cushman@uconn.edu)

**ONN**  
OFFICE OF AGRICULTURE,  
AND NATURAL  
RESOURCES  
EXTENSION

This work is supported by Agriculture and Food Research Initiative Professional Development for Secondary Teacher Education Professionals Program Grant #2019-680 from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture

## The Science of GMOs

The American public is growing increasingly skeptical about the safety of genetically modified (GM) foods. Despite consensus in the scientific community that foods containing GM ingredients are safe, nearly half of Americans believe otherwise. Younger adults are also more likely to regard GM foods a health risk.

In order to address misunderstandings about GM foods and provide information about the applications of genetic engineering in agriculture and other fields, a team is developing a program to enhance science literacy for educators and young adults. The team is collaborating to create a standards-based curriculum and laboratory-based professional development for secondary school teachers on genetic engineering. The project aims to build the knowledge and confidence of educators and provide them with materials to deliver lessons related to genetic engineering in their classrooms.


















High school teachers will participate in training at the Storrs campus, where they will utilize laboratory resources and build connections with academia and industry professionals. The networking opportunity will also allow educators to share career opportunities in the field of genetics with students.

In addition to the professional development workshop, the program will prepare simpler exercises that can be taught outside of classroom and without the resources of a lab setting, such as during 4-H youth activities, to introduce scientific concepts.

Read the full article at [http://bit.ly/UConn\\_PDSTEP](http://bit.ly/UConn_PDSTEP).

## ISTA Board Members 2023-2024

**BOARD MEMBERS**

 <b>TANYA ELMER</b> President South High School Essex School District taylor@essex.k12.nh.us	 <b>CHRIS STOKER</b> President Elect Science Coordinator West Hill School District cstoker@westhill.k12.nh.us
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Idaho Science Teaching Association President  
2023-2025

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**Melyssa Ferro**

Melyssa is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters

