

Florida Council of Teachers of Mathematics Access and Equity Position Statement

Currently

Florida is a diverse state with 4,200 public schools and 28 colleges. Florida's graduation rate is the highest it has been in 16 years, but Florida still faces challenges:

- There is a 21% achievement gap in mathematics between K-12 students who are English Language Learners (Emergent Bilinguals¹) and those that are native speakers of English.
- There is a 23% achievement gap in mathematics between K-12 learners who are economically disadvantaged and those that are not.
- There is a 29% achievement gap in mathematics between black students and white students.

These statistics are not all-inclusive and there are other groups who are marginalized in Florida. The Florida Council of Teachers of Mathematics is advocating for access to high quality mathematics instruction for each and every student in Florida.

Vision

The Florida Council of Teachers of Mathematics believes Florida's students should have access to engaging mathematics teaching and learning that reflects the diversity of Florida's learners; the supports necessary to thrive within rigorous, adaptive learning experiences; and teaching and learning that fosters a love and appreciation for mathematics, and how it connects to themselves and the world around them.

What Access and Equity Looks Like:

- **High Expectations** for each and every student. High expectations start with teachers promoting and modeling a growth mindset, "...a genuine belief that student effort and effective instruction outweigh 'smarts' and circumstance..." (NCTM, 2014). Teachers communicate, through words and actions, that each and every learner can perform at high levels in mathematics.
- **Access to a high quality challenging curriculum.** Florida currently has standards that support college and career readiness. Curriculum should provide access to on-level content for each and every learner through supports for students who struggle, and opportunities to engage with on-level content in greater depth for students who are high-performing. Curriculum should provide learning experiences that are balanced in regards to conceptual understanding, procedural fluency, and application.
- **Skilled and effective teachers** who are knowledgeable of content and pedagogical practices required to teach mathematics. Each and every student should have access to teachers that have a deep understanding of the mathematics content they teach, implement high yield teaching strategies such as the eight practices detailed in NCTM's Principles to Actions, and are continually working towards improving their craft.

¹ While the State of Florida uses the term English Language Learners (ELL), we prefer the term Emergent Bilinguals as it communicates a positive characteristic of these students rather than a deficit perspective.

- **Support and resources** needed to maximize students' learning potential. Intervention materials should emphasize reasoning and problem solving in addition to skills needed to be successful in mathematics. Materials should provide instruction for Emergent Bilingual students in their native language and English in order to support English language learning.
- **Adequate time** for students to learn. Time for mathematics instruction must be allocated and used strategically. Mathematics learners should have time for intervention and/or enrichment in addition to core math instruction. Time should be used flexibly and strategically so that each and every learner meets their full potential in mathematics.
- **Technology and extra-curricular activities.** Students need access to technology that allows them to access mathematical ideas, reason mathematically, and communicate their mathematical thinking. Each and every student should have the opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities that inspire, develop mathematical interests, and grow potential.

Conclusion

When the vision presented in FCTM's access and equity statement is fully realized, student outcomes in the state of Florida; both on high stakes assessments and their relationship with mathematics, will not be predicted by age, gender, language, religion, race, ethnicity, physical ability, geographic location, sexual orientation, gender identity, family structure, and/or socioeconomic background.

**FCTM Access and Equity Position
Statement Committee**

Lead Author:

Douglas “Zack” Hill

Writing Team:

Zachary Champagne

Robert Curran

Jose de Leon

Rose Mack

Claire Riddell

Lisa Robertson

Terri Varn

P. Denise Williams

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