



Joe Krupins, a highly regarded science teacher at Standley Middle School in San Diego City Schools, is one of the participants in the Middle School Science Education Leadership Initiative.

Top Science Teachers Gather at SDCOE For Privately-funded Leadership Initiative

Thirty-one of the best middle school science teachers in the county gathered at the County Office of Education recently to improve their own skills and work on plans to lead their colleagues.

Part of the Middle School Science Education Leadership Initiative, the five-day workshop will result in “a countywide professional learning community for middle school science educators,” said Nancy Taylor, Science Coordinator at the San Diego County Office of Education. Taylor and Kim Bess, Director of Science for San Diego City Schools, are co-directors of the project.

“We’re creating a cadre of leaders that understand science teaching and learning, and will be able to lead others,” Taylor added. “And we’re partnering with the local business community in a significant way.”

The 31 teachers represent 12 San Diego County school districts: San Dieguito Union High, San Diego City Schools, Lemon Grove, San Ysidro, Mountain Empire Unified, Poway Unified, La Mesa-Spring Valley, San Marcos Unified, Escondido Elementary, Bonsall Union, the County Office of Education, and Valley Center Unified.

The MSSELI was funded last year by \$100,000 from the Pfizer Corp., Wells Fargo, and the McCarthy and Hervey Family Foundations. This year’s work is funded by a \$150,000 grant from Pfizer. The San Diego Foundation and General Atomics also provided assistance.

The 31 participating teachers were selected after a competitive application process. According to Taylor, they are some of the county’s best, yet by taking part in the MSSELI, they’re allowing their past practices to be challenged, all in the interest of improving science education for children.

“They’re some of the best, yet their taking a risk,” Taylor said, “because they’re going to open up their classrooms and their instructional practices to others, to learn more about the art of teaching science. That’s hard work. They’re challenging beliefs about their own teaching and

learning styles.”

Teachers participating in MSSELI are: Tracy McCabe of Earl Warren MS in the San Dieguito Union High School District; Heather O'Donnell of Roosevelt MS in San Diego City Schools; Samantha Swan of Lemon Grove MS; Michelle Grantham of Taft MS in San Diego; Erin Cronin of San Ysidro MS; and Frank Forrester and Kellie Marcarelli of Challenger MS in San Diego.

Other participating teachers are: Joe Krupens and Andrea Pfaff of Standley MS in San Diego; Jeff Major of the Preuss School at UCSD; Cheryl Miller of Sullivan MS in Bonsall; Emmy Rodgers and Ray Ruffin of Montgomery MS in San Diego; Nicole Buchanan, Richard Barr, Jeremiah Potter and Susan Benson of Pershing MS in San Diego; and Roger Wynn of Mountain Empire Junior High.

Also participating in the program are: Kati DeBolt of Bernardo Hts. MS in Poway Unified; Bruce Cornish of Parkway MS in the La Mesa-Spring Valley SD; Denise Marriott and Gwendolyn Fairley of the School of Creative and Performing Arts in San Diego; Heather Michel of Carmel Valley MS; Julie Nunes-Felix of San Marcos MS; Susan Scott of Rincon MS in Escondido; and Julie Mori of Mesa Verde MS in Poway.

Also taking part are teachers Rebecca McCaslin of Hidden Valley MS in Escondido, Andrea Cook of the San Diego County Office of Education; Pat Franco and Jim Crouch of Valley Center MS, and Dan Grendziak of Wangenheim MS in San Diego.

Helping shape the project is the 2005-06 MSSELI Advisory Committee: Bess, Taylor, Rodger Bybee of the Biological Science Curriculum Study (BSCS); Andrea Cook of the County Office of Education; Kelly Marcarelli of Pershing MS; Janet Powell of the BSCS; Felicia Ryder, Don Whisman and Tammy Wu of San Diego City Schools; and Joe Taylor of the BSCS.

For more information, call Taylor at (858) 292-3854, or go to www.sdsa.org