

The Middle School Administrators' Symposium took place at Suncadia Resort, May 17-19, 2009. The Symposium was designed to bring Middle School Administrators together in a "think tank" environment to review the current research on how children learn and the use of effective science instruction. We had 31 principals, 5 Assistant Principals, 11 speakers, and almost all Alliance Directors (11/16) and ESD Regional Science Coordinators (6/9) present.

Administrators listened to Call to Action speaker **Dr. Francis Eberle**, Executive Director of National Science Teachers Association on Sunday evening. He provided a global picture and spoke of the current changes that support and enhance science education programs across the nation.

Monday, administrators listened to the research team **Bell, Shouse**, and **Tsurusaki**, University of Washington researchers, who provided a deeper understanding of the current research found in Ready, Set, SCIENCE! Shouse explained the 4 strands of science and Bell spoke on the impact of informal science and how we must use these experiences to connect science learning in the classroom. Tsurusaki shared actual case studies that emphasized the importance of making science relevant and engaging.

Tuesday morning, **Jeanne Harmon** spoke on science advocacy and how to create different types of messages: messages for awareness and messages that cause people to reflect about policy or changes they are involved in. Participants were given time to create their own message. Many participants felt Jeanne's advocacy strategies were particularly useful and empowering.

The morning concluded with administrators and /or teams working on their action plans. The action plan was designed with three distinct levels on which to work. The Administrators' needs dictated which level they worked on, whether it was a building, district, or regional plan. The action plan outlined changes for effective science instruction to their current science programs. ESD Regional Science Coordinator and LASER Alliance Directors were present and provided guidance as administrators developed their plans. Two resources were provided: Ready, Set, SCIENCE! and *A Field Guide to Student Success in Mathematics and Science*.

As the Symposium came to an end, **Mark Cheney** spoke to the variety of challenges ahead in these difficult times. He also highlighted the steps the administrators had made in making changes that would allow them to support and promote effective science instruction.

The response from participants is encouraging:

"I am walking away as an administrator feeling newly supported by a network of science reform experts."

"The interactive time was masterfully structured to elicit deep thinking."