The Community of Mathematics Teachers

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Why a community of all math teachers?

The time is right for *all of us who teach math* to join together to become community:

- Math teaching is connected across all levels; Suzanne Wilson: we all own this problem!
- *We have the Common Core in common* Bill McCallum: common standards are the glue for a network;
- *All of us* have much to learn from each other about both math and math teaching.
We have a common problem in math teaching

- The current system is not fostering excellence in math teaching at any level;

- math teaching is not regarded as a top-notch profession at any level;

- math teaching is not vigorous and vibrant the way some other mathematical professions are, such as math research.
How can math teaching become a vigorous, vibrant profession?

What makes math research so strong and productive?

- **Public, shared knowledge**
  Math researchers publish their work, they discuss their work in depth, they build on each other’s work;
  Suzanne Wilson: “Professions make a commitment to storing and vetting knowledge.”

- **A reward structure of peer approval**
  Quality is judged from *within* the community by peer recognition and admiration;
  the community is a meritocracy that is led by and learns from the top professionals in the field.

- **A high bar to entry**
  Entry into the community requires a high level of education and accomplishment.
Internal motivation is fostered by environments that fulfill the basic human needs for

- autonomy
- competence
- relatedness

as opposed to environments that are externally controlling.

**External measures of accountability cannot work in the long term because they will sap motivation.** External reward structures are not as motivating as peer approval.

Development of expertise requires *deliberate practice* over many years.
From an unsolvable problem to an inevitable solution? (Bob Moses)

All of us who teach math:

- Let’s see ourselves as a professional community; let’s take collective responsibility for math teaching at all levels; let’s demand that we decide what qualifies as appropriate professional education and development; let’s demand high standards for entry into our community.
From an unsolvable problem to an inevitable solution? (Bob Moses)

All of us who teach math:

- Let’s develop repositories of shared, vetted knowledge about math and its teaching;
- let’s compete for each other’s admiration through the sharing of ideas;
- let’s develop system that allows knowledge about math and its teaching to build and evolve;
All of us who teach math:

- Let’s negotiate and promote excellence in math teaching *from within our community*, not by external accountability measures; let’s not allow summative assessments to drive teaching — lofty visions about learning and understanding should guide us!

Let’s join together and let’s advocate collectively to make math teaching strong!