



# MathScience Innovation Center

*Imagine. Create. Lead.*

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## **ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS BUILD FOR THE FUTURE**

107 teachers attend conference on engineering, robotics, mathematics

Technology played a significant role in last week's mathematics and science education conference at the MathScience Innovation Center from August 6-8. Sessions were held on Elluminate Live, distance learning and virtual field trips, nanotechnology, alternative energy, and more. But, rather than merely explaining the concepts behind these growing, innovative fields, the 107 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers that participated learned about how math and science are used to imitate and understand nature. Participants that completed the conference were awarded a stipend and teacher recertification points.

Professor of Physics at Wellesley College, and one of the conference's speakers, Dr. Robbie Berg, has done just that with a collaborative project with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Media Lab. These programmable bricks, called Crickets due to their ability to communicate with each other like real crickets, were developed by both these researches and the LEGO Company. While the LEGO Mindstorms brick focuses on making robots, Crickets are more geared toward artistic expression. Currently, the Center uses the former in its robotics courses for students, though it plans to implement a new lesson on Picocrickets in 2009.

Those bricks were at the center of just two of the 40 conference sessions that were offered. Educators learned how to engage their students in mathematics and science through a variety of topics, from NASA's planned return to the moon in 2020 to snowflakes.

Participants praised the strength of the lectures and the hands-on activities. Gini Miller in particular, a teacher from J.B. Cary Elementary School in Richmond City, liked "the way the most abstract concepts were made accessible," according to an online survey submitted to the Center. Others praised the variety

and strength of the instructors' backgrounds, the constant reinforcement of the relevancy of math and science, and the keynote speakers.

Sonya Hall, of Harvie Elementary School in Henrico, flat-out stated that the conference "was one of the best [that] I've ever attended," while Laura Shifflett from Alberta Smith Elementary School in Chesterfield County declared that she "can't wait to use this stuff in my classroom."

The MathScience Innovation Center is a 42-year-old organization dedicated to futuristic math and science education for K-12 teachers and students. Its vision for 2015 focuses on implementing new programs in fractal geometry, engineering, nanotechnology, environmental modeling, and distance learning. The MathScience Innovation Center is an educational consortium comprised of eight school divisions: Chesterfield, Colonial Heights, Hanover, Henrico, King William, Petersburg, Powhatan, and Richmond. Other divisions also participate through abbreviated memberships: Charles City, Hopewell, Prince George, and the Steward School.

Below is a list of the 107 teachers that completed the conference programs, by division:

- **Chesterfield County Public Schools (23)**
  - Alberta Smith Elementary School: Cheryl Baker, Melanie Gadish, Betsy Hugenberg, Laura Shifflett, Kelly Shultz
  - Bailey Bridge Middle School: Linda Moore
  - Bensley ES: Melissa Dagenhardt
  - Clover Hill ES: Earin Renfro
  - Crestwood ES: Melissa Winters
  - Curtis ES: Marsha Rogers
  - Davis ES: Keasha Hunt
  - Ecoff ES: Gayle Dillon, Jolene Fanning, Phyliss Karamarkovich, Shannon Magne, Jill Nalbach
  - Greenfield ES: Denise Quigley
  - Matoaca ES: Kristine Wells
  - Robious ES: Kelly George
  - Spring Run ES: Patricia Slagel
  - Watkins ES: Dolores Emery
  - Wells ES: Dana Loy-Anderson, Laura Watkins
- **Colonial Heights (2)**
  - Colonial Heights High School: Wanda Bage
  - Lakeview Elementary School: Karen Stringer
- **Hanover County Public Schools (7)**
  - Battlefield Park Elementary School: Amber DePass
  - Cool Springs ES: Bonnie Harvell, Sharon Seaton
  - Mechanicsville ES: Tracey Magner
  - Pole Green ES: Amy Gordon, Kimberly Peters, Adrienne Tate

- **Henrico County Public Schools (32)**
  - Adams Elementary School: Peggy Hart
  - Arthur Ashe ES: Tonya Meyers
  - Baker ES: Whitney Shotwell
  - Chamberlayne ES: Bob Friend
  - Donahoe ES: Kasey Reed
  - Echo Lake ES: Nancy Aloma, Heather Reid
  - Glen Lea ES: Franketta Tatum
  - Greenwood ES: Donna Goodman
  - Holladay ES: Dawn Burriesci
  - Laburnum ES: Tamika Johnson, Marcia Johnson
  - Longan ES: Sara Carr
  - Newbridge Alternative ES: Elisabeth Norman
  - Pinchbeck ES: Michael Renfroe
  - Ratcliffe ES: Monique Bonner, Dale Grooms, Sonya Hall, Tracy Hayes-Leeks, Tara Huber, Rita Roberson
  - River's Edge ES: Meghan Atkins
  - Sandston ES: Nicholas Ernst
  - Seven Pines ES: Jackie Batkins, Bonnie Gouldin, Dawn Johns
  - Short Pump ES: Michael Price
  - Skipwith ES: Karen Friend
  - Three Chopt ES: Rebecca Baldwin, Nancy Loveless, Elizabeth Miller
  - Twin Hickory ES: Blake Reid
  - Ward ES: Kimberli Combs
- **Hopewell County Public Schools (1)**
  - Dupont Elementary School: Christina Wade
- **King William County Public Schools (1)**
  - Acquinton Elementary School: Mary Alexander
- **MathScience Innovation Center (3):** Theresa Bryant, Bessie Kirk, Dorothy Stanton
- **Petersburg Public Schools (1)**
  - J.E.B. Stuart Elementary School: Johna Vasquz
- **Powhatan County Public Schools (3)**
  - Powhatan Elementary School: Claire Andrews, Monica Gerow, Marilyn Wright
- **Richmond City Public Schools (33)**
  - Albert Hill Elementary School: Katrina Anderson, Katrina Holmes, Lelia Snell
  - Bellevue ES: Charlotte Lucas
  - Blackwell ES: Jean Harvey
  - Cary ES: Gini Miller
  - Chimborazo ES: Cristy Hasha
  - Fisher ES: Chante Givens
  - Fox ES: Lynn Pleveich

- Francis ES: Jessica Lefort, Deborah Morgan, Kimberly Wilkerson, Lee Zickafoose Jones
- Holton ES: Kateherine Euting, Sherrard Gardner, L. Rochelle Turnage, Patricia Woodberry
- Miles Jones ES: Phyllis Bell, Tiffany Blue, Melissa Robinson, Diane Sabol
- Oak Grove ES: Theodore Barnett, Veola Glover
- Reid ES: Sharon Allen, Christy Deonanan
- Southampton ES: Melanie Harrell, LaToya Lawrence
- Summer Hill ES: Eunice Alston, Richard Obrien, Lorna Schaefer
- Swansboro ES: Mary Ann Gryboski
- Woodville ES: Dorothy Hopkins, Shaunte Means
- **The Steward School (1):** Nancy Loyd