



# NSTA Conference

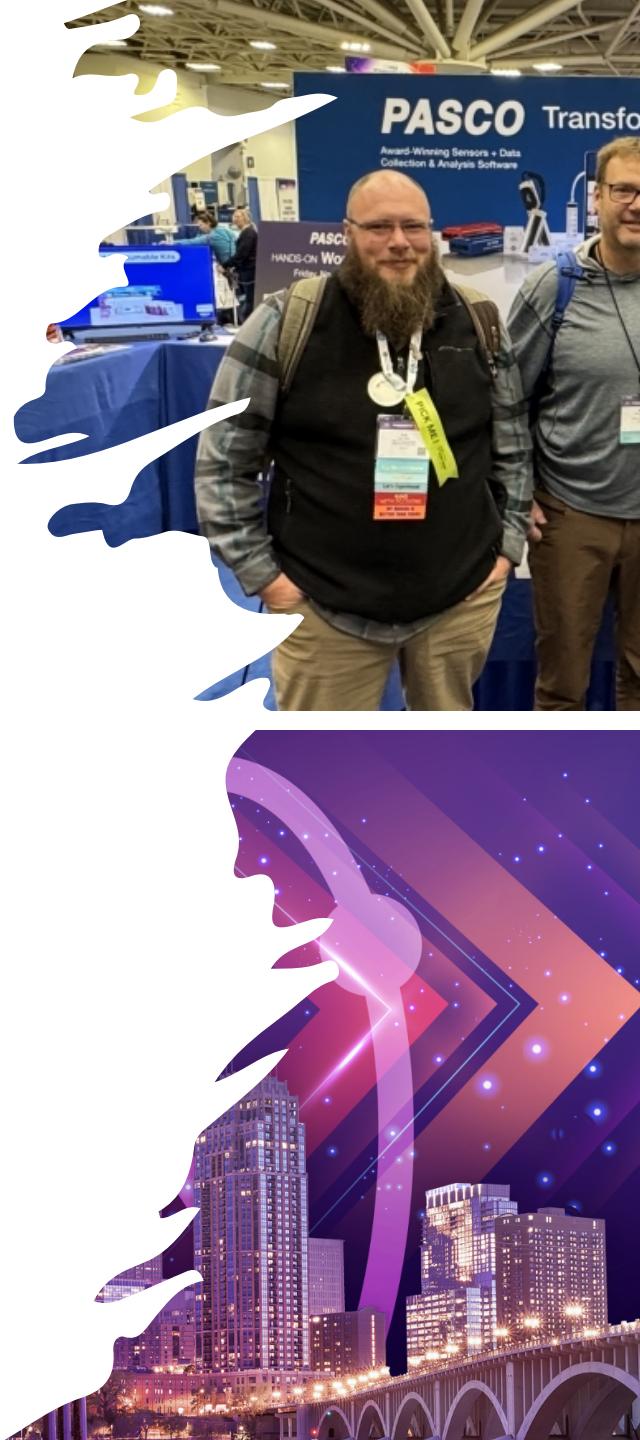
National Science Teaching Association

November 2025  
Minneapolis, Minnesota





The conference was an amazing experience!



Eric Theis, HHS &  
MDHS  
Matt Hellhake, MDHS  
Carmen Tatum, DES  
Erin Sinclair, PLMS  
Lesley Doane, BRMES



National Conference  
in Minneapolis  
November 12-15, 2025

# The National Science Teaching Association (NSTA)

- NSTA is the largest national organization for science educators
- Focused on research-based best practices in science teaching
- Aligned with NGSS / 3-Dimensional Learning
- Opportunity to bring national-level ideas back to our local classrooms



Students aren't just learning facts. They're learning how scientists think.

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- Shift from “Doing Activities” to “Making Sense of Phenomena”
- Less focus on step-by-step labs
- More focus on **students explaining *why* things happen**
- Learning driven by real-world phenomena (wildfires, weather, ecosystems, energy, etc.)



# Three-Dimensional Learning

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- **Science content** (what students know)
- **Science & engineering practices** (what students do)
- **Crosscutting concepts** (patterns, cause & effect, systems)



- Curriculum based built around how student learn.
  - Anchoring phenomenon
  - Guiding Questions
  - Investigation
  - Sense Making
- Built by a network of teachers across the US.
- All adaptable/editable
- Aligned with NextGen Science Standards, and Idaho Science Standards.
- Partnered with other organizations to make it more usable..
- Not quite ready for High School.

A new approach to science curriculum.



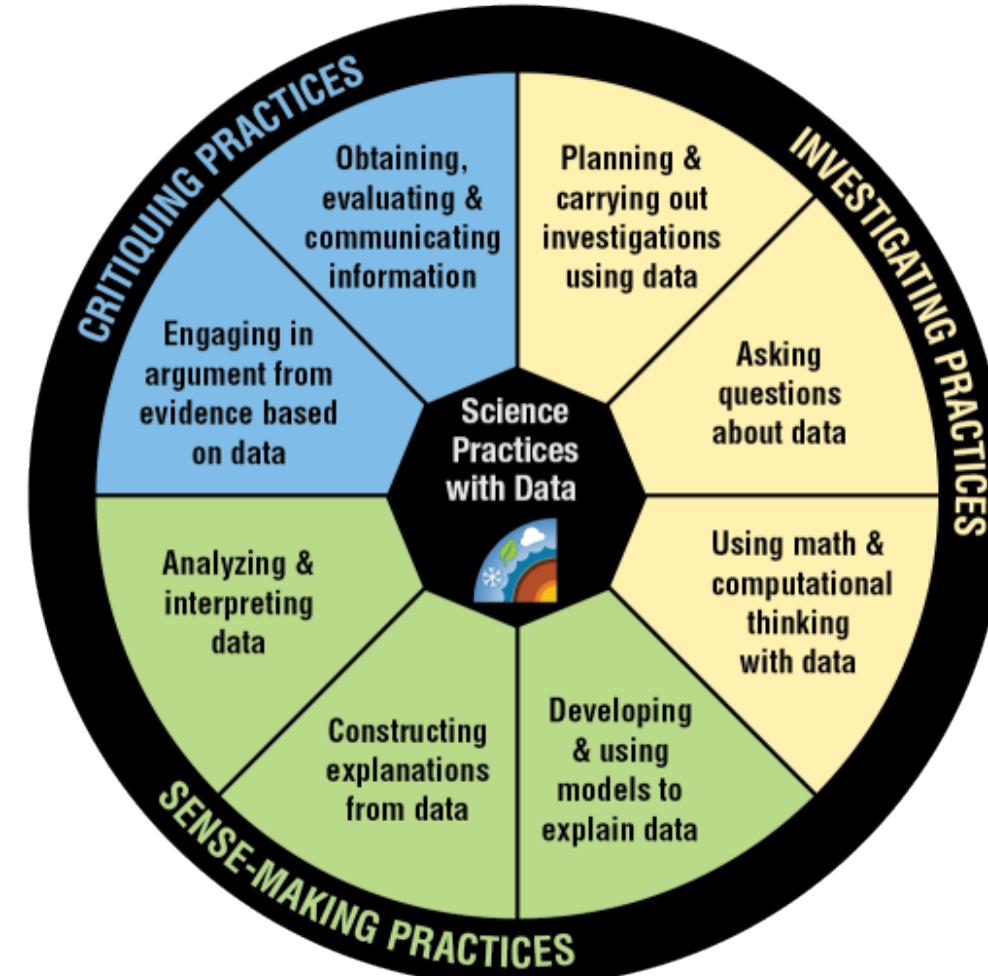
- Having the opportunity to attend sessions that were designed for early childhood was refreshing and inspiring! Often at conferences or trainings, our youngest learners get left behind in the mix.
- I walked away with new ideas and strategies including repurposing pumpkins into birdhouses, adopting a classroom tree, exploring found objects outside, and discovering organizations that offer grants to help support meaningful science experiences for all kids.
- \*Lesley Doane
- BRMES Kinder Teacher

# NSTA Conference Focus Areas for PLMS

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I focused on sessions about implementing the Science and Engineering Practice *Developing and Using Models* as a sensemaking tool for students, rather than just as a final product or assessment. I attended several sessions with this emphasis and returned with great ideas and materials to use at the middle school level.

Exploring different programs and talking with both educators and vendors as we prepare for our upcoming curriculum adoption was so valuable.



Erin Sinclair

PLMS 6th Grade Science

# Vertical Collaboration and Alignment

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- Teachers in our district working together from Kindergarten to High School
- The content may be different, but the goal is the same
- We all want our students to LOVE science!
- Rigor + Joy = Deeper Learning





THANK YOU!

"Thank you! Events like the NSTA Conference allows us to interact with and learn from science educators across the country. It also recharges our batteries and keeps our passion to improved science education burning. Thank you for supporting not just quality education, but quality educators as well!" ~ Eric Thies

"I am so grateful to the board for the opportunity to attend the NSTA Conference! We returned with a wealth of new resources and ideas to bring back to our classrooms. It was also wonderful to connect with and build relationships with other science teachers from our district."  
~ Erin Sinclair



"Thank you for supporting our professional development journey! We're also grateful for the time we were able to dedicate toward meeting with vendors and curriculum companies to make informed decisions when it comes to science adoption in our district!" ~ Lesley Doane

Thank you for helping make this opportunity possible! I appreciate the collaboration with our district science teachers so that we can share and refine our common goal. We also are grateful for the ability to enhance our skills as science teachers. ~Carmen Tatum