AN ENDANGERED SPECIES: SOUTH DAKOTA SCIENCE TEACHERS—A SUGGESTED MODEL FOR PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN UNIVERSITIES AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

How is science taught in South Dakota schools? If the science teacher knows little or no science, how CAN it be taught? This presentation will address the high national need for qualified science teachers – especially in physics and chemistry. Also examined is how the science education of students K-12 is impacted by the current teacher shortage. Suggested are model designs and methods of “retrofitting” teachers who are new or cross-teaching outside of their majors and currently in service. Examined also is the role of attracting new science teachers and pre-service teacher training for the next wave of science teachers. Only through a strong multi-pronged attack with public school and university partnerships bridging traditional barriers and fully engaged to tackle the problem can this crisis be turned around. Tapping the opportunities offered by the Celebration of the Year of Science 2009, I suggest a research-based model, informed by examining successful efforts in South Dakota and nationwide.