

August, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

The National Science Teachers Association ([NSTA](http://www.nsta.org)) will be hosting its [2017 National Conference on Science Education](#) in Los Angeles, California from March 30–April 2, 2017. NSTA, founded in 1944 and headquartered in Arlington, Virginia, is the largest organization in the world committed to promoting excellence and innovation in science teaching and learning for all. To enhance professional learning and provide networking forums for science educators, each year NSTA conducts a national conference on science education. This event attracts science educators from all over the United States and the world. At this conference, teachers choose from hundreds of workshops, demonstrations, and presentations covering every discipline, grade level, and teaching focus from grades preK–16. They hear nationally renowned speakers address the hottest topics in science education and learn about the latest breakthroughs from experts in the field.

The confirmed General Session speaker for the Los Angeles National Conference is Andy Weir, author of the book, *The Martian*. This bestselling book was made into a major motion picture starring Matt Damon. Weir’s address is entitled "The Martian: The story behind the story" and promises to be exciting as well as educational!

To help participants make the most of the professional learning opportunities available at the Los Angeles conference, the conference planning committee has focused the conference around four strands that explore topics of current significance:

- **NGSS: The Next Generation of Science Teaching**
Celebrate the vision of three-dimensional teaching and learning in the NRC *Framework* and *Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS)*. This strand provides engaging and collaborative examination of the *NGSS* architecture to allow teachers to implement the changes necessary to construct a coherent program, including classroom practice and instructional sequence, as well as to build student skills.
- **2017: A STEM Odyssey**
Students' science learning has changed dramatically from learning in the past. In a STEM environment, students' understanding of the world around them is facilitated through the intentional connections among the four disciplines of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. A STEM curriculum provides research-based instructional strategies that engage diverse learners and highlights career pathways in STEM-related fields.
- **Science & Literacy Reloaded**
With the continued emphasis on mathematics and language arts, elementary teachers have not always been encouraged or given opportunities to teach science. This strand will support these teachers in seeing the connections between science and literacy. Elementary science will be re-envisioned as an opportunity for authentic language learning—not just one more thing to squeeze into the curriculum.

- **Mission Possible: Equity for Universal Access**

Access to science education is not a privilege; it is a right of students of all abilities, genders, languages, socioeconomic status, and geographic locations. A quality science education is essential in closing the skills gap in our current workforce. Science learning must start in early childhood and be sustained through postsecondary education to keep our nation as a leader in innovation.

Additional events that will be offered during this four-day science education extravaganza are:

- Hundreds of science education-oriented workshops and numerous short courses
- Exciting and education-based field courses
- Exhibits where teachers can learn about and try tools and resources to further enhance the skills of science educators
- Numerous strand-related “Featured Speakers”, who will share their expertise in various science education-related fields
- Conference participants can also earn one (1) graduate-level credit in professional development through a pre-selected university at the Los Angeles national conference

We are confident that the programing and events associated with the 2017 National Conference on Science Education in Los Angeles, California will allow conference participants to return to their respective districts/schools armed with their new understanding of the *Next Generation Science Standards*. They will return to their schools re-energized and ready to use their newly acquired science education knowledge and pedagogies to provide meaningful science instruction for their students, preparing them to be successful in a scientifically literate workforce.

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