

MEDIA OUTREACH



STEP-BY-STEP PLANNING

Whether you're working on your own or as part of a large group, securing media coverage can be made easier by following these steps:

- Determine what you want publicized or reported in the media.
- Develop a media list of those who would be interested in the event. Include city, state or provincial, national, trade, and education press.
- Develop and execute a publicity plan. Decide what needs to be done when and by whom.
- Assign someone to collect newspaper clippings.
- Evaluate your publicity results.

WHAT MAKES NEWS

For your activities and programs to be newsworthy, they must have some relevance to the community. For example, how does NCTM's *Principles and Standards for School Mathematics* affect the local and national school systems? Does it include new requirements for both public and private schools?

When planning your approach to reporters, the key is to identify the angles that would interest them. *Hint:* Before approaching a reporter with your story, try it on your family members. If you can get them interested in it, you have a chance with a reporter. To shape your story, ask questions such as the following:

- Can the implementation of the *Principles and Standards* in mathematics education improve standardized test scores?
- How do U.S. students compare to the rest of the world?
- How will *Principles and Standards* affect local school systems?
- How can *Principles and Standards* help students understand mathematics?

DEVELOP A MEDIA LIST

To contact reporters, you need a current media list. The list can include magazines, newspapers, television and radio stations, and state or local bureaus of national wire services such as the Associated Press. If you do not already have such a list, check with NCTM headquarters. You may also be able to obtain one from a convention or civic center, chamber of commerce or board of trade, newswire or press clipping service, advertising or public relations agency, or press club. The media list should include the names of appropriate reporters and editors. Don't forget editors of professional and technical societies' and employers' newsletters.

When contacting different editors, be sure to emphasize why NCTM's *Principles and Standards* is important from their point of view. For example, when contacting—

Education editors—"NCTM's Standards in mathematics for prekindergarten through twelfth grade are designed to improve math education and to bring practical applications of math to the classroom."

Metro and city desk editors—“NCTM’s Standards in mathematics have a positive impact on local school systems, classrooms, and students.”

Technology or science editors—“NCTM’s Standards in mathematics will better prepare our nation’s students for careers in such fields as mathematics, technology, science, and engineering.”

In addition to the editors listed above, television and radio stations also have assignment editors. They are the people who make daily decisions about which stories get covered.

Keep a file of printed stories that you generate to evaluate your publicity results. At the end of the year, be sure to distribute copies of them to schools and sponsors. In addition to speaking with reporters, there are a variety of ways to work with your local newspapers; we detail these in the section “Getting the Word Out.”

CHOOSING THE RIGHT MEDIA

Keep in mind that although all media sources search out and present news stories, newspapers, radio, and TV each have individual attributes that will influence their degree of interest in your story.

Newspapers—More than any other type of media, printed news has the ability to provide in-depth analysis by means of longer news stories. Newspapers can have long shelf lives and can be saved and referred to in the future.

Radio—Radio coverage may not be your first choice, but radio is often the medium with greatest immediacy. Radio interviews may air live or be produced to be broadcast within the hour. Also, morning drive-time and evening rush-hour programming have the highest listenership.

Television—Television can merge pictures with storytelling, creating a broadcast that can leave a strong and lasting impression. When it comes to covering *Principles and Standards*, television operates at a small disadvantage because such stories are short on visual elements (pictures). Nevertheless, because mathematics education is of interest to a high percent of the population (especially parents), TV news as well as special newsmagazine programs such as *Dateline* may be interested in your story.