

**Stanislaus County Office of Education
January 2007 Math and Science Newsletter**

FREE COPIES OF "AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH" DVD FOR TEACHERS

50,000 DVDs of "An Inconvenient Truth" are being donated to teachers. This acclaimed documentary explains the science of global climate change, and is being donated on a first come, first serve basis to U.S. teachers who are interested in using the film as a teaching tool in classrooms. This generous donation was made possible with the cooperation of Paramount Vantage, Participant Productions, The Environmental Media Association, and private funders.

Registration to be eligible to receive the free DVD started Monday, December 18, 2006, and the final **deadline is Thursday, January 18, 2007**. The sooner you submit your request, the more likely you are to receive a free DVD. You submit the request online at the web address in this message. You need to provide your name, email, school address, and school Tax ID number.

The donation is organized as a "sweepstakes contest," but the contest part is simply getting your valid request submitted as early as you can. The website has more details about the "Contest Rules." Note that when you go to the submission page, you just need to fill out the simple form in white on the right hand side of the page. You can ignore the User Login grey column on the left-hand side of the page. Simply enter the information on the right side of the page, and click Submit. The web address is <http://www.participate.net/educators/DVD/giveaway>

Can Technology Help Improve Mathematics Scores?

ALEKS is a powerful online tutoring tool to help students increase their math scores. This technology tool relies on the use of artificial intelligence to assess and then target instruction to gaps in student knowledge and understanding. The software then develops an individual tutoring program to match the identified needs and gaps of the student. It is web based and standards driven, with a variety of applications from a Level 3 (grade 3) through Pre-Calculus, and all courses in between. There is no minimum purchase requirement, so it can be used for one student or one class, depending on the school need. The cost runs from \$ 25 – 35 dollars per student for a year subscription. It is accessible from virtually any computer with internet access, and students can work at school or home with this program. To find out more information about this powerful math tool go to www.aleks.com I would encourage you to check out the success stories of schools using ALEKS to raise student achievement with struggling students. It also has a feature that allows the student to toggle instruction from English to Spanish, so it can be very useful for English Learners.

MAPS news (Modesto Area Partners in Science)

Mark your calendar for Friday, January 26th, 2007 for an evening with Dr. Michael Sims, with the NASA Ames project. The topic will be "*The science of food production*". This is part of the free lecture series sponsored by the Modesto Area Partners in Science. For more information, visit their web site at <http://virtual.yosemite.cc.ca.us/MAPS/> the evening is from 7:30 – 8:45 p.m. at the MJC East campus, Forum 110.

Saturday Math at CSUS

Here are some upcoming dates and topics:

- Saturday, January 27th, 2007 – titled "Tips and Techniques to Tackle Fractions" for teachers in grades 4-12. The instructor is Dr. Viji Sundar.
- Saturday, February 10th, 2007 - titled "*Literature and Mathematics Part 1*" for teachers in grades 1-3. The instructor is Judy Lewis

The cost of any Saturday workshop is only \$ 20 dollars, with a continental breakfast and lunch included. Workshops are Saturday from 9:00 – 3:00 p.m. Walk in registrations are also accepted the day of the workshop.

You can register for any of these workshops at <http://csmp.ucop.edu/cmp/ccmp/calendar.php>

Parent Handbook for Math and Science

The California Department of Education (CDE) has just made available a series of handbooks on their web site called the Parent Handbook for Math, and the Parent Handbook for Science. The handbooks are in a user friendly format and provide information on how to help students succeed in math and science as well as provide suggestions on home and family activities. Parents can also find an overview of California's science and math curriculum and requirements for high school graduation and college / university admission. It is available at www.cde.ca.gov/ls/pf/pf/documents/sciencebook.doc for science and www.cde.ca.gov/ls/pf/pf/documents/mathbook.doc for math.

Mathematics Festivals

Have you ever considered hosting a mathematics festival at your site? Would you like a way to draw attention to mathematics and to *include your parents* and community in the experience? *Looking for a way to enhance your spring Open House?* The California Mathematics Council has developed an exciting school wide event to educate students, teachers, and parents to critical mathematics topics in positive, hands – on, festival atmosphere. The festival is designed for access by students in grades Kindergarten through eighth grade, with activities appropriate for all. It is all standards based, engaging, and fun. Each festival consists of 15-20 different problem solving stations, each focusing on one or more **key mathematics standards**. Every station offers challenging tasks of different levels of difficulty. You can combine this with an evening Family Math Festival and parents can experience first hand the kinds of challenging math problems their children encounter in school. For more information about math festivals go to www.cmc-math.org/festival This math festival is appropriate for state and federal programs requiring parent involvement, and also for the one time state block grant funding new in California.

Nominate a science teacher for cash grants from Amgen

Each year, Amgen awards up to 30 classroom science teachers with cash awards of \$ 5000 through the Amgen Award for Science Teaching Excellence (AASTE). Eligible teachers must be full time K-12 classroom teachers whose major responsibilities include teaching science, and have at least three years experience. The cash grants are accompanied by a school grant of \$ 5000 dollars to be used to expand or enhance the school's science program, purchase new science resources, or further the professional development of the science teachers. Details can be found at their web site <http://www.amgen.com/citizenship/aaste.html> **Applications are due to Amgen by January 31, 2007.** Last year, four teachers in Northern California were recipients of the Amgen awards, including a local science teacher in Oakdale, Ann Marie Bergen. I would encourage you to nominate a colleague for this award.

DuPont Challenge Science Essay Competition

The DuPont Center for Collaborative Research and Education is sponsoring an essay contest for students in grades 7-12 with prizes awarded up to \$ 3000 dollars per winning essay. Students write a 700-1000 word essay discussing a scientific discovery, theory, event, or technology application that has captured their interest. Judges note that winning essays reflect several attributes, including creativity, originality, readability, thorough research, and appropriate choice of subject matter. Awards are given in junior, senior, and teacher divisions. The science teacher who sponsors the winning student receives a prize. **The deadline for student entries is February 12, 2007.**

For information go to <http://www.glcomm.com/dupont/index.htm>