

Moving Science and Literacy Forward in Elementary Classrooms:

An action oriented research symposium for education leaders

State and national education experts will share a research-based vision for elementary teaching and learning of science and literacy with recommendations for how all Michigan children can experience the wonder of learning science from the earliest grades.

The [2018 National Survey of Science and Mathematics Education](#) study revealed that teachers in grades K-3 reported spending an average of only 18 minutes per day on science; only 17% of them teach it “most days.” Teachers in 4th-6th grades reported spending an average of 27 minutes daily; only 35% of them teach it “most days.”

A recent informal survey of over 300 K-5 teachers suggests this problem may be worse in Michigan. In many districts, science has completely fallen out of the elementary curriculum. The de-emphasizing of science prevents elementary students from experiencing and using scientific practices, despite findings that indicate it helps improve students’ reading comprehension as a result of the knowledge and vocabulary gained from these experiences. Early experiences are necessary for learners to see the wonder of science, help prepare them to participate as knowledgeable consumers of science and begin to prepare individuals who will enter the STEM workforce. Elementary science education is simply not the priority it needs to be in the State of Michigan.

In support of K-5 science teaching and learning, a team of intermediate school district science and literacy consultants, in collaboration with the CREATE for STEM Institute at Michigan State University, will bring together leading state and national researchers in both fields to the campus of MSU, November 30, 2023. The field of experts will engage a statewide audience of education leaders to discuss the value of science instruction in the elementary grades, share a research-based vision for teaching and learning of science and literacy in the elementary grades, and to outline recommendations for how to achieve this vision, so that all children in the State of Michigan can experience the wonder of learning science. Educational leadership teams are invited to attend the symposium including ISD Curriculum Directors, Science and Literacy Consultants/coaches, and local district administrators. In addition to hearing from expert speakers, participants will:

- Explore how to ensure science instruction is a common component of elementary education for all students.
- Discuss how to ensure effective, research-based literacy practices are being used that support knowledge building.
- Discuss the importance of providing elementary teachers with long-term professional learning opportunities in science education.
- Encourage science-specific professional learning opportunities for school administrators, principals, and instructional leaders.
- Look for opportunities to integrate literacy and science throughout instruction.
- Discover opportunities to connect with statewide systems of support for elementary science instruction and professional learning.
- Return to their districts prepared to engage their constituents with the support needed to move forward.

The symposium is only the beginning. We are launching a movement to ensure all of Michigan’s elementary school-aged children can experience the joy and wonder of learning science at school!

The movement begins Thursday, November 30, 2023.

Register today at elemsciencematters.org

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