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To Whom It May Concern:

The National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) will be hosting its *6th Annual STEM Forum & Expo* in Kissimmee, Florida from July 12-14, 2017.

This highly specialized professional development event will enable educators to help our students stay globally competitive in terms of innovation and invention. The teaching of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) must be a priority in today's classrooms.

As the need for students to become stronger in STEM grows, so does the need for well qualified STEM teachers and administrators who understand what is needed to develop relevant, rigorous, and high-quality STEM programs. The *STEM Forum* offers opportunities for those involved in the teaching of STEM to learn how to effectively integrate various instructional approaches into their teaching and learning environments.

The Forum's programming is built to assist with the implementation of initiatives and programs that provide specific professional development programs, strategies and models that will enhance the skills and knowledge of current and future STEM teachers and school leaders in pre-kindergarten through the university level. With over four hundred strand specific sessions, seminars, and panels, formal and informal educators are able to collaborate with leaders in STEM education and national education policy makers while networking with over two thousand STEM colleagues from around the world.

Grade-based strands, as well as a strand specifically geared toward administrators, will enable attendees to easily follow their own interests and interact with colleagues from their respective teaching communities.

The ultimate goal of the Forum is to positively impact overall student performance in the STEM disciplines at all levels of education. Examples of the type of programming opportunities that educators will experience include:

- Hands-on sessions that enhance on-going development of teachers and school leaders to improve their STEM knowledge, as well as their pedagogical skills used to impart the specialized knowledge/content in each of the STEM disciplines.
- Specialized panels that promote the implementation of teacher and administrator skill and competency development, including data-informed teaching and leading, and the integration of research based methods into the STEM curriculum.
- Networking opportunities that enhance, on-going development of administrators to improve and enhance competencies attributable to strong STEM leadership, including, but not limited to supervising and motivating staff, coordination of STEM curriculum, promoting and sustaining a positive school learning climate and evaluating student performance in the STEM disciplines.
- The forum provides project- and research-based activities that tackle issues of real-world relevance. Our programming is driven by the latest research in subject areas as well as best practices for communicating topics in effective and meaningful ways.

Additional events that will be offered during this 2-1/2 day Forum are:

- An opportunity to hear perspectives from a diverse group of student panelists who have benefitted from STEM education and how it has affected their school experiences. These students will also be sharing their aspirations and interests related to STEM opportunities and careers.
- Exhibits that provide the latest tools and resources to further enhance the skills of STEM educators.
- Featured panels that will help educators develop partnerships with informal education groups, business, industry, and governmental agencies. In addition, featured panels that will assist educators with incorporating the principals of "making" and design thinking into their STEM classrooms.

We are confident that the programming and events associated with the *6th Annual STEM Forum & Expo* will help to ensure successful implementation of STEM education into our schools and communities.

We hope you and your colleagues will take advantage of this unique offering.

Jennifer C. Williams, Chair | *6th Annual STEM Forum* | Department Chair Lower School Science | Isidore Newman School | New Orleans, LA