

Science Is Elemental: Update #9

03/27/24

NSTA Conference

The motto of the [March National Science Teachers Association in Denver, Colorado](#) was, “You Belong Here.” Although I am not a classroom science teacher, my work with SIE has provided opportunities for me to teach children ranging in age from 4 to 12 in informal settings. In addition, at least one of the planned programs for SIE, the Network of Scientists, will support classroom science teachers. All our programs are designed to support and improve science learning, particularly for those students who do not yet show interest in or aptitude for the sciences.

I did, indeed, belong there. I made new friends and contacts. More importantly, I gained new ideas and ways for how to expand and/or improve the work of Science is Elemental.

For the children’s books that show, through stories, how scientists work, I found publishers and a potential collaboration partner for expanding the reach of these books. For the Network of Scientists, I found many teachers that thought this was a good idea, and a potential source for scientists to join the network. I made a connection with whom I might present some of my informal classes, and with whom my adult daughter might volunteer. I attended seminars that gave me new ways to think about the SIE clearinghouses program.

While there are no guarantees that these partnerships will bear fruit, I would not have made these connections without the conference.

Mission: Change science education to encourage more understanding of and respect for the scientific process by all high school graduates, through starting science education in the early grades



Funding the book publication

The illustrator for the first book on what scientists do is hard at work creating amazing works of art.

The next step for me is to work out how to get the book published. As I pointed out in the column to the left, several publishers of children’s science books were at the NSTA conference, and I will be pursuing that angle.

We also might choose to self-publish, probably through Amazon. While not free, it is relatively low cost to do so as an eBook. However, this is a children’s book, and would do better as a paperback.

One way to finance publication as a paperback is through Kickstarter. We are exploring that possibility now. Campaigns offer rewards for different levels of giving, so watch this space to get your desired reward, should we decide to run with Kickstarter!

Working with rural communities

I am thrilled for all of the opportunities I have had so far, to teach integrated science classes, or provide others with my lesson plans.

However, all these events provided education to students that are, at least relatively, well-to-do. The children and their families may be far from wealthy, but they generally have opportunities available to them that others may not.

I don't want to stop doing this informal, integrated science teaching. However, I, and my board, feel strongly about bringing good science education to those who may not easily find such opportunities, or be able to take advantage of them, in their own communities.

I live in Maryland. There are rural communities in my state, and in the surrounding states, that too often are overlooked when it comes to providing needed educational resources. In part, this is due to similar needs elsewhere, such as in the nearby cities. In general, it is easier to provide services when the population in need is concentrated in one place. Rural communities are more spread out, and the families of those children who are rural and have low socioeconomic status often do not have the transportation resources to get to enrichment activities.

SIE will do its best to work with these communities. Look for more information in future newsletters.



Humanitarian needs

Nonprofits serving rural communities

Science education is important, but many rural communities need much more support. Due to the sparse populations in some of these areas, it can be difficult and expensive for nonprofits to bring their services to all who need them.

While SIE is planning to bring support for integrated science education to the rural areas near our headquarters in Maryland, other such communities can use your help.

If you can, please consider donating to help people in rural and impoverished communities.

Rural LISC

<https://www.lisc.org/rural/>

Rural Coalition

<https://www.ruralco.org/home>

