

# Canadian Forum for Education in Mathematics

Last May, I represented MCATA in Quebec City at the Canadian Forum for Education in Mathematics. Sponsored by the Canadian Mathematical Society, the forum brought together about 150 mathematics educators at all levels—from classroom teachers to professors of mathematics—from across Canada. As well, representatives from ministries of education, Industry Canada, educational publishing, and technology and telecommunications companies attended.

The forum began with a presentation on SchoolNet, a cooperative initiative of governments, educators and industry, that aims to link all Canadian schools to the electronic highway. (See “SchoolNet” sidebar.)

We then broke into discussion groups to examine one of four topics: curricula, expectations, lifelong learning or math at work. Each group agreed on key issues and goals, and then worked to identify strategies and procedures to accomplish them. We also predicted how mathematics education would look if our aims were achieved. This provided for some lively debate and some interesting conclusions.

The second day, we reported on our previous deliberations and then met in provincial/territorial action groups. This was especially valuable, as we were able to share information about the Western Canada Protocol for a Common Math Curriculum with college and university colleagues, most of whom had never heard of it.

I left Quebec City with a more global perspective of mathematics education in our country. It was gratifying to realize that efforts are being made across the country to improve the quality of our mathematics teaching. I was encouraged by the apparent realization in postsecondary institutions that different types of teacher education courses in mathematics are needed. Concerns were voiced from every province about the need for continuing professional development and inservice sessions in new curricula and the lack of funds for implementation. (I hope the ministry representatives took note. . . .)

Everyone came away believing that we had begun a dialogue that was important and should be pursued, and that it would be possible to continue to stay in contact with one another as math educators via the Internet. I urge each of you to explore that same possibility.

## SchoolNet

SchoolNet is a cooperative initiative of Canada's provincial, territorial and federal governments, educators, universities and colleges and industry. It aims to link Canada's 16,000 plus schools to the electronic highway as quickly as possible.

SchoolNet's objective is to electronically network Canadian schools to

- enhance educational opportunities and achievements in elementary and secondary schools across Canada by making national and international education resources available to Canadian teachers and students no matter where they are located;
- foster significant improvements in learning performance by facilitating the development of electronic delivery of the most advanced and proven educational techniques through new software applications and access to electronically based resources;
- stimulate learning and produce a school graduate population with a strong command of information and telecommunications technologies, which will be key employability skills in a knowledge-based economy;
- identify and develop new educationally relevant services from government, industry, universities and colleges, and facilitate their electronic provision to schools, teachers and students;
- build shared learning experiences among teachers and students in schools across Canada through electronically based educational projects; and
- stimulate Canadian information technology, software and multimedia businesses by providing new market opportunities.

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