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**MERCK INSTITUTE FOR SCIENCE EDUCATION UNITES TEACHERS,  
PRINCIPALS AND DISTRICT ADMINISTRATORS AT  
ACADEMY FOR LEADERSHIP IN SCIENCE INSTRUCTION**

**New Jersey and Pennsylvania Educators Focus on Effective Science  
Teaching and Learning**

Rahway, NJ, July 16, 2009 — The Merck Institute for Science Education (MISE), dedicated to ensuring access to the highest quality science instruction for every student, kicks-off Year Two of its Academy for Leadership in Science Instruction (The Academy) in Princeton, New Jersey, on July 20. MISE's signature three-year K-12 professional development program brings together teachers, principals and district administrators to create a community of science educators and leaders who will work to strengthen science instruction in their schools and districts for years to come.

"Science teachers are eager to make their subject more meaningful to students," said Carlo Parravano, MISE's executive director. "The Academy helps to make effective science instruction a reality by facilitating collaboration of educators to develop tools and techniques that will improve their practice and make science alive in the classroom."

MISE has supported the New Jersey and Pennsylvania K-12 science teaching community for the past 16 years with a variety of professional development programs. The Academy, MISE's newest program, is the culmination of this work. MISE introduced the Academy in 2008 with a three year structure which encompasses the intensive residential summer session each year and meetings throughout the academic year. This in-depth approach enables educators to implement Academy techniques in their classrooms and reflect, reinforce and build upon them as they progress through the three-year program.

Teachers who have experienced MISE's professional development and the Academy have commented on the effect this approach to science teaching has had on their students. "My students have a newfound passion for science that was not there before," said Paul Skelton, Hillside High School's biology and life science teacher. "I have had students who are now in college tell me they are now pursuing careers in science."

In 2008, the Academy's inaugural cohort of 22 K-12 school teams included over 100 teachers and principals alongside six district teams of more than 20 administrators. The group will reunite in Princeton August 3 -7. During the week of July 20, the

Academy will host its second cohort, a group of 100 plus first-time participants made up of 18 K-12 school teams and six district teams. Participating school districts include Elizabeth, Hillside, Linden, Rahway and Readington Township in New Jersey and North Penn in Pennsylvania.

“The Academy showed me how to cultivate student scientists rather than science students, while giving them opportunities to share ideas and probe for information through active, hands-on participation,” said Janice Sina, North Penn High School’s biology teacher. “The Academy has also helped strengthen the relationship with my principal who now plays an active role in the school’s science curriculum and fully supports my lessons.”

Each year of the Academy focuses on a unique science theme as a vehicle to discuss student learning and guide teachers in their intellectual growth. First-year participants explore their vision of effective science education by experiencing investigations of air-pressure including a can crusher experiment. Second-year participants build models to explain eclipses and phases of the moon, using the theme of the Earth-Moon-Sun system to examine students’ evolving understanding of scientific concepts.

The intensive week-long summer Academy is led by educators, scientists, education researchers and MISE staff, which includes a former principal and teachers. The authors of *Ready, Set, Science!*, the award-winning publication of the National Research Council that is the Academy’s core text, will also lead Academy sessions. During the program educators learn invaluable tools and techniques that can be immediately used in the classroom.

“The Academy taught me how to continually involve students in asking and answering questions about science,” said Anjanette Highsmith, Rahway Middle School’s science teacher. “Students feel engaged and empowered when they learn through experimentation rather than getting answers from a textbook.” Ms. Highsmith recently involved her 6<sup>th</sup> grade class in swabbing surfaces around the classroom and school to find evidence of bacterial growth.

### **About MISE**

Founded by Merck & Co., Inc. in 1993, the Merck Institute for Science Education (MISE) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving student participation and performance in science. A public/private partnership, MISE works with teachers, principals and district administrators to make science a priority in schools and cultivate lasting improvements in science education. For more information, please visit [www.mise.org](http://www.mise.org).