

# Mathematics Council NEWSLETTER

The Alberta Teachers' Association

*Providing leadership to encourage the continuing enhancement of teaching, learning and understanding mathematics.*

Volume 23

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## President's Message

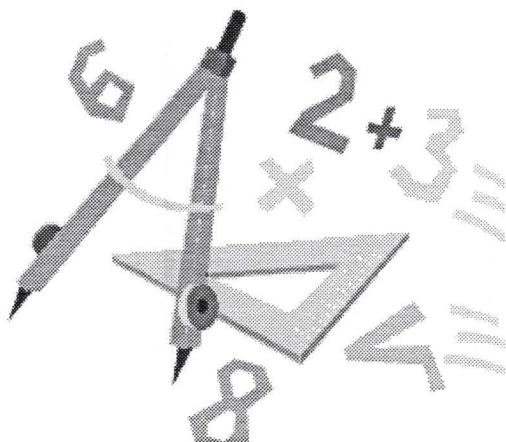
The deadline has passed for teachers, parents and other interested parties to view the Western and Northern Canadian Protocol (WNCP) framework for K-9 mathematics. The MCATA table officers have some general concerns about this proposal: the timing of the WNCP implementation and deadlines, plans for professional development, current success on international assessments and the role of Alberta teachers in the consultation process.

We have drafted a letter elaborating on these issues for submission to Minister of Education Gene Zwozdesky. We hope to hear from or possibly meet with him as soon as possible.

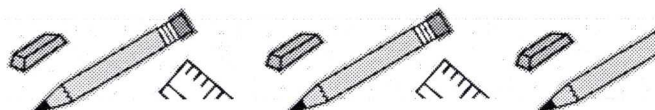
MCATA has not dealt with specific outcomes and the placement of topics by grade level. We hope that teachers have e-mailed the WNCP committee with concerns specific to their grade levels or divisions.

MCATA plans to publish a position paper on our website ([www.mathteachers.ab.ca](http://www.mathteachers.ab.ca)) for all Alberta mathematics teachers to read. We hope to have the paper ready by early fall.

—Len Bonifacio



## From the Editor's Pencil



At the close of the Canadian Mathematical Society's Canadian Mathematics Education Forum (CMEF), held in Toronto in early May, many attendees expressed how privileged they felt to be present at such a gathering and how fortunate they felt to have been part of a national discussion about mathematics education in Canada. Someone pointed out that there is a problem with those statements: as math educators, we should have access to forums like this whenever and wherever they occur.

Teachers, professors, government representatives, and others from boards of education across the country worked hard at the CMEF, spending long hours sharing, debating and trying to find solutions to problems found in every province and territory throughout our wonderful country. How many more issues might have been addressed if every teacher across the country could attend this forum, without having to consider the cost!

The attendees were committed professionals who believe that math education is an important and integral part of everyone's life and that we need to find ways to make math more accessible to all students and all citizens. To make that happen, perhaps teachers everywhere should have opportunities to engage in discussion and to find their own answers to the challenges we face.

Teaching can be a lonely and isolating profession. We need these ongoing opportunities to keep the dialogue going and to advance understanding of the importance of math for everyone.

—Anne MacQuarrie

# Alberta Education Update

## Revision of K–12 Mathematics

Alberta Education is providing leadership for the WNCN to make revisions to the common curriculum framework (CCF) for K–12 mathematics. Alberta stakeholders have provided a lot of feedback, which will be used to inform the revisions. Alberta Education thanks all those who participated in the consultation process.

Similar feedback was received by WNCN partners, and the final analysis report on the consultation draft for the K–9 mathematics CCF was recently posted on the WNCN website ([www.wncn.ca](http://www.wncn.ca)).

As was indicated in the previous issue of the *Mathematics Council Newsletter*, achievement indicators will replace the illustrated examples in the revised CCF for K–12 mathematics. Over the past two months, Alberta Education has worked with teacher committees to create achievement indicators for the remaining outcomes in the CCF.

Revision to the Grades 10–12 CCF will begin in June 2005. From October 2004 to May 2005, Alberta Education and its WNCN partner jurisdictions consulted extensively with postsecondary institutions and business and industry regarding high school mathematics programs and student transitions to trade school, college, university and the workplace.

Alberta Education is reviewing the proposed implementation timelines, which specify that implementation of the revised CCF will begin in September 2006. Alberta Education is also working with publishers to ensure that resources, in both English and French, will be available prior to implementation. Actual implementation timelines will be published in the upcoming curriculum development and implementation schedule.

For more information, contact Richard DeMerchant at (780) 427-5628 (for toll-free access in Alberta, first dial 310-0000).

## Mathematics Resources from LearnAlberta.ca

LearnAlberta.ca (<http://learnalberta.ca>) provides quality resources to Alberta's K–12 community. Students, teachers and parents will find engaging multimedia learning resources based on Alberta Education curriculum guidelines.

# Call for Manuscripts

As you may be aware, the next issue of *delta-K* will be the first refereed issue. Many teachers across the province have written to the editors about the marvellous activities and resources they have found in *delta-K* and have used in the classroom. They also appreciate learning of developments in math education and the achievements of MCATA and Alberta's math teachers.

The *delta-K* coeditors invite you to become part of this ongoing professional conversation about mathematics instruction. Contribute an article, a description of classroom activities, a letter or a rich math problem. Submissions that focus on the theme of the upcoming conference, "Mathematics for Teaching," are of special interest.

Do not be intimidated by the idea of your contribution being refereed. Your active participation and your willingness to share your ideas and teaching strategies make *delta-K* a relevant and useful resource for mathematics educators.

Send manuscripts or inquiries to A. Craig Loewen ([loewen@uleth.ca](mailto:loewen@uleth.ca)) or Gladys Sterenberg ([gladyss@ualberta.ca](mailto:gladyss@ualberta.ca)).

—Gladys Sterenberg, *delta-K* coeditor

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## Celebrating Diversity

*Just in Time*, the newsletter of the ATA's Diversity, Equity and Human Rights (DEHR) committee, is intended to complement and promote the committee's mandate. It reaches out to various groups and individuals who share the goal of creating a school system, a province and a country where all people are valued and diversity is seen as an asset, not a detriment. The DEHR committee is proud of its record in promoting the principles of diversity, equity and human rights in Alberta's public schools and invites you to support its cause.

Please take a few minutes to read *Just in Time*. Feel free to distribute it.

You can access previous issues of *Just in Time* online. On the ATA website ([www.teachers.ab.ca](http://www.teachers.ab.ca)), click on Diversity, Equity & Human Rights (in the Issues in Education category).

If you want to reproduce an article from *Just in Time*, contact Karen Virag, administrative secretary of the DEHR committee, at [kvirag@teachers.ab.ca](mailto:kvirag@teachers.ab.ca). If you have any questions about the committee's work, or if you want to share news, submit an article or post notice of an event, please don't hesitate to contact the committee.

## Conference 2005

### “Mathematics for Teaching”

November 3–5

Fantasyland Hotel, Edmonton

Conference 2005 excitement is building! To whet your appetite, here is some information about the keynote speakers:

#### Brent Davis

Back by popular demand! Brent Davis, of the University of Alberta, will join us once again. He is the author of the must-reads *Engaging Minds: Learning and Teaching in a Complex World* (Erlbaum, 2000), *Inventions of Teaching: A Genealogy* (Erlbaum, 2004) and *Teaching Mathematics: Toward a Sound Alternative* (Garland, 1996). Visit his website at [www.ualberta.ca/~bdavis/](http://www.ualberta.ca/~bdavis/).

#### John Allen Paulos

John Allen Paulos, of Temple University in Philadelphia, is the author of *Innumeracy: Mathematical Illiteracy and Its Consequences* (Hill and Wang, 1988), *Beyond Numeracy: Ruminations of a Numbers Man* (Knopf, 1991), *A Mathematician Reads the Newspaper* (Basic, 1995) and many other thought-provoking books. Visit his website at [www.math.temple.edu/%7epaulos/index.html](http://www.math.temple.edu/%7epaulos/index.html).

Are you interested in presenting a session? There are still spaces open for speakers, especially for Divisions 3 and 4. If you or someone you know is doing good things that should be shared, please submit a proposal (or encourage somebody else to submit one). A good way to get your feet wet if you're a first-time presenter is to find a partner and work on a presentation together. If you would prefer to present in a smaller room, please let us know and we'll do our best to accommodate you.

You can download a speaker proposal form at [www.mathteachers.ab.ca](http://www.mathteachers.ab.ca).

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## Reaching Out to the Mathematical World?

MCATA has received notification of the publication *The Montana Mathematics Enthusiast* from the Department of Mathematical Sciences, University of Montana. For more information and to see previous issues, visit [www.montanamath.org/TMME/](http://www.montanamath.org/TMME/).

## New and News from NCTM

TeachMath.org ([www.teachmath.org](http://www.teachmath.org)) is a new National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) website that furnishes information on how to become a mathematics teacher. Together we can work to fill the pipeline that leads to highly qualified mathematics teachers.

### Reminders in Brief

- A listing of affiliate conference dates can be accessed at [www.nctm.org/affiliates/resource/index.htm](http://www.nctm.org/affiliates/resource/index.htm).
- Please periodically view the affiliates website ([www.nctm.org/affiliates/](http://www.nctm.org/affiliates/)). Some of the resources you can access online are
  - a directory of all NCTM affiliates, listed by affiliate category and state or province;
  - links to affiliate websites;
  - Affiliate Service Committee members' contact information;
  - various affiliate information resources, documents and forms; and
  - the 2005 Affiliate Leaders Conferences information and registration form.

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## News from Provincial Executive Council

The ATA has developed a new framework for education accountability in Alberta. Current research and events in education provided the committee with direction, and seven principles were developed. This framework was presented to the Annual Representative Assembly in May. It was approved and will now be promoted with all educational stakeholders and partners.

The current education accountability framework defines and directs the learning system in Alberta today, but not necessarily in ways that will address student needs in the 21st century. This framework was imposed by the government about 10 years ago and has never been assessed for its effectiveness and viability.

Given emerging notions of shared accountability and capacity building, the ATA invites education partners and the minister of education to engage in a review of the accountability system and propose improvements that will enable the system to meet the current and future learning needs of our children and youths.

—Carol Henderson, PEC liaison

# Highlights of the MCATA Executive Meetings

## September 10 and 11, 2004

The highlights of the meeting were as follows:

- MCATA planned to send an executive member to the Canadian Mathematical Society's Education Forum in May 2005 in Toronto. The theme of the forum was "Why Teach Mathematics?" The purpose of this invitational forum was to develop an ongoing national conversation between educators at all levels about important issues in mathematics education in Canada.
- Gladys Sterenberg accepted the position of *delta-K* editor. Craig Loewen would help Gladys in preparing the next two issues. As of August 2005, *delta-K* will be a refereed journal.
- Doug Weisbeck resigned as treasurer. The books would be transferred to Elaine Manzer in the next few months. Dale Burnett decided not to continue as the faculty of education representative. No replacement had been found as of this meeting.
- MCATA awards will be promoted directly through the ATA school mailings. Watch for posters.

## January 14 and 15, 2005

The highlights of the meeting were as follows:

- At our annual conference in October, Lisa Hauk-Meeker, now a member of the executive, received the Dr. Arthur Jorgensen Chair Award. Elaine Simmt, of the University of Alberta, joined the executive as the faculty of education representative.
- Frank Bruseker, ATA president, joined the executive for our dinner meeting and shared the latest developments in education.

- We reflected on the value of Conference 2004 in helping to plan the upcoming Conference 2005 in Edmonton. Other discussion items were the spring symposium, the possibility of executive members attending the Canadian Mathematical Society's Education Forum in May, the use of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) logo on MCATA publications and two forms of the Pure Math 30 diploma examination in January 2005.
- MCATA is in good standing as an affiliate of the NCTM.

## April 22 and 23, 2005

The highlights of the meeting were as follows:

- Michael Podlosky discussed global concerns about the proposed implementation of the WNCPC's K-9 common curriculum framework.
- Plans for the 2005 and 2006 annual conferences were shared, with more decisions being made. All executive members in attendance were asked to complete a preliminary feedback form regarding a background paper on accountability in education that had been prepared by an ATA subcommittee.
- There will be some executive member changes for next year.
- The tentative meeting dates for the next school year are September 23 and 24, 2005; January 13 and 14, 2006; and May 5 and 6, 2006. A table officers' meeting is scheduled for March 18, 2006. Tentative dates for the two symposiums are November 3, 2005, and May 5, 2006.

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