



TRANSFORMING Innovations into REALITY in SCIENCE (TIRS)



The first three Newsletter installments have focused on the need for transformation to meet the vision from *A Framework for K-12 Science Education* and our New York State Science Learning

Standards. In preparing my vision for STANYS, I have been studying strategic direction processes of successful science associations including our parent association, the National Science Teachers Association. If we are to make sense of our STANYS mission and purpose, it is important that we now refine and polish our existing mission to reflect current innovations in science education here in New York State and throughout the nation.

In this fourth installment around my vision *Transforming Innovations into Reality in Science (TIRS)*, I will discuss:

- What is being proposed and why it is important for STANYS
- The historical context of what was accomplished and what is being undertaken now
- How this work will move our association forward in the future

What is Being Proposed and Why it is Important for STANYS

STANYS is a mosaic, with pieces drawn from committed volunteers throughout our state fitted into a pattern that represents a concrete translation of our mission. This translation expresses the responsibilities of individuals involved in carrying out the STANYS mission. Our mosaic has an organic quality and only grows when nourished by reflection and new insights. Without a strategic direction to refine and polish our existing mission, there is no real transformation, only random actions.

INSTALLMENT IV A Strategic Direction for STANYS

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The fact that we come together as an association to examine possibilities and search for new directions indicates our intention to *Transform Innovations into Reality in Science*. As stated in earlier installments, transformation is not easy. It comes as individuals and groups of shareholders meet small successes, which build confidence and hope for the future.

A strategic direction document would go great lengths to inform and guide decisions made in the development of our programs including 1) coherent and sustainable professional learning experiences for our members, 2) strategies to enrich the membership experience and increase membership, and 3) how to communicate and advocate for the central role of science education to benefit students and society.

Historical Context and What is Being Undertaken Now

Let's consider five components from the Anatomy of the Drivers Model based upon the work of Michael Wilkinson and his colleagues at Leadership Strategies, Inc. as a vehicle to develop ideas around a STANYS strategic direction document. From our existing mission to strategies and action plans, the Drivers Model provides a quality check for each component of a strategic direction. The five components of the model are:

1 Vision – a statement that describes how the future will look as our association fulfills its mission. Our STANYS vision is, *promotes excellence in science education.*

2 Mission – a statement of purpose of an association which describes what we do, for whom, and the benefit. Our STANYS mission is, *to work with educators and communities to provide opportunities for all students to participate in and learn science.*

3 Guiding Principles/Purpose – general guidelines which set the foundation for how an association will operate. Two of our STANYS guiding principles include, *servicing as an effective forum and voice for the science teachers throughout the State of New York; promoting research in science education.*

4 Goals – broad, long-term aims that define fulfillment of our mission. Two of our STANYS goals include, *a student-centered education that excites and invites participation by all students; a collaborative partnership will be maintained with other professional and community organizations.*

5 Objectives – specific, quantifiable, realistic targets that measure accomplishment of a goal over a specified period of time. According to the Driver Model, and from my perspective, it is here where a gap exists. An example of a specific, quantifiable target for STANYS may be to increase attendance at our annual conference from 800 to 850 people.

Like other elements we have discussed around the TIRS theme (e.g. Instructional Resources for Professional Growth, Transformation to Carry Out our Purpose) STANYS can be thought of as a system with inputs, processes, and outputs. The idea of inputs, processes, and outputs were part of the discussions during STANYS organizational meetings held in April and December 2018. A strategic direction document will build upon the successes of these organizational meetings led by current President Lisa A. Brosnick and insights provided by our Board of Directors during our November 2018 meeting. Strategic direction assumes our STANYS system must be responsive to a dynamic and changing landscape in science education.

With the support of my fellow Executive Committee members, and our Board of Directors, a strategic direction document for our association is under development thanks to the efforts of the STANYS Strategic Direction Task Force. The development of a STANYS Strategic Direction Document is an internal one-year action plan item.

What Will Happen and Moving Forward into the Future

I will be providing an update to the Board at our May meeting and to the membership body during our November conference. This process is similar to how our existing DAL Handbook and Professional Development Position Statement were developed and presented to the STANYS Board of Directors.

We must look to the future and navigate a path that includes developing a strategic direction document for our association. This new document will refine and polish our existing mission. It will emphasize developing programs around professional learning experiences, membership, and communication and advocacy and will provide a sense of empowerment and unity of purpose for us as professional teachers of science. The size of transformation is large and thus, an appropriate and accurate STANYS Strategic Direction Document is a necessity.