White House Ignores Mathematics Education in FY 2021 Budget Request

February 12, 2020

Statement from NCTM President Robert Berry

NCTM is disappointed that the White House has once again proposed cutting funding for the U.S. Department of Education. The request that Congress eliminate more than $5.5 billion in education investments is short-sighted. And it does not reflect the much-needed increased attention on improving mathematics learning and achievement that is acknowledged by local, state and federal policymakers.

The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) community has spent considerable time discussing how to address the troubling results of the most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress—or the Nation’s Report Card, as well as the latest Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). Our country is not improving in mathematics learning and problem solving. Improving teaching practices, resources, facilities, technology, professional development, leadership and assessments are all on the long list of strategies that can catalyze change and improve the mathematics learning experience.

While the current Administration has requested that Congress not fund important investments in professional development for educators in every one of its budget proposals, NCTM is relieved that Congress has ignored those requests. However, in the FY 2021 plan, the Administration proposes even more radical and detrimental policy changes for K-12 education. The proposed cuts in funding would be achieved by block granting more than two dozen PK-12 education programs, including investments in educators, principals, STEM education, afterschool and early childhood education programs. This cannot happen.

President Trump, Congress, governors, state legislators, and local leaders must support our education system in providing each and every student rigorous mathematics learning opportunities and applications to support and sustain the STEM workforce and an informed citizenry in our democracy. The FY 2021 White House budget request disregards this responsibility.

NCTM asks Congress to once again dismiss the White House’s call for damaging cuts to K-12 education investments and to support the 1.5 million teachers of mathematics that are giving the country’s young people of every color, gender, faith, and economic background the mathematics abilities they need to thrive.