

# The Long Island Sound Mentor Teacher (LISMT) Program in Connecticut and New York

*Since 2002, Mentor Teachers have helped 366 peers incorporate Long Island Sound content into existing curricula, to the benefit of more than 17,000 K-12 students in Connecticut and New York*

Since its inception in 2002 in Connecticut, the Long Island Sound Mentor Teacher (LISMT) program has consistently recruited high quality, creative and respected teachers to assist their peers in incorporating Long Island Sound (LIS) content into curricula within the scope of the Connecticut Science Frameworks and New York science standards. With oversight by Sea Grant, teams of mentor teachers meet to develop a workshop highlighting a theme of their choice, identify appropriate resources and equipment to



share with workshop participants, and conduct the workshop at the location(s) of their choice. The workshops emphasize hands-on participation so teachers can learn the activities firsthand. In 2011, the program was also established in New York by New York Sea Grant with the assistance of Connecticut Sea Grant.

Funding from the EPA Long Island Sound Study (EPA LISS) supports the LISMT Program, covering modest stipends for the mentor teachers, the workshop resources and equipment, boat trips, and workshop site fees.

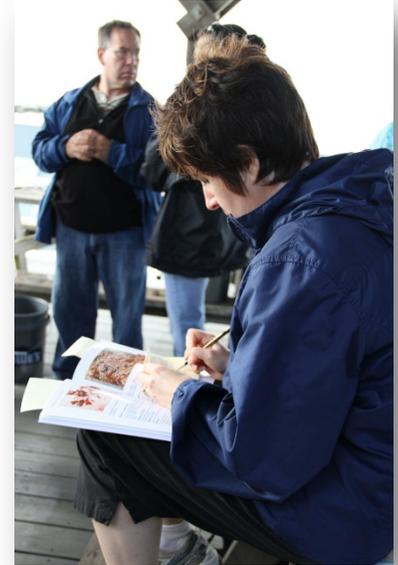


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Highlights of the past 10+ years include:

- 28 LISMT professional development sessions;
- a cadre of 31 LIS mentor teachers;
- 366 formal and informal K-12 educator participants;
- 17,541 students reached through the 366 participants in 65 Connecticut and 27 New York cities, towns and regional school districts; and
- publication of the *Long Island Sound Curricular Resource Guide*, which includes lesson plans, activities, and multi-lingual field trip guidance and resources developed by Mentor Teachers, participants in LISMT workshops, and Connecticut Sea Grant.

Over a single 12-month period from May 2012 through April 2013, the five parts of the Resource Guide were downloaded 4,416 times from the Connecticut Sea Grant website; Part 1, Background, was downloaded more than 1,339 times during this period.



The LISMT Program and the myriad of resources developed through Connecticut and New York's Sea Grant's extensive and productive relationship with EPA LISS will continue to ensure that the relevant science is properly translated and utilized by citizens of all ages in the Long Island Sound watershed. The LISMT program is a sound investment by the EPA LISS. It is the only education program (education is not the same as outreach) in LISS base funding, and costs about 1-2% of the annual base funding budget. Evaluations and anecdotal feedback indicate that workshop participants are sharing their knowledge and resources with their peers, and are taking their own classes into the field to investigate Long Island Sound and its watershed.

With the finalization of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), the successful LISMT program is even more critical and relevant. Unlike current state and previous national science standards which are nearly devoid of marine and aquatic science content, educators will now incorporate Earth systems science (which includes ocean, coastal and climate change topics) into K-12 curriculum. The LISMT program will ensure that current science-based content will be utilized by mentor teachers and participants during the transition to new standards and frameworks.

