

Dear Teachers of Grades 5-12 Science and Math,

We are writing to let you know about an exciting opportunity for mathematics and science teachers and their students in Deer Isle-Stonington. The National Science Foundation has recently funded a five-year, \$12.3 million project, the Maine Physical Sciences Partnership, involving the Maine Center for Research in STEM Education at the University of Maine and almost 50 Maine schools. (STEM stands for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.) This project targets the teaching and learning of physical sciences in grades 6-9, as well as science and mathematics teacher preparation at the University of Maine.

During the coming year, teachers, curriculum coordinators, and other administrators from our schools will have a chance to work with faculty, future teachers, and researchers from physical sciences disciplines at the University to look at ways to provide vertically aligned curriculum and instruction for our students in grades 6-9. We are inviting teachers also from mathematics and from lower and higher grades to participate, to ensure that any work done through this project is fully coordinated with the rest of our science and mathematics curriculum.

This project includes funding for teachers to participate in Physical Sciences Partnership (PSP) Collaboratives, working dinner meetings, to be held in the Ellsworth area. Participating teachers will receive a stipend of \$50 for each meeting attended. Additional resources for participating teachers will also be available as the project develops.

The goal of this first year is to discuss in detail how important ideas from the state and national standards in science will be sequenced and select and adapt common instructional materials and assessments to support this sequence. Attached is a list of criteria that were developed by a team of Maine teachers, curriculum coordinators, and faculty as part of the proposal. These will be part of the discussion at the first collaborative meeting.

During subsequent years, cohorts of teachers will begin to implement the items selected and adapted during the first year. Week-long Summer Academies (with \$1000 stipends for participating teachers), continuing PSP Collaboratives, mentoring, and other resources will provide preparation and ongoing support for those teachers using these new instructional materials. Teachers and researchers will review the outcomes from assessments to further improve student learning as the project progresses.

Materials and supplies for teaching the selected curriculum will be prepared and provided by a resource coordinator as needed. In addition, those teachers who complete two Summer Academies and participate in the PSP Collaboratives will each receive a \$1000 bonus to use for equipment and supplies for their classroom.

We look forward to working with you on this important project. It presents an exciting opportunity to work together to improve our students' learning and aspirations in science. If you have any questions about the project, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,
Susan Smith
Executive Director
DEEP

Susan R. McKay
Professor of Physics and Director
Maine Center for Research in STEM