



**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA**  
**Department of Education**

March 1, 2013

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: Patricia I. Wright, Superintendent of Public Instruction

**SUBJECT: Investigations in Science Modeling Instruction**

I am pleased to announce that the Virginia Department of Education, in partnership with Longwood University (LU) and James Madison University (JMU), will sponsor Investigations in Science Modeling Instruction, as part of the Content Teaching Academy (CTA) on the campus of JMU, June 24-28, 2013. Science Modeling Instruction is a guided inquiry and Socratic approach to teaching science where students create and apply conceptual models of natural phenomena as a central aspect of deeply learning science content.

The intensive, five-day program is open to physical science (middle school), biology, chemistry, and physics teachers. Each of the four concurrent, discipline-based sections is designed to:

- introduce science teachers to a pedagogy that uses a model-centered, guided inquiry method of teaching and concurrently improve content knowledge;
- give participants experiences with computer courseware that they can integrate into their science curriculum;
- establish an electronic network of support and a learning community among participants; and
- encourage participants to seek further training in the Science Modeling pedagogy.

The Academy will provide participants with research-based curriculum materials to implement Science Modeling Instruction in their own classrooms. Participants will also gain experience in the use of computer-interfaced data-acquisition equipment that plays an important role in many of the Science Modeling Instruction activities.

The Virginia Department of Education will assume the cost of registration, graduate tuition (3 hrs.), lodging, and meals for all public school participants accepted into the program. Acceptance will be based on order of registration. School divisions are strongly encouraged to cover travel expenses for division participants as this cost is not assumed by the Department; however, this is not a requirement of the program.

For more detailed information regarding the CTA and how to register, please visit the Academy Web site at <http://www.jmu.edu/contentacademy/>. If you have additional questions about the program, please contact Eric Rhoades, director, Office of Science and Health Education, by e-mail at [Eric.Rhoades@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:Eric.Rhoades@doe.virginia.gov) or by telephone at (804) 786-2481.

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