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**Justification Toolkit**

Making the case for support of travel, funding, and time off—especially in times of tight budgets and reduced staff—to attend any conference requires a solid understanding of the potential benefits of attending. NCTM’s conferences are not just an opportunity for you to improve your instructional practice and gain ready-to-use teaching and assessment strategies. They are also an opportunity to benefit the professional development of your colleagues, supervisor, and district. Use this toolkit to help define and clearly communicate these benefits in order to make the case to attend.

Table of Contents

[**Why You Should Attend** 2](#_Toc449942402)

[**Expenses & Benefits** 3](#_Toc449942403)

[**Benefits Worksheet** 3](#_Toc449942404)

[**Conference Strands** 4](#_Toc449942405)

[**Expenses Estimate**](#_Toc449942405) 5

[**Opportunities to Save**](#_Toc449942408) 5

[**Registration Rates & Dates**](#_Toc449942409) 6

[**Testimonials** 7](#_Toc449942410)

[**Justification Letter** 8](#_Toc449942411)

**Why You Should Attend**

NCTM’s conferences are a great opportunity to expand both your local and national networks, and they can help you find the information you need to prepare your pre-K–grade 12 students for college and career success. Classroom teachers, administrators, math coaches, supervisors, college professors, and preservice teachers can all benefit from the sessions and learning at this event.

Participants attend these conferences to—

* improve their knowledge and skills with high-quality professional development and hands-on activities;
* gain insights by connecting and sharing with like-minded educators;
* collect free activities that will keep students engaged and excited to learn; and
* learn from industry leaders and test the latest educational resources.

**Expenses & Benefits**

Beyond fulfilling your personal professional development goals, you can rightly claim that attending NCTM’s conferences will also enable you to bring expertise and knowledge back to your school or district. When you propose a conference for approval, be sure to *focus on what you will specifically bring back to your school or district*. You’ll also want to connect your responsibilities, goals, and challenges to your conference experience. To help you make a strong case for attending, here are some goals common to our attendees and the ways in which NCTM’s conferences meet these goals.

**Benefits Worksheet**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **GOAL** | | **How NCTM’s Conferences Support Your Goal** |
| ü | Gain insight into successful implementation of **college- and career-ready standards**, including the **Common Core State Standards for Mathematics** | Meetings feature experts in mathematics education who can help you correlate the Common Core State Standards, as well as other state standards, to your curriculum and give you research-based strategies to assist with implementation. A variety of sessions provide tools to help you make the connections that you can take them back to your classroom. |
| ü | Stay on top of **current (and future) trends** in mathematics education | NCTM’s conferences offer concurrent sessions, workshops, and bursts to keep you ahead of the trends in mathematics education. You will gain new and effective intervention methods, refine your assessment techniques, discover the latest technologies, and acquire strategies to address the needs of each and every student—including those considered “high needs.” |
| ü | Expand your **professional network** | At these events you’ll connect with knowledgeable speakers and session leaders as well as experience exceptional peer-to-peer networking opportunities where you will learn from others and grow your network. |
| ü | Keep your students **engaged and excited** about learning | Experts in mathematics education, who are breaking new ground and witnessing real success in schools across the country, present workshops and sessions to share their insights and strategies. |
| ü | Gain **fresh ideas** and get inspired | Get inspired by keynote speakers and leaders in mathematics education who will stimulate your passion for teaching mathematics. |
| ü | Learn about **new advances and technologies** for the classroom | Talking with vendors can be a great way to access expert knowledge and learn about new products and educational resources. Tour a lively exhibit hall, test the latest educational resources, and collect free activities and lesson plans to bring back to the classroom. |
| ü | **Bring information back** to your school or district | Session handouts are posted and available on the NCTM website after the event. You’ll be able to support the investment of time and budget dollars by setting up training sessions or sending out information on your return. |

# NCTM 2021 Annual Meeting Conference Strands & Descriptions

## Moving Forward – Kicking Off NCTM’s Next 100 Years

**Systemic Change**

In order to create positive, systemic change, classroom teachers, instructional coaches, mathematics specialists, administrators, and other system level stakeholders must support and challenge one another to grow professionally. Sessions in this strand will explore ways to identify and leverage individual strengths within diverse communities of educators and empower one another to create positive systemic change.

**Agency, Identity, and Access**

To build student agency and foster student mathematics identity, NCTM advocates empowering each and every student to be an author of mathematics through conceptual understanding. Effective systems and structures must also be in place to ensure access to high-quality mathematics learning opportunities. Sessions in this strand include, but are not limited to, discussing equitable classroom norms and routines; creating spaces where students are socially and emotionally engaged in mathematics; strategies for cultivating inclusive mathematics classrooms.

**Professionalism and Advocacy**

Who we are as professionals evolve throughout our careers. Along the journey as a teacher, learner, and advocate for mathematics education, we often turn to our colleagues for professional support, and they turn to us. Sessions in this strand will feature opportunities to learn about collaborative learning experiences, mentoring, coaching, social media, and how to become an effective advocate for our profession and our students with all stakeholders as we continue to evolve.

**Mathematics Teaching and Learning**

NCTM describes mathematics teaching as a complex process that requires teachers to deeply understand mathematics content, know how concepts develop across students’ school experience, and implement instructional practices that support learning for each and every student (NCTM, 2014). Sessions in this strand will support teachers in building mathematical knowledge for teaching and implementing the eight research-based teaching practices outlined in the Teaching and Learning Principle from Principles to Actions.

**Expenses Estimate**

Conference expenses are affected by a number of factors. Use the following worksheet to help you develop a cost estimate for attending your selected conference. Be prepared to compare the expenses against your benefits worksheet in order make the case for attendance.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Expense** | **Guideline** | **Cost** |
| [**Conference Registration**](http://www.writingassist.com/resources/articles/how-to-justify-conference-attendance/) |  | $ |
| **Preconference Workshop R**[**egistration**](http://www.writingassist.com/resources/articles/how-to-justify-conference-attendance/) **(*if applicable*)** | Optional fee, separate from conference registration. | $ |
| **Flight** | Estimate using a travel service | $ |
| **Lodging** | NCTM has negotiated discounted conference rates for hotel accommodations. Room rates for the NCTM Annual Meeting start at $169\* per night. Rates closer to venue are $219\* per night.  *\*Tax not included.* | $ |
| **Transportation** | Estimate using a travel service. Be sure to include transportation to and from the airport to the hotel. If driving, remember to include estimated parking costs and mileage reimbursement. | $ |
| **Food Per Diem** |  | $ |
|  | **TOTAL** | **$** |

**Opportunities to Save**

There are a number of ways you can save on your conference attendance. Here are two options to explore:

* If you register by the early-bird registration date, you can **save up to $80 per person!**
* NCTM offers a discounted rate for a group of five or more attendees from the same institution. Register a group to **save 15% on each registration**.

**Registration Rates**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Early-Bird Registration**  Register by:  March 26, 2021 | **Regular Registration**  Register by:  April 20, 2021 | **On-site Registration**  Begins April 21, 2021 |
| **Discounted NCTM Member Registration Rates** | | | |
| Premium | $355 | $390 | $424 |
| Essential | $405 | $445 | $485 |
| Emeritus & Life Members | $275 | $295 | $315 |
| Student Member | $203 | $223 | $243 |
| Student Member One-Day | $172 | $189 | $206 |
| Group\* | $430/registrant | $473/registrant | $515/registrant |
| **Nonmember Registration Rates** | | | |
| Nonmember Full Registration | $507 | $557 | $606 |
| One-Day Nonstudents | $374 | $394 | $414 |
| Student Nonmember | $252 | $272 | $292 |
| Nonteaching Guest | $275 | $295 | $315 |
| Group\* (nonmember) | $430/registrant | $475/registrant | $515/registrant |

\*Register a group of five or more and receive a 15% discount off the individual nonmember rate!

**Testimonials**

**Hear what past attendees have said about NCTM in-person meetings, conferences, and events:**

“The energy, the high level of participation, the spirit, and getting together with so many people. It’s just wonderful.”

“When I read blogs or look at different schools throughout the country and then see that they are going to be here, to be able to meet those people and connect with them in person—that really is an exciting thing.”

“You’re exposed to so many different ideas from so many different places and things that I have never even considered. Especially when you look around and see people incorporating different things in their own individual ways it’s like, ‘Oh, I can use that too.’”

“If you’re a new teacher, I think coming to the NCTM Annual Meeting is a huge deal. Just to see what’s out there . . . see the different exhibits, hear different speakers—it gets you inspired.”

“It’s so awesome and great to be around so many like-minded people who want to do well for their students, and we’re all teaching the same content and we all have the same goals in mind.”

“Having the opportunity to take an idea and go back to my classroom on Monday and be able to use it, that’s been the most valuable thing for me.”

“If you’re thinking about going to the Annual Meeting next year, definitely go. You’ll be able to talk with your peers, people who have knowledge about mathematics, research, research knowledge, practitioner knowledge . . . You’ll be able to find what you’re looking for.”

“I will go to every workshop, every session I can starting at 7:00 a.m. in the morning!”

**Justification Letter**

***Dear Educator,***

***We have prepared the following letter to assist you in garnering support from your principal or district leader to attend an NCTM Conference. Feel free to customize the document to help “make the case” for your attendance.***

Dear <Colleague>,

At the NCTM 2021 Annual Meeting & Exhibition in St. Louis, Missouri, educators at all levels will be brought together to enhance their professional skills, knowledge, and careers. I would like to attend this event, which is scheduled for April 21-24, 2021, to learn best practices central to implementing college- and career-ready standards.

To meet my professional development goals, I am seeking approval for the registration fee, travel expenses to the conference, and minimal food expenses during the conference. The detailed cost breakdown is listed below.<Insert your expense estimate numbers here>

Conference Registration \_\_\_\_\_\_

Preconference Workshop registration (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_\_

Flight \_\_\_\_\_\_

Lodging \_\_\_\_\_\_

Transportation \_\_\_\_\_\_

Food per diem \_\_\_\_\_\_

Total estimated conference cost of \_\_\_\_\_\_.

By attending this conference, I will be able to select presentations (sessions, bursts, and workshops) from the following topic strands that are specific to my grade level:

* Systemic Change
* Agency, Identity, and Access
* Professionalism and Advocacy
* Mathematics Teaching and Learning

My participation in this program will complement our school’s objectives, and I plan to return with resources to share what I’ve learned with my peers, and to give our students the tools they need to succeed.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

***<Your Full Name>***