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Contact:
media@nctm.org

NEWS RELEASE

Math Education Organizations Release Guidance for Teaching Math in the Fall

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Reston, Va. — June 16, 2020 — In the coming months education leaders will have to address many issues that relate to educating children as we continue to endure the public health crisis caused by COVID-19. In response to requests by district and school leaders at all levels the [National Council of Teachers of Mathematics \(NCTM\)](#) and [NCSM Leadership in Mathematics Education \(NCSM\)](#) released a [joint document](#) to assist leadership in making informed decisions for next steps as district and school leaders and teachers prepare for the return to school.

[Moving Forward: Mathematics Learning in the Era of COVID-19](#) frames key considerations and questions, coupled with solution processes for educators and school leaders to address the challenges induced by the COVID-19 pandemic. The guidance is organized around three areas that require consideration:

- Structural considerations;
- Teaching practices; and
- Advocacy.

Trena Wilkerson, NCTM President and Mona Toncheff, NCSM President shared the uncertainty of the times we live in. Concern for public health have disrupted our classrooms and schools in ways never seen before. While it is unclear how education will look in the coming months, it is in the best interests of our students to strategize now on how to best meet their needs when we return.

“The end of this school year left our students and fellow educators looking for better ways to approach learning and teaching in these challenging settings,” said Desiree Y. Harrison, NCTM board member, NCSM member, and elementary mathematics coach from Michigan. “The vision shared by NCTM and NCSM is invaluable at this moment in time. With so many variables and unknowns for the coming school year, this guidance will help leaders and teachers across the range of settings and contexts. As educators we want what is best for our students and *Moving Forward* outlines the things we all need to consider.”

The outbreak of COVID-19 caused schools to shut down abruptly, leading to interruptions in student learning. There is significant concern that the same sort of challenges will occur in the coming school year with the potential to exacerbate structural inequities and widen differences in what groups of students experience and learn.

The purpose of *Moving Forward* is to focus on decisions that must be made regarding equitable access to high-quality mathematics teaching and learning, intentionally considering the needs of all learners and teachers. Decision-makers — whether they be teachers, teams, teacher leaders, coaches, administrators, or policymakers at the local, state and provincial levels — must consider the diverse needs of learners and teachers when making policy and instructional decisions.



NCTM and NCSM each recently released publications that address these systemic inequities. NCTM's [Catalyzing Change series](#) and NCSM's position paper, [Closing the Opportunity Gap: A Call for Detracking Mathematics](#) include key recommendations calling for the elimination of ability grouping and tracking for PK–12 students and discontinuing the practice of tracking teachers. A key recommendation consistent in the Catalyzing Change series calls for dismantling structural obstacles that stand in the way of mathematics working for each and every student across PK–12 mathematics.

NCTM and NCSM see this moment as an opportunity to examine critical areas in need of support, as well as to create the best opportunities for teachers and students to be successful whether they are in classrooms or in other spaces. This means examining whether each and every student has access to high-quality teaching, curriculum, and resources. Additionally, this means understanding ways to support teachers with providing students with the mathematics necessary to experience joy, wonder, and beauty so that students can make informed decisions about their futures and make sense of their world. All teachers and students deserve the best opportunities to be successful no matter the circumstances.

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About National Council of Teachers of Mathematics

The [National Council of Teachers of Mathematics](#) celebrates 100 years as the public voice of mathematics education, supporting teachers to ensure equitable mathematics learning of the highest quality for each and every student through vision, leadership, professional development and research. With 40,000 members and more than 200 Affiliates, it is the world's largest organization dedicated to improving mathematics education in prekindergarten through grade 12. NCTM is dedicated to ongoing dialogue and constructive discussion with all stakeholders about what is best for students and envisions a world where everyone is enthused about mathematics, sees the value and beauty of mathematics, and is empowered by the opportunities mathematics affords.

About the NCSM: Leadership in Mathematics Education

[NCSM: Leadership in Mathematics Education](#) is the premier leadership organization for those who influence student learning of mathematics. NCSM is founded on the strength and dedication of a growing membership of mathematics education leaders. These leaders include grade-level team leaders; course-level team leaders; department chairs; district or county coaches; site-based teacher leaders; district, state, or provincial leaders; college faculty; and all who work to ensure the success of each and every mathematics student.

Contact: Stacey Finkel, media@nctm.org, (703) 304-1377