

Legislative Priorities of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics 2021

Founded in 1920, the [National Council of Teachers of Mathematics](#) (NCTM) is the world's leading mathematics education organization and advocates for high-quality mathematics teaching and learning for each and every student. Success on this count requires support from federal, state, and local lawmakers.

Teachers and what they do in the classroom are at the heart of preparing college-, career-, and citizen-ready high school graduates. Time and again, research demonstrates that the quality of the teacher in the classroom is the largest factor in successful learning. NCTM supports investing in teachers of mathematics at every stage of their development and believes that mathematical literacy and fluency can be achieved for each and every student through an increased emphasis from policymakers on early childhood education, rigorous and engaging PK–12 mathematics instruction, family engagement, high-quality standards and assessments, and the guarantee of appropriate conditions for learning for each and every student in the country's schools and classrooms.

Successful Mathematics Educators Need Adequate Support

In 2021, teachers are being called upon to do much more than teach. They are juggling their own family obligations with their commitments to students and colleagues and are worried about the raging COVID-19 pandemic and being safe and healthy. These circumstances have laid bare the need to support educators. Teachers of mathematics and the mathematics education community need lawmakers to do the following:

- Invest in professional development programs that recognize the unique demands of teaching mathematics.
- Invest in the E-Rate program and other programs that give all students and teachers access to the technology they need to be successful in virtual environments as well as the hybrid classrooms that will certainly be the norm post-COVID.
- Invest in programs that support colleges of education and the modernization of mathematics teacher preparation programs.
- Rely on research-based practices in preparing and supporting PK–12 mathematics teachers and classrooms.

Mathematics Achievement Must Improve

Although navigating the pandemic and reopening schools safely is the education community's most immediate priority, NCTM members are increasingly concerned about the state of mathematics education, particularly given the recent disappointing achievements of the country's students on both the National Assessment of Educational Progress and the Programme for International Student Assessment. NCTM has taken a critical look at policies, practices, and issues

that affect mathematics education at every level—early childhood and elementary; middle school; and high school—to support the critical conversations and actions needed to create positive systemic change. Specifically, we ask lawmakers to do the following:

- Establish programs for leaders and teachers focused on engaging and lasting mathematics teaching and learning to confront the pervasive challenges of unmet learning that is experienced disproportionately in mathematics at all levels.
- Establish a program that provides high-quality, evidence-based professional development for mathematics educators.
- Ensure that accountability requirements do not continue to result in practices that minimize sense making and understanding of mathematics concepts and that decrease mathematics learning time annually.
- Facilitate the use of federally funded research to inform classroom teaching through changes to the What Works Clearinghouse and other resources.
- Work with NCTM and other like-minded organizations to ensure that each and every student has access to quality mathematics teaching and teachers in every year of their PK–12 schooling, regardless of their location, race, or socio-economic status.

Education Needs Adequate Investments

School buildings are crumbling across the country. Teachers and students are being exposed to unsafe conditions, particularly in areas that are economically challenged. Federal, state, and local governments must use public resources to create a minimum standard and improve school facilities and infrastructure. NCTM asks lawmakers to support the following:

- Invest in school buildings, transportation, and technology to bring facilities into the 21st century.
- Ensure that districts, schools, and institutions of higher education are receiving relief from the federal government that will help them weather the effects of COVID-19 on local schools and communities.
- Invest in programs authorized by the Every Student Succeeds Act at their proposed funding levels, and not the lower amounts that have been appropriated since the law's 2015 enactment. Specifically, increase Title I funds that support the country's neediest schools, Title II programs that support educators, and Title IV, Part A funds that support local choices related to serving students and schools.

The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics is the world's largest professional organization dedicated to improving mathematics education for each and every student. The Council's *Principles to Actions: Ensuring Mathematical Success for All* (2014) describes the principles and actions, including specific teaching practices, that are essential for a high-quality mathematics education for all students. *Principles and Standards for School Mathematics* (2000) provides guidelines for excellence in mathematics education. *Curriculum Focal Points for Prekindergarten through Grade 8 Mathematics: A Quest for Coherence* (2006) outlines the next step in implementing the Standards by identifying the most important mathematical topics that form the foundation for understanding and lasting learning at each grade level. *Focus in High School Mathematics: Reasoning and Sense Making* (2009) advocates practical changes to the high school mathematics curriculum to refocus learning on reasoning and sense making. The Council is committed to a constructive public dialogue to ensure a mathematics education of the highest quality for each and every student. The NCTM's *Catalyzing Change in High School Mathematics: Initiating Critical Conversations* (2018) identifies significant challenges in policies, practices and purposes of high school mathematics and provides a framework for leaders, teachers, universities, and businesses to engage in supporting much needed change.

