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MERCK INSTITUTE FOR SCIENCE EDUCATION SETS TEACHERS ON PATH TO LEADERSHIP

The Academy for Leadership in Science Instruction Continues Commitment to Teachers in Time of Shrinking Education Budgets

Rahway, NJ, July 12, 2010 — The Merck Institute for Science Education (MISE), dedicated to ensuring access to the highest quality science instruction for every student, is forging ahead with its Academy for Leadership in Science Instruction (the Academy) at a time when education budgets are shrinking and many teachers face an uncertain future. The Academy, MISE's signature K-12 professional development initiative, is a three-year program that brings together teachers, principals and district administrators to improve their practice, develop tools and techniques to make science come alive in the classroom, and strengthen science instruction in their schools and districts for years to come.

"At a time of drastic budget cuts and economic uncertainty, it is more important than ever to offer educators the resources they need to engage students for a lifetime of learning science," said Dr. Carlo Parravano, MISE's executive director. "MISE, with support from Merck, is proud to offer this professional development opportunity to ensure the sustainability of high-quality science education."

First introduced in 2008, the Academy brings together school and district-based teams from Elizabeth, Hillside, Linden, Rahway and Readington Township in New Jersey and North Penn in Pennsylvania to create a strong, collaborative community of science educators. The program's in-depth, three-year approach supports educators as they implement Academy methodologies and techniques in their schools and reflect, reinforce and build upon them as they progress through their careers.

"Participating in the Academy has made me reflect on every aspect of my teaching, enabling me to make changes that benefit the students," said Kelly Crits, teacher at Nash Elementary School in North Penn, Pennsylvania. "I now make an effort to relate concepts and content to real life: During a solar energy unit, the class discussed the Gulf oil spill and West Virginia's mine tragedy."

Each year of the Academy highlights 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 engaging in hands-on

investigations involving air-pressure. Second-year participants examine students' understanding of scientific concepts using the theme of the Earth-Moon-Sun system.

Third-year participants learn how to work as school-based inquiry teams in order to sustain learning beyond the Academy. Work highlights natural selection and the nature of science with experiences such as *Predator*, which simulates predator-prey interactions in a natural ecosystem.

"Year three of the Academy sets science educators on the path of career-long leadership," said Dr. Parravano. "Now more than ever, when schools are losing valuable professional development resources, it is critical for educators to sustain and lead others in implementing great teaching practices."

Held in Princeton, NJ, the Academy's intensive week-long summer sessions are led by educators, scientists, education researchers and MISE staff. Educators who began their Academy work last year take part in their second summer session July 19-23. The Academy's inaugural cohort of teachers returns for their third and last summer session August 2-6.

About MISE

Founded by Merck 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.