

## Pre-College Science Education & The Use of Animals in the Pre-College Classroom



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In its mission to support biomedical and biological research for the betterment of human, animal, and environmental health, the Massachusetts Society for Medical Research, Inc. (MSMR) actively seeks to improve basic literacy in the life sciences at the pre-college level. Remarkable advances in life science are being utilized to solve major problems in human society and the natural world. Genetically-engineered insulin to control diabetes, genetically-engineered disease-resistant plants, and the use of monoclonal antibodies for disease detection are but a few examples characterizing the reality in which our students are growing up and learning. Given the sophistication and rate of development of these advances, we must have a pool of talented scientists to continue this work and a scientifically-literate public for wise and effective decision-making into the next century.

The MSMR supports the 1995 National Science Education Standards produced by the National Academy of Sciences, and in particular the development of programs and curricula that encourage “hands-on” scientific inquiry. Science is best taught by giving students firsthand experience with the subject of their study, and this is no less true regarding the use of animals, both living and preserved, in the classroom. The MSMR supports the responsible use of animals in science education in

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accordance with federal, state, and local law, and expects that educators and their institutions avoid any inappropriate use of animals for instructional purposes, and ensure the well-being of living animals in the classroom and in science fair competitions by maintaining the highest standards for their care and handling.

In accordance with Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 272, Section 80G, the MSMR cannot support experiments involving live vertebrate animals in elementary- or secondary-level classrooms in the Commonwealth. The MSMR does, however, support the use of preserved animals in the classroom for dissection purposes. Firsthand experience using preserved animals is a valuable component to the available alternatives for appreciating the complexities of body organs and systems, and for sparking lifelong interest in biology. ■