
PCSM NEWSLETTER

Leaders in Mathematics Education

Spring 2001

PENNSYLVANIA COUNCIL OF SUPERVISORS OF MATHEMATICS

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

From the President
- Bernie Schroeder

Greetings from Lancaster - the center of Pennsylvania Dutch Country. I hope that everyone is finishing a productive and rewarding school year.

The 24th annual meeting of PCSM in Pittsburgh on March 15th was both informative and successful. Joan Ferrini-Mundy gave us her perspective (as chair of the writing group) on the NCTM's Principles and Standards for School Mathematics (2000). Frank Marburger followed with a very fact-filled presentation on PDE issues and topics. Frank Reardon closed the conference with a presentation on teacher certification. His presentation included two bombshells. The first was the significant drop in the passing percentage on the specialty PRAXIS exam for secondary mathematics majors (presumably due to the change from 127 to 136 for a passing score). The second was the new teacher testing program - ALL teachers taking mathematics and writing tests based on the Pennsylvania Standards in these areas. I would like to finish this paragraph by giving kudos to Frank Sottile and Dave Marchand for their superlative efforts in helping to set this conference up.

If the date on your mailing label is March '01 or earlier, please renew!

GOOD NEWS!! We are solvent (\$14,883.80 as of 1/15/01) and our paid-up membership has gone up slightly (115 to 126 as of 3/15/01). BUT, don't stop recruiting.

MORE GOOD NEWS!! Kathy Hebert (our fantastic treasurer) and Arlene Dowshen (our equally fantastic newsletter editor) are putting together and mailing to you a packet containing a copy of "Before It's Too Late" (a report on the state of education today in the United States by the Glen Commission), a new PCSM membership directory, and a new ENC focus issue on teaching standards. Read, enjoy, and be informed. Kudos to Kathy and Arlene for their continuing superlative efforts.

Have a good summer and fall, and we'll see you all next March in Philadelphia, if not before.

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Lunch was provided through the courtesy of **Scott Foresman**. Award Chair M. Foley presented the Outstanding Service Award to Wayne Boggs and the PCSM Hall of Fame Award to Albert Mauthe. M. Foley asked for suggestions for future award recipients.

F. Sottile thanked **McGraw Hill** for the portfolios and **Holt, Rinehart and Winston** for the pens.

PCSM EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

(Summary) – March 15, 2001

Present: B. Schroeder, presiding, G. Battisto, A. Dowshen, H. Field, M. Foley, K. Hebert, C. Marchand, J. Mowbray, J. Mullen, F. Marburger, F. Sottile, F. Stewart, J. Zimmer

The meeting was called to order at 1:05 PM. B. Schroeder asked for approval to pay F. Reardon's expenses since the PDE will not. This was approved and it was suggested that PCSM pay one-half of the cost to have Joan Ferrini-Mundy here as a speaker with the other half to be paid by PCTM. This would amount to one-half of \$500 plus expenses. A motion was made and approved.

The minutes of the previous Executive Board meeting were approved as amended. The Treasurer's report was the same as for the business meeting with the addition that K. Hebert and Past Treasurer W. Boggs will look for evidence that PCSM received PCTM payment for last year's meeting.

NCTM Representative C. Marchand asked for caucus topics. There were none. It was noted that we renewed our affiliation with NCTM at the partnership level so that we can co-sponsor regional meetings. A motion was passed to furnish C. Marchand \$300 to represent PCSM at the NCTM Annual in Orlando.

C. Marchand, having been elected President-elect, asked the Executive Committee to find a replacement for her as NCTM Representative. It was also noted that D. Marchand has asked to be replaced as PCTM Representative.

Newsletter Editor A. Dowshen needs articles from members. She would prefer locally authored materials to re-publishing material from other newsletters. Also, she would like the newsletter to look more professional. She will look into costs for doing this.

Awards Chair M. Foley reported that she had put a request in the Fall newsletter for award nominees, but no response was received.

In other business, the question of what we might distribute to our members was raised. It was suggested that Before It's Too Late could be distributed to members. F. Marburger also suggested that some of the PDE materials that he had shown us during his presentation

could be put on a CD for distribution. A. Dowshen will pursue this with F. Marburger and A. Dowshen and K. Hebert will take care of mailing such materials. \$1000 was authorized for covering the cost of sending these items to our members.

Respectfully submitted,

John S. Mowbray, Secretary

NCTM Representative Report

NCTM Conference, Orlando, FL

The 79th Annual NCTM Meeting in Orlando featured the first four books in the Navigations Series, which coordinate with the Algebra Standard in the Principles and Standards for School Mathematics. The books discuss topics, student expectations, assessment, and lesson values. The topic strand, in this case algebra, is connected from pre-K through grade 12. The books include blackline masters and a CD-Rom.

The following resolutions were passed by the 2001 Delegate Assembly at the Annual Meeting:

- NCTM will return to the policy of one complimentary speaker registration for presenters at NCTM Annual Conferences.
- It was recommended that the NCTM Board of Directors charge the conference committees to avoid scheduling NCTM regional conferences that conflict with state conferences.
- It was resolved that a section be added to the NCTM Bulletin that apprises the membership of the status of resolutions passed at the Delegate Assembly.
- Referred to NCTM Headquarters - be it resolved that speakers invited to the annual conference with a paid honorarium be given an honorary membership to NCTM.
- Referred to NCTM Headquarters - be it resolved that any individual who is speaking at the Annual Conference must be a member.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Faculty Academy 2001 - Building Bridges for e-Learning is designed to help educators leverage the power of technology in their classrooms.

June 18-20, 2001, Penn State, University Park, PA
For further information about the Faculty Academy, presentations from last year's event, and other resources, please see <<http://www.pafaculty.org>> or direct any questions to Malena K. Moore at mmoore@ist.psu.edu or (814-865-7724).

International Mathematical Olympiad

This prestigious event gathers 500 of the most talented high school age mathematicians from more than 80 countries. Opening ceremonies will be held at the Washington Mall on July 4, 2001.

July 1-14, 2001, Washington, DC
For information contact Walter Mientka, Executive Director at 888-449-2001 or IMO2001@anc.unl.edu.

2001 Summer Session of the IAS (Institute for Advanced Study)/Park City Mathematics Institute

High School Teachers Program which provides a paradigm for life-long professional development in a stimulating atmosphere

July 8-28, 2001, Park City, Utah
For information visit <<http://www.ias.edu/parkcity>>.

NCSM Fifth Leadership Academy - Level 1

July 11-15, 2001, Wheeling, West Virginia
For registration information contact:
NCSM - Mo Nelson at 303-274-5932 or ncsm@forum.swarthmore.edu or visit the following website: <<http://www.ncsonline.org>>

COMPASS Curriculum Showcase Conference

Showcasing Standards-based Secondary Mathematics Curricula

August 10-12, 2001, Denver, Colorado
Registration & application materials are available online at <<http://www.ithaca.edu/compass>> or send an e-mail to compass@ithaca.edu or call 1-800-688-1829.

International Conference on "Mathematics for Living"

August 19-24, 2001, Australia
Information is available at <<http://ncsonline.org/MeetingsConferences/conferences.html>>.

NCTM Eastern Regional Conference

October 25-27, 2001, Somerset, New Jersey
Information available at <www.nctm.org> or contact Joyce or David Glatzer at 1-973-742-6284

School Science and Mathematics (SSMA) 100th Annual Conference and Anniversary Celebration

November 1-3, 2001, Downers Grove, Illinois
For more information visit the SSMA Web site at <<http://www.ssma.org>>.

Fourteenth Annual International Conference on Technology in Collegiate Mathematics

November 1-4, 2001, Baltimore, Maryland
For more information visit <www.ictcm.org> or call 1-800-472-6288.

AMTE (Association of Mathematics Teacher Educators) 6th Annual Conference

January 24-26, 2002, San Antonio, Texas
Speaker proposal form is available at <www.ceemast.csupomona.edu/amte/conference/2002/index.html>.

Research Council on Mathematics Learning (RCML) 29th Annual Conference

RCML seeks to stimulate, generate, coordinate, and disseminate research efforts designed to identify, understand, and affect factors that influence mathematics learning.

March 7-9, 2002, Memphis, Tennessee
Speaker proposals are requested. Contact Sheryl Maxwell at 901-678-4061

PCSM Annual Conference

March 14, 2002, Adam's Mark Hotel, Philadelphia, PA

PCTM Annual Conference - Through the Looking Glass, Reflecting upon the Past, Looking towards the Future

March 14-16, 2002, Adam's Mark Hotel, Philadelphia, PA
(Announcement and speaker response form are included as inserts in this newsletter. These forms are also available at <www.PCTM.org>.)

NCSM 34th Annual Conference - Seize the Opportunity: Provide the Leadership

April 19-21 (Friday-Sunday), 2002, Las Vegas, Nevada
Speaker proposal form is available at <ncsonline.org>.

NCTM Annual Conference

April 21-24 (Sunday-Wednesday), 2002, Las Vegas, NE
For more information go to <www.nctm.org>.

Mark your calendars!

The NCTM 2004 Annual Conference will be in Philadelphia, PA

April 22-24, 2004

The Pennsylvania Convention Center

SUGGESTIONS FOR SUMMER READING

Adding It Up: Helping Children Learn Mathematics by the National Research Council. Visit the National Academy Press Web site (<<http://books.nap.edu/catalog/9822.html>>) to order this new and important resource. An Executive Summary is also available in PDF form at the Web site. This report attempts "to address the conflicts in current proposals for changing school mathematics by giving a more rounded portrayal of the mathematics children need to learn, how they learn it, and how it might be taught to them effectively."

Listening to Urban Kids, School Reform and the Teachers They Want by Bruce Wilson and Dick Corbett. Wilson and Corbett are independent researchers who asked Philadelphia middle school students what they like and do not like about their learning experience. The students were nearly unanimous in identifying the actions of the most highly valued teachers. Much of what the authors found applies to middle school children in any setting. This book is available from RBS Publications (call 215-574-9300, ext. 280 or email books@rbs.org or go to <<http://www.rbs.org>>).

"Who Is Teaching Our Children? Improving the Quality of the Teaching Force" in Educational Leadership, May, 2001, by M. Scherer. This article is a conversation with David C. Berliner "about the characteristics of expert teachers, the reasons certified teachers are better for the job, and the challenge to attract more highly qualified teacher candidates." See <<http://www.ascd.org/frameedlead.html>> and click on "May, 2001 - Who is teaching our children?" Professor Berliner has been studying teacher expertise since 1977 and makes "a case for providing more field-based experiences and mentoring for teacher candidates and beginning teachers."



HOT TOPIC: TESTING

NCTM has a Position Statement on High-Stakes Testing. Some of the recommendations include using multiple sources of assessment information and allowing everyone to know what is expected and what will be measured. Visit NCTM's Web site (<www.nctm.org>), click on "ABOUT NCTM" and then on "NCTM Position Statements." **High-Stakes Testing** (November, 2000) is at the bottom.

For numerous articles on the issue of testing visit the **COMET** (California Online Maths. Education Times) Archive at <<http://www.ca4cs.org/CometData/COMET.html>>. Click on "Search the COMET Archives," type in "testing" and click on "Search 4cs Website." Titles of some of the articles included are: "Why We Must Have Testing" by Rod Paige, U.S. Secretary of Education and "Math Test Forces new Teachers to Quit" (5/15/01); "Marin Students Boycott State Test" and "Scarsdale Mothers Succeed in First Boycott of 8th-Grade Test" (5/7/01); "Test Stress: Do Kids Suffer?"; "High-Stakes Test Prep Robs the Three Rs," "Pointless Tests Hurt Students" and "Testing May Cost States \$7 Billion" (5/1/01); and "School Testing Has Unintended Effects" (1/24/01).

"Right Answer, Wrong Score: Test Flaws Take Toll" and "When a Test Fails the Schools, Careers and Reputations Suffer" by D. Henriques and J. Steinberg of the New York Times. Visit <<http://www.nytimes.com/learning/testing>> to hear an audio interview with the authors, see related articles and join a discussion on standardized testing.

Also from the New York Times, **"What Tests Can't Fix"** by Senator Paul Wellstone and Jonathan Kozol at <<http://www.nytimes.com/2001/03/13/opinion/13WELL.html>>.