
PCSM NEWSLETTER

Leaders in Mathematics Education

August 2005

PENNSYLVANIA COUNCIL OF SUPERVISORS OF MATHEMATICS

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

From the President

- Mary Foley

The lazy hazy days of summer are quickly turning into the busy breezy days of fall. Many of us have spent our time involved in in-service and professional development programs to be ready for a new school year renewed with energy and ideas to tackle NCLB and PSSA tests. Why not share some of your expertise with colleagues at the upcoming Fall Meetings?

The NCTM Regional will be held in Hartford, Connecticut October 6 – 8, and the PCTM meeting will be held in Harrisburg October 26 - 28. Get aboard the "Capitol Express" – High-Speed Change for the Future - you don't want to miss the train!

The PCSM Annual meeting will be held Thursday October 27 at the Holiday Inn East in

Please check the date on the mailing label of the newsletter. If the date is 2005 (05) or earlier, it is time to renew your membership. Save money by renewing for three years. If each of us signs up a new member, our membership will double!

Harrisburg. Check the schedule in this Newsletter. We are fortunate to have three outstanding speakers on the program - our own Jim Bohan will discuss the Pennsylvania Value-Added Assessment which he has done much work on, and Frank Marburger will inform us of "What's New in Mathematics" and will update us on what is happening at PDE.

Glenda Lappan of Michigan State University will discuss some of the Connected Mathematics projects at Michigan State. Dr. Lappan received the 2004 Lifetime Achievement Award for Distinguished Service to Mathematics Education from NCTM and was recently named by U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley to the National Education Research Policy and Priorities Board, making her the only scientist in higher education selected. She is both nationally and internationally known for her work in

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Mathematics Education and is a Past President of NCTM. We look forward to sharing her experiences.

We are fortunate once again to have support from wonderful sponsors for breakfast, coffee break, and lunch. **BE SURE YOU PRE-REGISTER** to attend these events. Breakfast will be hosted by Houghton Mifflin and McDougal Littell through the efforts of David Lynn, Doug Stone and Bill Seng. Prentice Hall will provide a Coffee Break thanks to Craig Wayman, and Scott Foresman will sponsor a luncheon with Walter Jarrett as host. Macmillan McGraw-Hill will provide portfolios thanks to Ron Genicola, and Harcourt will provide bags thanks to Barry Ruckel. Please express your appreciation to these great people when you see them. They certainly do everything they can to make our meeting a success. All functions will be held in the Capitol East and Capitol West rooms.

A special "Welcome aboard" to Cathy Schloemer, Newsletter Editor, and her assistant Chris Czapleski, who are taking over for Arlene Dowshen who has made the Newsletter what it is today. Many thanks, Arlene!

Hope to see you all in Harrisburg!

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U.S. Department of Education will discontinue funding of the Eisenhower National Clearinghouse (ENC) on September 30, 2005. ENC will deliver its products and services to schools and other organizations through paid subscriptions beginning August 2005. Visit goENC.com or call 800-471-1045 for details.

From the Editor - Cathy Schloemer

In a few short days we'll begin another school year. Welcome back! I hope the summer has been a time for you to relax, reflect, and refresh. October 27 our annual conference will be held in conjunction with the PCTM Conference October 26-28 in Harrisburg, PA. Please use the enclosed form to register for the conference and, if needed, to update your membership.

You may notice a new name under "From the Editor." I would like to extend my thanks to Arlene Dowshen for seven years of outstanding work as our newsletter editor. With the assistance of Chris Czapleski, I hope as our new editor to be able to continue Arlene's tradition of excellence. I encourage and welcome your contributions as well. Please send correspondence to me at:

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◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ NAEP UPDATE

NAEP is always a hot topic among those concerned with improving the performance of our mathematics students. NCTM has recently offered a list of "talking points," listed below, [for you to consider should you be called on to talk to reporters, respond to questions from administrators, parents or fellow educators, or write a letter to the editor regarding trends in NAEP.](#)

Signs of improvement

- Math scores increased significantly at both ages 9 and 13 and were higher in 2004 than in any previous year. At age 9, scores increased from 232 to 241 since 1999; at age 13, the increase was from 276 to 281. The recent emphasis on math and science education in early grades is paying off.

- Scores for 17-year-olds have been flat since 1973. Practice needs to change if we're going to help students reach their potential, especially at the high school level.

Achievement Gap narrowing

- We're pleased to see progress in closing the achievement gap, and we want to see the movement continue until the gap is closed.
- When comparing white students to black and Hispanic students, the report shows that all achievement gaps at ages 9, 13, and 17 narrowed since 1999 except for the white/Hispanic gap at age 17.
- The achievement gaps between white and black students and white and Hispanic students narrowed at ages 9 and 13 since 1999, but did not significantly change at age 17.
- The most significant long-term change in the achievement gap was from 46 to 27 points from 1973 to 2004 between white and black 13-year-olds.

Higher-level math courses

- Significantly more 17-year-olds are taking advanced courses (53 percent in 2nd-year algebra and 17 percent in calculus) in 2004 than in 1978 (37 percent in 2nd-year algebra and 6 percent in calculus).
- The percentage of 17-year-olds for whom pre-algebra was the most advanced math course dropped from 20 percent in 1978 to 4 percent in 2004.
- These results, coupled with the overall flat scores of 17-year-olds, raise the question of what content is taught in those courses. We need to look closely at the mathematical content and how it is presented to students. To improve student achievement and learning, we have to teach in different ways.

Long-Term Trend NAEP Results are at
<http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/ltt/results2004/>

General Talking Points

- This part of NAEP is a long-term trend assessment that tells us how students are doing on a stable set of skills, particularly in important areas involving number and operations. It should be noted that the progress of students has remained stable since NAEP was first administered in the early 1970s. Items in the

trend NAEP tend to reflect curricular topics that involve computation, measurement formulas, and everyday problems. The main NAEP provides a more complete picture of topics in the mathematics curriculum, including algebra, data analysis, etc. These results will be released in the fall.

- Results for 9- and 13-year-olds show a continued increase in performance, with the highest performance on these skills of any time in the 30-year history of trend NAEP. Results for 17-year-olds are fairly stable during this same period.
- As identified by many studies, as well as by business and community leaders, students need to learn with real understanding so that they will be able to use what they learn not only in higher academic study and careers, but also in their daily lives. Facts and procedures are important, but teaching and learning merely facts and procedures won't prepare students adequately for the future. This position is aligned with the NCTM's vision expressed in the Learning Principle and Problem Solving Standard of *Principles and Standards for School Mathematics*.
- While many schools are making progress in teaching a comprehensive program anchored in real problem-solving skills, some schools still teach math in ways that don't give students the understanding from which to make decisions or the opportunities to apply what they learn to solve problems



PCSM awards for 2005 will be presented at the Annual Meeting held in conjunction with the PCTM Harrisburg meeting on October 27, 2005. The nomination form included in this newsletter may be used to submit a nomination by land mail or e-mail. If you wish to phone in information, that is acceptable. You are encouraged to recognize the achievements of a colleague in PCSM and take the time to nominate that individual for the appropriate award. Gen Battisto looks forward to receiving several nominations prior to the September 19 deadline.

NCTM Representative Report Eastern 2 Regional Caucus The 2005 Delegate Assembly

Each year at the annual meeting of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), Affiliates of NCTM participate in regional caucuses and a Delegate Assembly. The regional caucuses, held the day before the Delegate Assembly, serve as an opportunity for delegates and alternates to meet informally to discuss current proposed resolutions (and responses from NCTM), make revisions to the proposals, and share other information pertinent to Affiliates. The Delegate Assembly is NCTM's formal structure for Affiliates to make recommendations about mathematics education issues or Council operational issues.

Regional Caucus

On April 6, 2005, delegates and alternates representing NCTM Affiliate Groups from Delaware, D.C., Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia met at the Eastern 2 Regional Caucus. Mary Lou Metz, Chris Czapleski, Sharon Warner, and Ann Massey represented the Pennsylvania Affiliates of PCTM, MCWP, LHMA, and PCSM respectively. The NCTM Board Members who greeted Region 2 attendees were our Kathy Heid, Mari Muri, and Henry (Hank) Kepner. The caucus was chaired by Rodney McNair from Delaware State University.

After introductions, Rodney announced summer dates for the Affiliate Leaders Conferences and guidelines for the MET and Cummins Awards. A suggestion was made that the dates of affiliate conferences be given to NCTM one year in advance for inclusion on the NCTM calendar to alleviate overlap of conference dates.

Since one proposed resolution (O.R.05.01) had been initiated by the Maryland Council of Teachers of Mathematics, that proposal was read and discussed. Some changes were made in the wording. A vote was taken on the revised proposal and the consensus was that the revision be presented to the Delegate Assembly.

NCTM Delegate Assembly

Our Delegates from the four Pennsylvania Affiliates, along with representatives from approximately 109 other Affiliates, attended the 56th Delegate Assembly on April 7th. We were proud to witness the awarding of a charter to the new National Council of Teachers of Mathematics Student Affiliate of Kutztown University. Winnie Peterson and Celine Przydzials are the co-faculty advisors. Two other student charters were given to the Ball State Council of Teachers of Mathematics and to the University of Nevada Mathematics Council. The

President of NCTM, Cathy Seeley, awarded the charters.

After the charter presentations, Hank Kepner presided over the session. Hank called delegates to the floor to present proposed resolutions and then to speak in support of or against the resolutions. The following resolutions were presented to the assembly, voted on, and passed by the delegates.

Resolution O.R.05.01

Be it resolved that the Delegate Assembly recommends to the NCTM Board of Directors that registration at NCTM regional and annual conferences for full-time students who are not members of NCTM be set at \$25 for the full meeting and \$10 for a single day. NCTM student members would receive free registration at NCTM regional and annual conferences.
(Initiated by Maryland Council of Teachers of Mathematics)

Resolution O.R.05.04

Be it resolved that the Delegate Assembly recommends to the NCTM Board of Directors that NCTM instate the policy of accepting at most one resolution adopted by each caucus and presented at the Delegate Assembly. A resolution brought in this manner must be accompanied by a rationale and supporting evidence.
(Initiated by California Mathematics Council, and the Northern, Central, and Southern Sections of the California Mathematics Council; amended by Florida Council of Teachers of Mathematics.)

Proposed resolutions for next year's Delegate Assembly will be due by November 1, 2005. If anyone or any Affiliate has a mathematics education issue or a Council operation issue that might be addressed in a resolution, please contact me.

Reflection

In recent reports and in a letter written to Jim Rubillo, the NCTM Executive Director, I have expressed concerns about the caucus and its function. Last year "there was little, if any, sharing of concerns, ideas, or recommendations for mathematics education from the affiliate delegates. It seemed that the caucus had lost its mission of bringing messages from the general membership to the Board and instead was becoming a means of hearing from the Board." (Letter to Jim Rubillo, February, 2005)

This year at our Eastern 2 Regional Caucus, the members of the NCTM Board took time to greet the delegates and alternates and invited informal conversation. The friendliness of these Board members set a congenial tone for the caucus.

Since there seemed to be fewer proposals to be discussed and there are so many dedicated and experienced professionals attending the caucuses, it would seem fitting to make productive use of the talents of those assembled. One delegate at our caucus did suggest that the Board make more use of the Affiliate representatives. As an example, the representatives might gather, from their contingent, information about important issues addressed by the Board. This information could be discussed and collated at the caucus, and proposals for the following year might be generated. In this way delegates and alternates would be a more valuable resource and indeed would bring messages from the general membership to the NCTM Board.

Respectfully submitted by
Ann Massey
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Upcoming Conferences and Events:

PCSM Annual Conference

October 27, 2005, Harrisburg, PA

(See the enclosed program of events.

Remember to register for the conference, even if you do not need to renew your membership.)

PCTM Annual Conference

October 26-28, 2005, Harrisburg, PA

For more information visit: www.pctm.org

NCTM Regional Conference

Discover the Connections –

Instruction and Assessment

October 6-8, 2005

Hartford, CT

For more information go to: www.nctm.org.

PCSM Annual Conference

Math Leaders Catch the Spirit in St. Louis

April 24-26, 2006

St. Louis, MO

Find details at www.ncsmonline.org

NCTM 38th Annual Conference

Asking Questions – Generating Solutions

April 26-29, 2006, St. Louis, MO

For more information visit: www.nctm.org.

18th Annual T³ (Teachers Teaching with Technology) International Conference

February 24-26, 2006, Denver, CO

Access online registration under “Training” at education.ti.com.

AMTE (Association of Mathematics Teacher Educators) 10th Annual Conference

January 26-28, 2006, Tampa, FL

Visit www.amte.net.

School Science and Mathematics Association (SSMA)

November 10-12, 2005

Fort Worth, TX

Visit <http://www.ssma.org>.

ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

NCTM Elaborates on Position on the Use of Calculators in Classrooms

http://www.nctm.org/about/position_statements/computation.htm

For more, see Education Week, June 8, 2005 at:

<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2005/06/08/39calculators.h24.html>

No Child Left Behind. Visit www.ed.gov for Department of Education resources, as well as links to other organizations. For a simple explanation of NCLB for teachers visit www.ed.gov/backtoschool/

Math World, An Interactive Mathematics Encyclopedia Source

<http://mathworld.wolfram.com/>

A comprehensive and interactive mathematics encyclopedia for students, educators, math enthusiasts, and researchers

Math Goodies Web Site

<http://www.mathgoodies.com/>

Math Goodies is a free math help site with more than 400 pages of activities for students, educators, and parents

