

EDUCATE, COMMUNICATE, AND ADVOCATE

An important part of the mission of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) is to act as a public voice for mathematics education by informing and educating the public and policymakers as well as the education community. We do this in various ways—from interaction with the news media, to participation in public forums, to meetings with elected officials.

As the attention on education increases, these opportunities will continue to grow. It will become more important for NCTM to be a part of the public debate as decisions are made that will have a significant effect on the future of mathematics education. Furthermore, it is essential that we not only take advantage of these opportunities but also reach out on our own.

Although the NCTM president is the national spokesperson for the Board and the Council, clearly there is a need for much more communicating than one person or a relatively few members in leadership positions can do. That is why we are extending our communications outreach to include more mathematics educators and their expertise in an effort to expand our sphere of influence and advocate for a quality mathematics education for all students.

NCTM and its members must participate in this outreach effort together. Although the Council reaches out most often in the national arena, we also rely on our members to keep us informed on education issues in their communities and states or provinces.

This communications guide was developed to assist you and to support your efforts on behalf of mathematics education. It is designed to provide the working tools you may need to reach out proactively to elected officials and your local media. It explains how to initiate and maintain positive relationships with reporters and elected officials and how to educate the public and policymakers through letters to the editor, written testimony, personal testimonials, interviews, and news conferences. It will help you become an informed resource and an advocate for mathematics education.

In preparing this information, we have taken care to incorporate detailed information in an easy-to-use format with sample materials included throughout. We encourage you to tailor these materials to suit your individual needs and interests.

As we work together, we will shape the Council into a more vibrant, effective organization—one better able to address issues at both the local and the national level and better able to serve our membership and set the direction for mathematics education in the twenty-first century.

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