



May 3, 2010

Dr. Donna R. Sterling
Science Education Leadership Program
College of Education and Human Development
George Mason University
4400 University Drive, MS 4B3
Fairfax, VA 22030

Dear Dr. Sterling:

I am writing on behalf of the Virginia Mathematics and Science Coalition in support of the Virginia Initiative for Science Teaching and Achievement (VISTA). George Mason University is leading this multi-year program focusing on providing the support needed by teachers to conduct effective science teaching in their classes.

We fully support VISTA's primary objectives to:

1. Increase student learning in science at all levels,
2. Enhance the quality of teaching of elementary school teachers to include inquiry-based teaching,
3. Enhance the quality of teaching of underprepared beginning middle and high school science teachers including having students conduct inquiry-based laboratory activities,
4. Increase the number of certified middle school and high school science teachers,
5. Build the state infrastructure to support effective science teaching and learning,
6. Conduct research to determine what makes the most significant difference in helping teachers to help students learn.

Please be assured that the Virginia Mathematics and Science Coalition is prepared to work with the Virginia Department of Education, George Mason University, and all the VISTA partners to improve science teaching and thereby student learning of science throughout Virginia. The Virginia Mathematics and Science Coalition will distribute information about the program to support recruiting of teachers, provide science expertise, disseminate the findings of the program via website and other publications and advocate for policy change that enhances effective science teaching.

Sincerely,

Patrick J. Dexter
President

BOARD OFFICERS

Ted Bennett
Southern Virginia Higher Education Center
Chairman

Patrick J. Dexter
Exxon Mobil Corporation
President

Henry R. Pollard V
Christian & Barton, LLP
Secretary

Sandra Critchfield
Thinking Maps, Inc.
Treasurer

BOARD MEMBERS

Cynthia P. Balderson
Dominion

David C. Carothers
James Madison University

Julia H. Cothron
MathScience Innovation Center

R. Wayne Ellis
Virginia Education Association

A. Elaine Fogliani
Westmoreland County Public Schools

James D. Gates
National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, Retired

David B. Hagan
Virginia Association of Science Teachers

Amy Harris
Micron Technology Foundation

Roger Hathaway
NASA Langley Research Center

Bill Hightower
Virginia Community College System

Fred Hoffman
Roanoke Valley Governor's School
for Science and Technology

Vickie Inge
Virginia Council of Teachers of Mathematics

Paula J. Klonowski
Virginia Department of Education

Raymond McGhee
SRI International

Sean McGinnis
Virginia Tech

Laura J. Nelson
Virginia Science Education Leadership Association

Terri Phillips
Golder Associates Inc.

Amy Parlo
Virginia Tech

Eric M. Rhoades
Stafford County Public Schools

Patricia Robertson
Arlington County Public Schools

Dexter R. Skinner
DuPont

Manorama Talavie
Institute for Teaching Through Technology &
Innovative Practices

Diane C. Tomlinson
Russell County Public Schools

Linda L. Vahala
Old Dominion University

Denise Walston
Virginia Council for Mathematics Supervision

George R. Wilcox
Virginia Technology Education Association