

CMC President's Message:

In Pursuit of Equity

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At the writing of this message, we find ourselves grappling with events that have resulted in significant shifts across the educational landscape. The rapid transition to distance learning in response to COVID-19 and the ongoing protests for racial justice have many educators questioning existing structures and examining more closely the ideals spoken by our actions. While some might yearn for a restart, let us leverage these circumstances as an opportunity to improve ourselves and how we educate our students. In “Where Do We Go from Here? Next Steps in Rehumanizing Mathematics for Black, Indigenous, and Latinx Students,” Dr. Imani Goffney (2018) explained:

One first step is for teachers to develop an awareness of the systemic barriers and structural racism that exist in their schools and classrooms, to work to identify patterns that consistently privilege whites, and to learn to use teaching practices that will interrupt patterns of persistent inequities in the mathematics participation and performance of Black, Indigenous, and Latinx students (p 162).



Now is the time to consider what actions we can take to support our rhetoric. As we return to school, let's consider what we can do individually, within our classrooms and schools, and within the larger educational system to create safe and rehumanizing mathematics experiences for all students.

Self

*What are the areas where I need to continue to grow?
How will I examine my biases and work to overcome them?*

Each of us can identify areas for personal growth and seek resources to build our understanding of systemic barriers and structural racism. Take the time to engage in conversations with others to listen and learn from their experiences.

Classrooms and Schools

*How can I examine the practices within my classroom/school with a focus on equity?
How will I ensure that my instruction is inclusive and values the culture and personal identities of each student?*

Mathematics classrooms should be spaces where students' identities are embraced, their ideas are valued, and they are engaged in meaningful mathematics (Bunton 2018). Our approaches to teaching mathematics shape the dialogue and interactions within the classroom and have the power to engage or exclude students.

Educational System

*How can I examine our system to uncover inequities?
How will I work to bring awareness to and advocate for systemic changes that benefit all students?*

Unfortunately, mathematics education often replicates existing power structures, acting as a gatekeeper rather than a gateway for students. Tracking and ability grouping continue to perpetuate educational inequities and have disproportionately negative impacts for Students of Color.

The strength of our CMC community comes from what we can do together. Goffney (2018) explains, “Some actions may seem small in light of the enormous complexities of issues of social justice in schools and mathematics classrooms, but each small action can serve as a stone on the pathway to real positive change for students traditionally not served well by schools.” We invite you to join the Twitter community of mathematics educators (#mtbos, #iteachmath) or join us on Facebook to engage in conversations about actions we can take to make positive changes. Include #cmcmath and @CAMathCouncil so that we can continue to grow together as a community and as an organization.

References

- Bunton, Z., C. Cook, and M. Tamburini. 2018. “Centering Students' Mathematical Agency at Northwest Indian College.” In Goffney, I., R. Gutierrez, and M. Boston (Eds.), *Annual Perspectives in Mathematics Education 2018: Rehumanizing Mathematics for Black, Indigenous, and Latinx Students* (pp. 107–120). Reston, VA: The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics.
- Goffney, I. 2018. “Where Do We Go from Here? Next Steps in Rehumanizing Mathematics for Black, Indigenous, and Latinx Students.” In Goffney, I., R. Gutierrez, and M. Boston (Eds.), *Annual Perspectives in Mathematics Education 2018: Rehumanizing Mathematics for Black, Indigenous, and Latinx Students* (pp. 159–170). Reston, VA: The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. 