

# NORTHWEST LASER ALLIANCE



## ***What is LASER?***

LASER stands for Leadership and Assistance for Science Education Reform. It is a state-funded partnership program dedicated to helping school districts implement inquiry based science programs in their schools. The LASER model of reform consists of six elements: Research-based Instructional Materials, Professional Development, Student and Program Assessment, Materials Support, Administrative and Community Support, and Literacy. For more information you may visit the WA State LASER web site at <http://www.wastatelaser.org/>.

## ***What does it mean to be a member of the NW LASER Alliance?***

School districts that have sent a team to the WA State LASER Strategic Planning Institute and have developed a 5 year LASER Strategic Plan are eligible to join a LASER Alliance. There are ten LASER Alliances across the state, and the NW Alliance currently serves 16 districts in the NWESD region. Districts that are members of an Alliance are eligible to receive funds to support professional development for their teachers as well as funds earmarked for the purchase of exemplary instructional materials. Member districts commit to using research-based science instructional materials and support science professional development for their teachers.

## ***What are the benefits to being a member?***

NW LASER Alliance districts have access to high quality professional development for their teachers and they receive funding for science instructional materials. Teachers as well as district administrators benefit from collaboration with colleagues in other LASER Alliance districts as they engage in rich discussion, offer new perspectives, and troubleshoot like issues.

## ***What kinds of professional development does the NW LASER Alliance offer?***

NWESD and the NW LASER Alliance are working hard to provide the tools and experiences you need to help students meet standards in science. Our professional development classes will:

- Help you successfully implement new modules in your classroom
- Deepen your understanding of science content, which will make teaching science easier and more enjoyable
- Model inquiry-based instruction methods to be used in your classroom
- Help you align your science instruction with the Washington State Science Grade Level Expectations and incorporate WASL language to better prepare your students
- Integrate science with other curriculum areas

We offer Initial-Use training for FOSS and STC modules as well as trainings on Science Content, Notebooks, Assessment, and more. Please let us know if you have a specific training need or special request, and we will do our best to help!

## ***What is required for NW LASER Alliance membership?***

NW LASER Alliance districts commit to sending a certain number of teachers to 18+ hours of science professional development each year. In addition, they agree to share data about the professional development their teachers attend, and they agree to support and embrace the collaborative nature of the Alliance.

***Is every teacher in the district obligated to attend 18 hours of science professional development each year?***

That would be ideal, but we realize the reality of district budgets and sub shortages. We ask each district representative to tell us how many teachers they *can* commit to 18 hours of PD each year, and that will be the target the district should strive to meet.

***Are NW LASER Alliance member districts also required to join the Science Materials Center Cooperative for kit refurbishment?***

No. They are welcome to join, but this is not required. The NW LASER Alliance and Science Materials Center Cooperative are separate entities.

***Can LASER pay for my sub so I can attend a training?***

Unfortunately, no. LASER funds cannot be used for sub or stipend pay. It is a grant requirement that districts match every dollar funded by LASER, therefore a great way to provide match dollars is for subs and release time for teachers.

***My district sent a team to the LASER Strategic Planning Institute. Doesn't that automatically make us members of the LASER Alliance?***

No. Creating a LASER Strategic Plan is the first step and is required before a district can become an Alliance member; however, districts don't automatically become members of an Alliance by attending the SPI.

***How can my district join the Alliance if we aren't already a member?***

During the next funding cycle, which comes around every biennium with all the other legislated funding, NWESD will invite eligible districts to express interest in joining the Alliance. At that point, your district Superintendent will write a letter of commitment stating that the district wishes to become a member and will support 18+ hours of science professional development per teacher, per year, based on each \$600 of funds requested. If NWESD is awarded grant funding for that biennium, the district then becomes a member of the NW Alliance. The next funding cycle will be for the 2009-2011 biennium.

***Does it cost anything to join the Alliance?***

No. There is no fee to join. It is the district's responsibility to provide subs or release time for teachers to attend trainings, and there is usually a nominal fee for teachers to attend trainings being held at other NW LASER Alliance districts.

FOR MORE INFORMATION,  
PLEASE VISIT OUR  
WEB SITE AT  
[WWW.NWESD.ORG/LASER](http://WWW.NWESD.ORG/LASER).

YOU MAY ALSO CONTACT  
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