



## TRANSFORMING Innovations into REALITY in SCIENCE (TIRS)

### INSTALLMENT V Leadership

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As professional teachers of science and members of STANYS, we have likely realized leadership goes beyond the classroom walls. Most of us are likely involved in policy and/or decision-making at some level.

We have a voice in and work toward improvement and transformation in a school, district, or here within STANYS. In whatever district you work, or community you reside, there are also other shareholders with whom you collaborate in bringing fresh ideas and new perspectives to the effort.

In this fifth installment around my vision Transforming Innovations into Reality in Science, I will discuss:

- Why I focus on leadership
- Why leadership is important within STANYS
- How your leadership contributes to moving STANYS forward

#### Why I Focus on Leadership

Pulitzer winning author James McGregor Burns, in his 1978 classic *Leadership*, stated leadership is inducing followers to act for certain goals that represent their values and motivations – the needs and wants, the aspirations and expectations – of both leaders and followers. Burns also stated the genius of leadership lies in the way leaders act on their own and their followers’ values and motivations. As your incoming President, I welcome your ideas. I look forward to working together toward implementing new science standards, providing quality professional development, and improving classroom teaching and learning.

As teachers of science, we have the greatest load and heaviest responsibility in Transforming Innovations into Reality in Science. This is why we need widespread leadership to achieve transformation in teaching and learning science. Leadership requires communicating the innovations of new standards to those who also share responsibility for change. Therefore, all individuals associated with science education must contribute to communicating innovations from A Framework for K-12 Science Education. Teachers are essential in the process of transformation. Being a current classroom teacher, I understand the scale of the task.

#### Why Leadership is Important within STANYS

The New York State Science Learning Standards represent a great opportunity to teach science in a way to prepare our students for an ever-changing world. As stated in earlier installments, transformation is difficult. We accept the diverse views of children and respect the background experiences they bring to the classroom: shouldn’t we do the same in working with other board members and members to help move the Association forward?

Science education is constantly on the move. During our 117<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference in November 2012, Dr. Stephen Pruitt stated that as leaders, “We

cannot let what is hard get in the way of what is right.” This reminded me that the beneficiaries of leadership are our students, our future citizens of society.

Leadership is key in successful transformation in science education. We can turn our expectations for a better tomorrow into actions that will make a difference for our students. Leadership is important within STANYS because it is the vehicle that can bring together the various components of transformation in science education in ways that will improve teaching and learning at all levels.

#### How Your Leadership Contributes to Moving STANYS Forward

We have choices as we consider the opportunity to step forth and lead. With our choices, we may also have questions, uncertainties, and even fear about making the choice to do something new and different. It takes courage to thoughtfully present new ideas and make the choice to step forth and provide leadership. Examples of courage include modifying an old lesson with a new emphasis on three dimensional learning, reading that new book you keep meaning to get to and joining a study group with your colleagues or participating in a new STANYS initiative to share innovations of the standards with parents and PTA groups in your community. These are ways to move STANYS forward and *Transform Innovations into Reality in Science*.

Achieving the new vision for science education will require leadership from throughout the entire system. The State of New York, its regions and communities, should not place the entire weight solely on teachers to achieve the new vision. Much good work has already taken place among shareholder groups including NYSED and NYS Science Education Consortium. As science teaching professionals, we must transform ourselves so our students can meet the new vision for science education.

*Best wishes for a restful summer among family and friends.*