**Justification Toolkit**

Make the case of why ***you*** should attend the **NCTM 2024 Regional Conference & Exposition**, which will be held in Seattle, February 7–9. Brush up on your professional development, gain new knowledge to bring back to your classrooms, network with like-minded peers, and much more.

Use this toolkit to help you define and clearly communicate the benefits of attending.

**This toolkit includes the following:**

* Why You Should Attend
* Benefits Worksheet
* Conference Strands
* Registration Rates
* Sample Justification Letter
* Testimonials

**Attend**

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| **Why You Should Attend** |

*The focus on mathematics teaching, learning, and all aspects of mathematics education through targeted sessions by national leaders and master teachers, and collaborations, innovations, and collective work with colleagues—are what make the NCTM Regional Conference & Exposition the premier event for educators.*

If you’re a classroom teacher, administrator, math coach, supervisor, college professor, or preservice teacher―you will benefit from the sessions and workshops, learning opportunities, and connections available at the NCTM 2024 Regional Conference & Exposition.

**Professional Development:** Benefit from three days of learning from educational leaders, teachers of math, and experts in mathematics education in a positive and supportive environment. Bring back actionable information and strategies to your school, district, and classroom.

**Networking/Community:** Enjoy the in-depth conversations, collaborative sharing, and camaraderie that happens when you meet in-person with like-minded educators from across the country.

**Exposition:** Discover innovative tools and resources to support your teaching. Meet with exhibitors and get answers to your questions about their products and services. Request additional information or schedule a follow-up.

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| **Professional Benefits** |

Beyond fulfilling your personal professional development goals, attending the Regional Conference & Exposition enables you to take the expertise and knowledge you’ve learned back to your school or district. When you submit a request to attend, be sure to ***focus on what you will specifically bring back to your school or district***. Connect your responsibilities, goals, and challenges to your conference experience. Here are some goals common to mathematics teachers and the ways the Regional Conference & Exposition meets these goals.

**Benefits Worksheet**

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| **GOAL** | | **How NCTM Supports Your Goal** |
| ü | Gain insight into how to support students and teachers most significantly impacted by the pandemic. | Meetings feature experts in mathematics education who can use strategies and their experience with research-based methods to address immediate needs and support students and teachers. A variety of sessions provide tools and strategies to support and engage students who are struggling in mathematics learning. |
| ü | Stay on top of **current (and future) trends** in mathematics education | NCTM’s conferences offer concurrent sessions, workshops, and bursts to keep you ahead of the trends in mathematics education. You will gain new and effective intervention methods, refine your assessment techniques, discover the latest technologies, and acquire strategies to support the needs and learning of underrepresented populations. |
| ü | Expand your **professional network** | You’ll connect with knowledgeable speakers and session leaders as well as experience exceptional peer-to-peer networking opportunities where you will learn from others and grow your network. |
| ü | Keep your students **engaged and excited** about learning | Experts in mathematics education, who are breaking new ground and witnessing real success in schools across the country, present workshops and sessions to share their insights and strategies. |
| ü | Gain **fresh ideas** and get inspired | Get inspired by keynote speakers and leaders in mathematics education who will stimulate your passion for teaching mathematics. |
| ü | Learn about **new advances and technologies** for the classroom | Talking with vendors can be a great way to access expert knowledge and learn about new products and educational resources. Tour a lively exhibit hall, test the latest educational resources, and collect free activities and lesson plans to bring back to the classroom. |
| ü | **Share information with** your school or district | Session handouts are posted and available on the NCTM website after the event so you can support the investment of time and budget dollars by sharing information with your colleagues. |

# Conference Strands

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| **Fostering Belonging and Value for All Students**  **through Instructional Practices and Systemic**  **Initiatives** |

We must all challenge the practices and structures that deny access and perpetuate separation. In this strand, we will focus on instructional practices and structures/systems that are inclusive, diverse, and equitable. Through culturally rich and diverse mathematical experiences, each and every student can learn from and contribute to the mathematics community. What is possible when we ground our instructional and systemic practices in honoring the whole student? What do we all stand to gain from situating our decisionmaking, instruction, and student learning in the values, norms, knowledge, beliefs, practices, experiences, and language that are the foundation to students’ cultural identity? Sessions in this strand might include, but are not limited to, the following:

* Practices that promote and foster diversity, inclusion, and/or equity in order to invite every student into mathematics while cultivating strong mathematical agency, authentic belonging, and joy.
* Strategies for fostering belonging in the classroom and school.
* Ideas for authentically conveying that every child brings value into the classroom, school, and community.

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| **Valuing Students’ Authentic Funds of**  **Knowledge to Enhance Deep Mathematical**  **Learning and Belonging** |

communities.

This strand will focus on instructional practices that value and use students’ prior mathematical, personal, and cultural experiences to enhance deep mathematical learning, as well as practices and routines that provide opportunities to help students see the function of mathematics in their everyday lives. Instructional routines can uplift students’ classroom experiences, promote their sense of belonging, and value their unique lived experiences. What methods can foster students’ growth and confidence in math? What types of strategies, routines, and tasks can be used to promote meaningful student mathematical discourse, elicit student thinking, and provide opportunities for students to engage in the Standards for Mathematical Practice? Sessions in this strand will provide participants with strategies to deepen students’ mathematics knowledge by promoting active engagement through mathematics practices. Sessions may include, but are not limited to, the following:

* Higher-order thinking tasks.
* Real-world connections.
* Hands-on engagement.
* Mathematical representations.
* Effective questioning strategies.
* Productive struggle to promote deep mathematical learning and understanding.

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| **Improving Students’ Sense of Value and**  **Belonging through Assessment** |

In this strand, we will focus on formative and summative assessments as tools to support students in navigating their learning, promoting a positive mathematical identity, and nurturing a growth mindset. Assessment is often viewed as a grade, not a learning opportunity but should reflect the instructional shift that embraces students’ unique educational, personal, and cultural experiences. How might we use assessment to break the cycle of grade captivity while evaluating what we value? Sessions in this strand may include, but are not limited to the following:

* Using student-centered assessment.
* Focusing on the Standards for Mathematical Practice.
* Implementing alternative assessment practices.
* Providing asset-based feedback.
* Leveraging multiple points of data to support every child.
* Dismantling grade-driven motivation.

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| **Developing Effective Advocacy Practices to**  **Affect Students’ Sense of Value and Belonging**  **within Mathematics** |

In this strand, we will focus on the components that are necessary for an equitable and sustainable system of mathematics education for all students. Effective advocacy work can take many forms, and all educational partners can participate and contribute to positive change. What is possible when we attend to, value, and connect the cultural capital of our students, families, and communities to schools? In what ways do we advocate for the teachers and learners of mathematics? Sessions in this strand might include, but are not limited to, the following:

* Interrogating current practices (classroom to systemic) of inequity and oppression.
* Empowering educators to reconceptualize and transform classrooms, schools, and systems to ones that promote the just teaching and learning of mathematics.
* Uplifting teachers to make decisions and take action in their classrooms.

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| **Using Innovative Technology to Enrich**  **Students’ Value and Sense of Belonging in**  **Mathematics** |

In this strand, we focus on innovative instructional strategies that improve and enhance learning through the use of technology. The use of technology, both inside and outside the mathematics classroom, can support sense making and reasoning while also honoring multiple ways to communicate thinking. How can we use technology to create a greater sense of belonging for all students as they learn mathematics? Sessions in this strand may include, but are not limited to, the following:

* Virtual reality, artificial intelligence, and other technological tools to investigate real-world problems and support student learning.
* Technology as a pedagogical tool for differentiation.
* Technological tools that support visualizing mathematics, student engagement, and collaboration to achieve a deeper understanding of mathematics.
* Equitable access for all students through the use of technology.
* Integration with other content areas with technology.

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| **Eliminating Barriers to Inspire Creative**  **Pathways Rooted in Students’ Authenticity,**  **Value, and Sense of Belonging in Mathematics** |

When students view mathematics as relevant and essential to solve worthwhile problems, they are more likely to engage, productively struggle, and succeed. In this strand, we will focus on ways to remove mathematics as a barrier to success. Graduation pathways are essential in honoring students’ interests and aspirations while providing them with opportunities to see mathematics as valuable. Sessions in this strand may include, but are not limited to, the following:

* Improving mathematical identities.
* Ensuring every student makes progress.
* Providing student choice in mathematics course sequence.
* Elevating pathways while dismantling tracks and deficit mindsets.
* Examining desired skills from different perspectives (trade, workforce, services, higher education).
* Modernizing mathematics.

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| **Registration Rates** |
| The most up-to-date rates can be found [online](https://www.nctm.org/seattle2024/). |

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| **Sample Justification Letter** |
| Personalize and use this draft letter to help gain approval to attend the NCTM 2024 Regional Conference & Exposition. We recommend downloading this portion as a word document to modify and share with your supervisor. |

*<<See Next Page>>*

<Date>

**Request to Attend the NCTM 2024 Regional Conference & Exposition**

Dear <Colleague>,

At the NCTM 2024 Regional Conference & Exposition in Washington, DC, educators at all levels will come together to enhance their professional skills, knowledge, and careers. I would like to attend this event, which is scheduled for February 7–9, 2024 in Seattle, to learn best teaching practices to build a strong foundation of deep mathematical understanding and further our mathematics instruction for each and every student.

To meet my professional development goals, I am seeking approval for the registration fee, travel expenses to the conference, and minimal food expenses during the conference. The detailed cost breakdown is listed below.

Conference Registration \_\_\_\_\_\_

Preconference Workshop registration (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_\_

Flight \_\_\_\_\_\_

Lodging \_\_\_\_\_\_

Transportation \_\_\_\_\_\_

Food per diem \_\_\_\_\_\_

Total estimated conference cost of \_\_\_\_\_\_.

At this event, I will select presentations (sessions, bursts, and workshops) specific to my grade level from the following topic strands:

* Fostering Belonging and Value for All Students through Instructional Practices and Systemic Initiatives
* Valuing Students’ Authentic Funds of Knowledge to Enhance Deep Mathematical Learning and Belonging
* Improving Students’ Sense of Value and Belonging through Assessment
* Developing Effective Advocacy Practices to Affect Students’ Sense of Value and Belonging within Mathematics
* Using Innovative Technology to Enrich Students’ Value and Sense of Belonging in Mathematics
* Eliminating Barriers to Inspire Creative Pathways Rooted in Students’ Authenticity, Value, and Sense of Belonging in Mathematics

My participation in this program will complement our school’s objectives, and I plan to return with resources to share what I’ve learned with my peers, and to give our students the tools they need to succeed.

Sincerely,

***<Your Full Name>***

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| **Testimonials**  **From NTCM In-person Meetings, Conferences, and Events** |

**“The energy, the high level of participation, the spirit, and getting together with so many people. It’s just wonderful.”**

**“When I read blogs or look at different schools throughout the country and then see that they are going to be here, to be able to meet those people and connect with them in person—that really is an exciting thing.”**

**“You’re exposed to so many different ideas from so many different places and things that I have never even considered. Especially when you look around and see people incorporating different things in their own individual ways it’s like, ‘Oh, I can use that too.’”**

**“If you’re a new teacher, I think coming to the NCTM Annual Meeting is a huge deal. Just to see what’s out there . . . see the different exhibits, hear different speakers—it gets you inspired.”**

**“It’s so awesome and great to be around so many like-minded people who want to do well for their students, and we’re all teaching the same content and we all have the same goals in mind.”**

**“Having the opportunity to take an idea and go back to my classroom on Monday and be able to use it, that’s been the most valuable thing for me.”**

**“If you’re thinking about going to the Annual Meeting next year, definitely go. You’ll be able to talk with your peers, people who have knowledge about mathematics, research, research knowledge, practitioner knowledge . . . You’ll be able to find what you’re looking for.”**

**“I will go to every workshop, every session I can starting at 7:00 a.m. in the morning!”**