



ASSOCIATION OF MATHEMATICS TEACHER EDUCATORS

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SUPPORTING CRITICAL SCHOLARLY WORK IN SEATTLE

AMTE 2019 Strategic Priority 1: Explore multiple avenues for AMTE members to recognize and address inequities, building toward equitable practices.

Raleigh NC, October 26, 2019 – When the AMTE Board of Directors wrote our strategic priorities for 2019 and charged me with leading our work on them, the strategic priority above was the one that simultaneously excited me and filled me with uncertainty. It was exciting in that it felt like a meaningful and important evolution of our work, and the framing of building towards more equitable practices invited us as mathematics teacher educators to be kind to ourselves, to notice areas in need of stronger equity work, and to move towards that work. It was uncertain in that recognizing inequities can be challenging, and they can sometimes appear from outside our field of view quite suddenly and unexpectedly. Taking this strategic priority seriously means being watchful and thoughtful for those moments and turning them into opportunities.

Seattle Public Schools recently published a plan to infuse their mathematics coursework with opportunities for students to learn about the ways in which cultures and mathematics have interacted and how those interactions have created inequities and limited opportunities. The [K-12 Math Ethnic Studies Framework](#) contains four themes for students to explore: Origins, Agency, and Identity; Power and Oppression; History of Resistance and Liberation; and Reflection and Action. Each theme contains learning targets and essential questions, asking students to reflect on who can do mathematics and what that work looks like, the ways in which mathematics can be used to perpetuate inequality and oppression; what ownership of mathematics and mathematical thinking looks like; and the ways in which mathematics and mathematical literacy can afford intellectual freedom. The framework is a proposal at present, under consideration for adoption and implementation in their mathematics classes as a part of a broader ethnic studies effort across K-12.

The work that Seattle is doing has strong resonance with our AMTE Standards for Preparing Teachers of Mathematics. In a recent interview, one of the authors of our standards, our colleague Rochelle Gutiérrez, reminded us that our commitment with the Standards is to support our preservice teachers in “understand[ing] the roles of power, privilege, and oppression in the history of mathematics.” Candidate Standard C.4 asks us to

engage candidates in meaningful study of the social context of mathematics, linking this work of understanding power, privilege, and oppression with seeing student assets and supporting their development as learners.

C.4. Social Contexts of Mathematics Teaching and Learning

Well-prepared beginning teachers of mathematics realize that the social, historical, and institutional contexts of mathematics affect teaching and learning and know about and are committed to their critical roles as advocates for each and every student.

- C.4.1. Provide Access and Advancement
- C.4.2. Cultivate Positive Mathematical Identities
- C.4.3. Draw on Students' Mathematical Strengths
- C.4.4. Understand Power and Privilege in the History of Mathematics Education
- C.4.5. Enact Ethical Practice for Advocacy

(*Note: Greater detail of the Candidate Standard C.4 is given at the end of this statement. The AMTE Standards for Preparing Teachers of Mathematics can be found online at: <https://amte.net/standards>)

Addressing inequities and building towards equitable practices brings with it the work of disturbing the status quo and asking ourselves and others to confront privilege and oppression. Such work can engender discomfort, and discomfort often results in backlash. The work of living our commitments to equity is not easy and it is not without a price; the scholars whose work is described in this [Ed Week article](#) have once again come under personal attack as a result of this work. I want to take a moment here to honor their commitment to their scholarship and to once again assert AMTE's support for their important and meaningful scholarly work and the work of all our scholars in the community. Challenges to our professional work are very much challenges to our identity. It is more than just deleting a set of hateful emails, blocking angry tweets, or making decisions not to read the comments on an article. We not only commit our heads to our work, but also our hearts, and hate can strike at our hearts in ways that can cause us to question ourselves and our work in fundamental ways. I honor the strength and the commitment of all those who bear that burden for our collective work, and in particular for those who bear it repeatedly.

The last of the five Assumptions in the AMTE Standards asks us to commit to improving the effectiveness of our work with preservice teachers. This assumption extends to our work with practicing teachers and developing mathematics teacher educators. My call to action for you to honor the work in Seattle is to spend some time reflecting on how you can better address issues of power, privilege, and oppression in the work you will do in the next few weeks with your preservice teachers, practicing teachers, teacher leaders, colleagues, or any other group who has responsibility for students' mathematical learning. As always, I remain in awe of the thoughtful and brave work that our AMTE community does to improve the work of mathematics teaching and learning across our country and beyond.

Yours in service,

Mike Steele, President, Association of Mathematics Teacher Educators

(Candidate Standard C.4 with greater detail—explanations of the related indicators)

C.4. SOCIAL CONTEXTS OF MATHEMATICS TEACHING AND LEARNING

Well-prepared beginning teachers of mathematics realize that the social, historical, and institutional contexts of mathematics affect teaching and learning and know about and are committed to their critical roles as advocates for each and every student.	C.4.1. Provide Access and Advancement	Well-prepared beginning teachers of mathematics recognize the difference between access to and advancement in mathematics learning and work to provide access and advancement for every student.
	C.4.2. Cultivate Positive Mathematical Identities	Well-prepared beginning teachers of mathematics recognize that their roles are to cultivate positive mathematical identities with their students.
	C.4.3. Draw on Students' Mathematical Strengths	Well-prepared beginning teachers of mathematics identify and implement practices that draw on students' mathematical, cultural, and linguistic resources/strengths and challenge policies and practices grounded in deficit-based thinking.
	C.4.4. Understand Power and Privilege in the History of Mathematics Education	Well-prepared beginning teachers of mathematics understand the roles of power, privilege, and oppression in the history of mathematics education and are equipped to question existing educational systems that produce inequitable learning experiences and outcomes for students.
	C.4.5. Enact Ethical Practice for Advocacy	Well-prepared beginning teachers of mathematics are knowledgeable about, and accountable for, enacting ethical practices that enable them to advocate for themselves and to challenge the status quo on behalf of their students.