



MathScience Innovation Center

Imagine. Create. Lead.

Contact: Robin Newton
Tel. (804) 343-6525 Ext 227
Email: prerelease@msinnovation.info

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 24, 2008

STUDENTS CELEBRATE MOLE DAY VIRTUALLY October 23-24, 2008

To make shopping easier, retailers package eggs in dozens. Likewise, chemists package atoms and molecules in a special unit – the mole, which equals 6.02×10^{23} particles. Because of its central role in chemistry, scientists celebrate Mole Day on October 23—the twenty-third day of the tenth month.

On October 23 and 24, 607 students throughout the MathScience Innovation Center consortium joined MSiC educators Rebecca Pittman and Mary Frances Hobbs in an online celebration. The virtual lesson, broadcast from the MSiC, linked multiple classes through the internet videoconferencing system *Illuminate Live!* Students texted answers to Mole Bowl Questions, posted data from experiments on the white board, and shared findings, as well as their class photos, with a webcam. Ongoing interaction continues through the Mole Day Wiki.

Participating teachers gave the Mole Day Celebration high marks! Teachers reported that “the concept was taught in a fun and exciting way” which was appealing to students in this age of computers. Students found the format exciting and “enjoyed interacting virtually.” Competition emerged as students, especially from different schools in the same county, sought to be the first to report experimental data and to solve mathematical problems.

As part of its 2015 Strategic Plan, the MathScience Innovation Center recently initiated virtual student lessons such as Mole Day. To learn how the Center would electronically deliver this new type of lesson, 14 chemistry teachers attended training on *Illuminate Live!* and the lesson components. The Virginia branch of the American Chemical Society funded the classroom materials dispensed at the training: a cardboard Mole Day Box filled with the experimental materials needed for the event. Repeatedly, teachers commented on the high

quality of the activities and the importance of the “pre-packaged items,” many of which were unavailable in their classrooms.

The twenty-eight student classes were from:

Chesterfield County: Manchester High School (3);

Hanover County: Hanover High School (3), Lee Davis High School (1), Patrick Henry High School (3);

Henrico County: Henrico High School (1), Hermitage High School (1);

King William County: King William High School (6);

Powhatan County: Powhatan High School (4);

Richmond City: George Wythe High School (1), Huguenot High School (2), Thomas Jefferson High School (1);

Institutional Partners: The Steward School (2).

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.