

NC-DPI Update

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Happy 2006 from DPI Science Consultants!

As I write this update and reflect on the past year, I see the great need for communication with others engaged in this work compete with the overwhelming overload of incoming information. I have seen science education issues more and more often in the news this year. Both state and national policymakers are putting new emphasis on science education. At DPI we hope to serve you in this coming year with the resources you need as science and technology education move into the national spotlight!

New DPI Consultant

DPI's Secondary Mathematics and Science Section welcomes our new science consultant Ragan Spain. Ragan comes from Southeast Raleigh High School in Wake County. He is National Board Certified in AYA Science and has sixteen years of teaching experience in Chemistry and Physical Science. His e-mail is rspain@dpi.state.nc.us. His phone number is (919) 807-3950.

DPI Resources

Download this DPI Science Resource Document to find contact information for science consultants, information for joining one or more DPI Science list serves, and web addresses for a variety of curriculum and assessment resources

http://community.learnnc.org/dpi/science/archives/2005/11/dpi_science_res.php

State Board of Education

Before I came to work at DPI, the State Board of Education (SBE) was somewhat of a mystery to me. Since coming here, I have become much more aware of how their work affects the daily work of schools, teachers and students. To learn more about North Carolina education policy go to the State Board of Education website http://www.ncpublicschools.org/state_board/. Here you will find links to board members, meeting agendas, policy, and legislation affecting North Carolina schools.

Honors Courses

In November 2004, the SBE approved new standards for developing and implementing honors courses in our state. This affects every high school teacher teaching a course that receives honors weighted credit. According to the new standards, the rigor of each of these courses must be documented and there must be a local process in place to evaluate and approve honors courses. To assist with implementation of this new policy, DPI developed an Honors Course Implementation Guide, available for download at <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/curriculum/honorsguide> In addition to general guidelines and policies, there is specific information for specific science courses in this guidebook. Also a group of teachers and scientists developed some additional sample activities for honors science courses. These are available in draft form on our Learn NC website http://community.learnnc.org/dpi/science/archives/curriculum_science/index.php

Exit Standards

New Exit Standards passed by the board will also be affecting next year's incoming freshmen. The exit standards require students to pass five EOC assessments and complete a senior/graduation project. The five required EOC assessments are Algebra I, Biology, English I, Civics & Economics, and U.S. History. The graduation project is a performance-based component that can include service-based learning or work-based learning experiences. I am especially excited about the opportunity to involve more students in doing in depth science related projects. Some teachers have already done this and it is very exciting to see their students' work! Three science teachers, Rod Bost, Alleghany County Schools, Steven Karl, Chowan County Schools, and Dee Dee Whitaker, Guilford County Schools are among the teachers and senior project coordinators serving on a committee advising DPI as we develop the implementation guide for graduation projects. To read more about the new exit standards please go to <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/policies/highschoolexit>

For [details on graduation and testing requirements in science read this memo](#) (in PDF format) from Elise Leak, Associate Superintendent for Curriculum and School Reform Services and Louis Fabrizio, Director of Accountability Services. The memo clarifies requirements for Biology, Earth/Environmental Science and Physical Science.

Physics Enrollment

What percentage of students enroll in Physics at your school? Have you been successful in increasing enrollment? In extending enrollment to traditionally underrepresented groups? In North Carolina last year, we had just over 11,000 students enrolled in Physics, 1,864 in second year courses, 76 enrolled in IB Physics III and 444 in Principles of Technology II. This is compared to 102,545 in Biology, 55,284 in Physical Science, and 50,353 in Chemistry. Physics is essential background knowledge for many professions. It is required for continuing study in the life as well as physical sciences and engineering. As a state we need to greatly increase enrollment in Physics courses. If you have successful strategies to share, please e-mail me at eehasse@dpi.state.nc.us.

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