

AMTE Responds to the National Mathematics Advisory Panel Report

San Diego, CA, March 14, 2008 -- The Association of Mathematics Teachers Educators (AMTE) recognizes the importance of the work of the National Mathematics Advisory Panel and the priority it has placed on research related to teachers and teacher education. AMTE fully supports the finding of the National Mathematics Advisory Panel that teachers matter and that teacher effectiveness can and must be improved. This verifies what our members know and value about teacher preparation and points to the critical need for strengthening mathematics teacher education. This includes building a stronger research base about effective approaches to the development of skilled teachers of mathematics.

AMTE also supports the Panel's observation that teacher content knowledge matters, and appreciates the important distinction that content knowledge makes a difference when it pertains to the content that teachers are teaching and the ways in which they have to use that content knowledge to teach. Much work in mathematics teacher education and professional development is in progress by AMTE members to support teachers in their development of relevant content knowledge. The report further acknowledges that content knowledge is not enough. For example, educators must also understand how children learn specific mathematical concepts and skills, including the interconnectedness among conceptual understanding, procedural proficiency and problem solving.

Research and teacher education program design must continue to focus on effective teaching practices. While the Panel was not able to identify "high quality research" that compared the effects of different instructional approaches, it is the AMTE Board's stance that this should not be interpreted as "instruction doesn't matter." Instead, there is a critical need for well-designed studies in this area, noting that different research methodologies beyond those valued in the report must be considered, within a full research portfolio.

Finally, AMTE feels that the following recommendations of the Panel are deserving of increased attention: (1) addressing the shortage of teachers of mathematics; (2) stimulating high quality research that helps identify qualities of teacher preparation that lead to effective teaching and student learning, and (3) validating the content background essential for teaching mathematics at varied levels of instruction.

It is our hope that the findings and recommendations of the Panel result in increased national attention to the resources available and research required to improve mathematics teacher preparation and professional development with the goal of improvement of preK-12 student learning.

The Association of Mathematics Teacher Educators is a non-profit organization created to promote the improvement of mathematics teacher education in all its aspects. Our membership includes teacher educators, mathematicians, and others who are involved in effectively preparing our nation's teachers to effectively teach mathematics.

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