



A Note from the WMC Board President and Past-President Regarding Systemic Racial Inequities

As president and past-president of the Wisconsin Mathematics Council, we extend our sympathies to the family and friends of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery. The racial inequities that have been brought to the forefront through the circumstances of these deaths reinforce our commitment to addressing inequities in our education system and, more importantly, the call for us to take action.

We recognize racial inequity in Wisconsin.

We recognize the systemic racial inequities throughout the United States, specifically the inequities that exist in the mathematics education system in Wisconsin. We fully support and lean on the [National Council of Teachers of Mathematics statement](#). As stated by Trena L. Wilkerson (NCTM President) and Robert Q. Berry III (NCTM Past President), "As a mathematics education community, we must not tolerate acts of racism, hate, bias, or violence." We also recognize and are reminded by Matt Larson that [We Teach More Than Mathematics](#). We teach math *students*, not just math.

Pamela Burdman states in the executive summary of [The Mathematics of Opportunity](#), "Beginning in kindergarten and continuing into college, mathematics is not just an academic subject: It's a key mechanism in the distribution of opportunity. Even as math expectations can serve as a foundation for academic success by supporting quantitative literacy, they can also operate as a filter that literally stops many students in their educational tracks." Specifically, "Wisconsin has large and persistent achievement and graduation gaps that impact the future success of too many of our children and our state. In fact, the academic achievement gap in Wisconsin for African American children is the worst in the nation." ([Promoting Excellence for ALL](#)) This is the harsh reality of mathematics education in Wisconsin. We have work to do.

We commit to learning.

As WMC leaders, we have to listen, learn, reflect, and use our positions to take action. To build a base of knowledge, we commit to studying these online resources and books:

- [Promoting Excellence for All: A Report from the State Superintendent's Task Force on Wisconsin's Achievement Gap](#)
- [The Opportunity Myth](#)
- [Checking In: Are Math Assignments Measuring Up?](#)
- [The Mathematics of Opportunity: Rethinking the Role of Math in Educational Equity](#)
- [Commentary: Why \(Urban\) Mathematics Teachers Need Political Knowledge](#)
- [Saying 'I Don't See Color' Denies the Racial Identity of Students](#)
- [Guidelines for Being Strong White Allies](#)
- [How to Be an Antiracist Educator](#)
- [Robin DiAngelo on Educators' "White Fragility"](#)
- [Catalyzing Change in Early Childhood and Elementary Mathematics: Initiating Critical Conversations](#)
- [Catalyzing Change in Middle School Mathematics: Initiating Critical Conversations](#)

- [Catalyzing Change in High School Mathematics: Initiating Critical Conversations](#)

We commit to the conversations.

The WMC Board's mission is to *lead in the development and promotion of quality mathematics education that enhances learning for all students*. We will challenge the Board to examine this mission. We will have critical conversations based on our readings to ensure that *all* truly includes Black, brown, and Indigenous students and educators. As we plan and implement WMC events, we will ask the tough questions of the Board that will influence policy and systemic change: Who benefits from the existing education structures? Who is left behind? How do these structures move us forward in our pursuit of equitable access to high-quality mathematics? What are our beliefs? It is only when all Wisconsin educators are involved in the conversations around mathematics that we will build a stronger community.

We commit to action.

As WMC leaders,

- we will challenge the Board to ask what we can do to break down systemic education barriers that stop many students in their educational tracks;
- we will commit to building knowledge through studying online resources and books and encouraging our members to do so as well;
- we will charge all committees to use the WMC mission of enhancing math education for ALL students in the planning and implementation of WMC events and tasks;
- we will continue the work on publication of a WMC equity statement that can be used to guide mathematics conversations throughout Wisconsin.

We truly believe that we can and will take action to address the inequities that exist within our education systems.

Sincerely,

Tammy Moynihan
WMC Board President

Lori Williams
WMC Board Past President