



# A Moment of Science from ISTA

Idaho Science Teaching Association President's  
Newsletter

November 2024



## **A Word (or two) From Your ISTA President!**

As we charge full STEAM ahead this school year, let's consider how we can build connections that truly ignite excitement and passion for learning and discovery. In our own teaching practices, how do we create these connections to inspire our students? What does "building connections that ignite" look like in our classrooms?

Are you actively seeking ways to foster meaningful connections with your students that strengthen your classroom culture and community? Through membership in the Idaho Science Teaching Association (ISTA), you have the opportunity to expand this connectivity beyond the classroom. Engaging with ISTA gives you access to a network of passionate science educators who share the goal of advancing science education in Idaho.

By participating in ISTA, you're not only connecting with fellow educators but also leveraging these relationships to enhance your teaching practice and support your students. Check out our social media posts, tune into our podcast on our website, and explore regional events posted on Sched to become part of the vibrant dialogue in Idaho's science education community.

Let's build connections that spark curiosity and fuel the growth of our students as future scientifically literate citizens.

Warm regards,  
Tanya Elmer

# THE 2024-2025 PAEMST

## APPLICATION CYCLE IS NOW OPEN!

APPLY OR NOMINATE AN OUTSTANDING 7-12TH GRADE STEM TEACHER, TODAY



### Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching Are Now Open!

Do you know an amazing science teacher? We think that you probably do! [Nominate that person](#) for the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST) the nation's highest honors for teachers of STEM (including computer science). We KNOW Idaho science teachers are doing great work and want to see those efforts celebrated!



#### "We do this job for kids like Justin" with Tanya Elmer

Inspiring Science Teachers • Oct 24, 2024



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Share

32:20

### Inspiring Science Teachers Podcast - New Episode!

The [latest episode](#) of ISTA vice president Chris Stoker's podcast 'Inspiring Science Teachers' is live on all of your favorite podcast platforms this week and in it, he interviews our current ISTA president Tanya Elmer about why she continues to find joy in teaching chemistry to Idaho high school students! Check it out!!



**NOW OPEN!**

**NOAA Marine  
Debris Program  
Art Contest**

**Entries Due  
December 13, 2024**

## **NOAA Marine Debris Program Art Contest**

Are you a student or teacher who's passionate about marine debris?

Then get your art supplies ready, because this year's [NOAA Marine Debris Program Art Contest](#) is officially open! Students in grades K-8 from the United States and U.S. territories can submit their artwork now through December 13th that answers the questions:

- How does marine debris impact the ocean and Great Lakes?
- What are you doing to help prevent marine debris?

The contest will accept entries electronically and by mail! Enter today and you could see your artwork featured in our 2026 Marine Debris Calendar! So get crafty, get creative, and help us raise awareness about marine debris.



## Free Electronics Program From Boise State University

"At Boise State's Institute for Microelectronics Education and Research (MER), we're on a mission to ignite curiosity and inspire the next generation of innovators. Our goal is to introduce K-12 students to the fascinating fields of microelectronics and semiconductors: key materials used in chip-making and essential to modern electronics. We spark creativity and engagement through dynamic, hands-on STEM activities, including lessons on circuitry, coding, and robotics.

The MER Institute offers FREE program visits throughout Idaho, tailoring lessons to captivate students of all ages during both in-school and out-of-school time. Join us on a journey into the world of technology and discovery!"

Click on [THIS LINK](#) to fill out the interest form!

## Career Connected, Mission Driven Learning For Idaho Schools

STEM, computer science, and CTE lessons

Today's students are inspired by project-based, mission-driven learning. Learning Blade engages students and is proven to increase career interests in high-demand careers, such as digital technology, advanced manufacturing, health services, and more while reinforcing core academic standards.

Appropriate for grades 5-9, Learning Blade provides ready-to-use online lessons for math, science, social studies, and language arts aligned to state standards and include corresponding lesson plans for teachers, parent handouts, and more!



 **Sign up for FREE**  
LearningBlade.com/ID 

Learning Blade is a STEM/CTE platform fully funded for all Idaho schools through the Idaho STEM Action Center.

### Implementation Models



STEM  
Classes



Computer  
Science




CTE & Career  
Exploration





Supplemental &  
Enrichment

Scan the QR code to sign up for  
your fully funded Idaho resource.



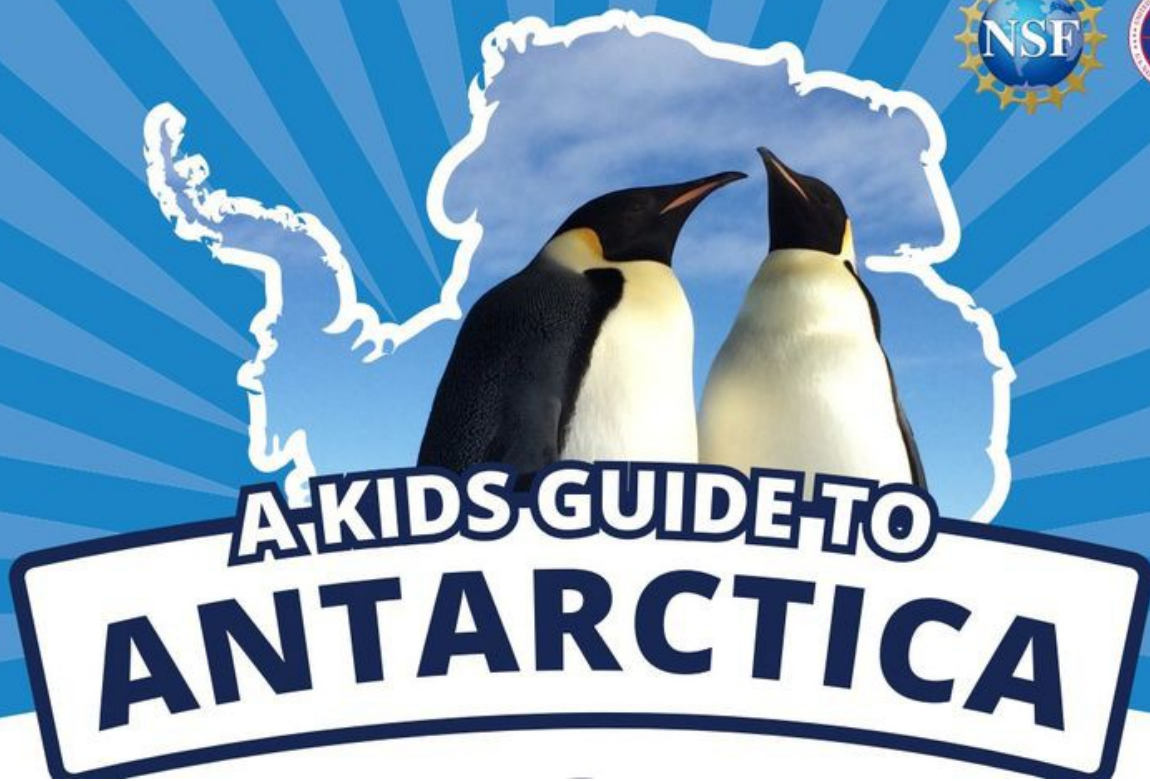
 [info@learningblade.com](mailto:info@learningblade.com)

 877.585.2029

 [LearningBlade.com/ID](http://LearningBlade.com/ID)

## Learning Blade for Idaho Schools

Exciting news! Learning Blade's new flyers are here! Featuring a fresh, updated design, these flyers are tailored to help you easily bring STEM, computer science, and career awareness into your classroom. Check out the flyer for your state and start exploring new ways to inspire your students!



## **NSF - A Kids Guide to Antarctica**

Antarctica is the highest, driest, coldest, windiest and emptiest place on Earth. To live in these harsh conditions requires special adaptations – for example, there’s a species of fish that has developed clear blood that won’t freeze in the cold water!

Explore more cool facts in our newest “Antarctica by the Numbers” factsheet and “A Kids Guide to Antarctica.” Find out why Antarctica – discovered less than 150 years ago – has since drawn hundreds of scientists (aka modern-day explorers) from around the world to the three, year-round U.S. research stations on the continent in these new learning resources, which will inspire educators and kids alike!

“A Kids Guide to Antarctica”: <https://bit.ly/4fvaK3N>

“Antarctica by the Numbers”: <https://bit.ly/3Nyt5Rn>



### **Notice and Wonder for Your Classroom!**

Our friends at the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) had some adorable plushies at their annual conference last month that would be right at home in a science classroom! You can order your very own pair of plushies here: [nctm.link/noticeandwonder](https://nctm.link/noticeandwonder)

How do you use Notice and Wonder in your classroom?





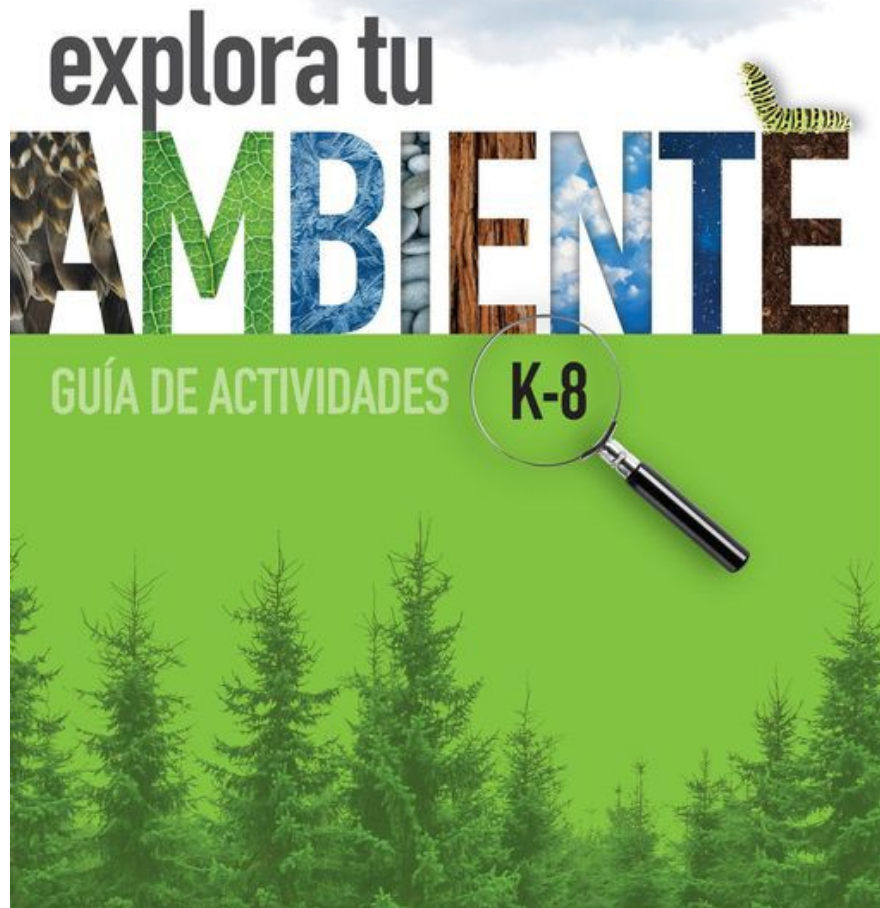
**Andy Heidelberg**  
Solar System Ambassador

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208-340-7639

### **Solar System Ambassador for Your Classroom**

Do your students get excited about topics like the Solar System, Stars, the Moon, and Black Holes, but you feel a little unsure since you're not a subject expert?

Andy Heidelberg, a NASA outreach volunteer from Boise, has spent the last 8 years visiting classrooms and presenting at STEM Nights (live or virtual). He offers engaging talks, handouts, and fun stickers for students—all at no cost. Reach out to Andy for more info!




















## ISTA Board Members 2024-2025

### Project Learning Tree Resources

Help multilingual students flourish this year with Project Learning Tree's multidisciplinary approach to teaching. Hands-on activities use nature to improve literacy, build STEM skills, increase engagement, and more! Visit [plt.org/explora](https://plt.org/explora) to learn more.

## BOARD MEMBERS

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### Tanya Elmer

Idaho Science Teaching Association President  
2023-2025

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