



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education

August 14, 2015

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: Steven R. Staples, Superintendent of Public Instruction

SUBJECT: 2015 Virginia Association of Science Teachers Annual Professional Development Institute

The Virginia Association of Science Teachers (VAST) will hold its annual statewide Professional Development Institute (PDI) on November 19-21, 2015, at the Westfield Marriott in Chantilly, Virginia. The VAST PDI supports the 2010 *Science Standards of Learning* by offering over 200 concurrent sessions, several field trips, and nationally known keynote speakers. Educators will be able to network with colleagues from all over the state, gain new ideas to enhance their content knowledge, and experience cutting-edge technology. Educators at every level of science will find many topics of interest with which to build their expertise.

For the first time this year, the VAST PDI will feature the Donna R. Sterling Institute, [Uncovering Student Thinking in Science Through Formative Assessment](#). In this one-day workshop, participants will

- **learn** how to use formative assessment probes to uncover and analyze student thinking about key science concepts;
- **practice** formative assessment strategies that inform teaching and deepen students' understanding of science content; and
- **apply** techniques that weave assessment into the process of instruction and learning.

Registration and the PDI schedule of events can be found on the VAST Web site at <http://www.vast.org>. The PDI also provides educators the opportunity to earn recertification points, and they may choose the option of earning college credit.

For further information, please contact Eric M. Rhoades, director, Office of Science and Health Education, by e-mail at Eric.Rhoades@doe.virginia.gov or by telephone at (804) 786-2481.

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