

(10/18/23 District Administrator's Corner Article)

October in Wisconsin brings autumn—it is filled with vibrant colors, cooler evenings, football, corn mazes, and ... science! This week is the annual Wisconsin Science Festival, held from October 16-22, which highlights events in over one hundred venues in more than 45 counties across the state. As proclaimed by Gov. Tony Evers and State Superintendent Dr. Jill Underly, Wisconsin Science Week is a wonderful time to connect with community experts and opportunities in your own backyard.

Science is a big part of our lives and inspires us all to analyze and learn. It is in that spirit of inspiration that our state celebrates the Wisconsin Science Festival again this year by showcasing events (both in-person and virtual) that seek to make an impact on Wisconsinites! Every October for the past 13 years, the week-long Wisconsin Science Festival has taken place. This year the theme is time and its impact on science, art and technology.

Examples of events include “Science in a Bag” kits from local libraries, free events at museums and galleries and “Badger Talks” Q&A sessions with scientific experts. The best way to learn about events or find information is by visiting the site: <https://www.wisconsinsciencefest.org/> Seek out an adventure.

In the River Valley School District, we embrace the vision of science education set forth by the Department of Public Instruction. Effective science instruction is important at all levels. At the elementary level, it is essential to allow students to discover science in order to prepare scientifically literate citizens as well as future scientists and engineers. Examples of elementary science lessons can be found here: <https://dpi.wi.gov/science/elementary/lessons>. At the middle level and high school, students start having scheduled time in their day for science classes. Standards are followed and course work becomes much more complex.

The Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) have become a popular framework for science educators to work from. Through a collaborative, state-led process, these K-12 science standards have been developed to elaborate on content and practice, and are arranged in a manner across disciplines and grades to provide all students an internationally benchmarked science education. The NGSS were released in 2013 and are being implemented in states and districts across the nation. We also have specific Wisconsin standards in Science for educators. These Wisconsin academic standards guide Wisconsin schools, teachers, and community partners toward development and continuous improvement of science courses. Our standards are built from the National Research Council's (NRC's) Framework for K-12 Science Education and the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS Lead States, 2013). The Wisconsin standards can be found here: <https://dpi.wi.gov/science/standards>

All in all, science is about discovery and continuing to learn. *"The important thing is not to stop questioning,"* stated Mr. Albert Einstein. Rest assured, our River Valley School District students continue to grow and learn by questioning and discovering every day.

Sincerely,

Loren Glasbrenner, District Administrator
River Valley School District