



# Wahpe Woyaka pi

## ( Talking Leaf )

South Dakota Council Teachers of Mathematics Newsletter

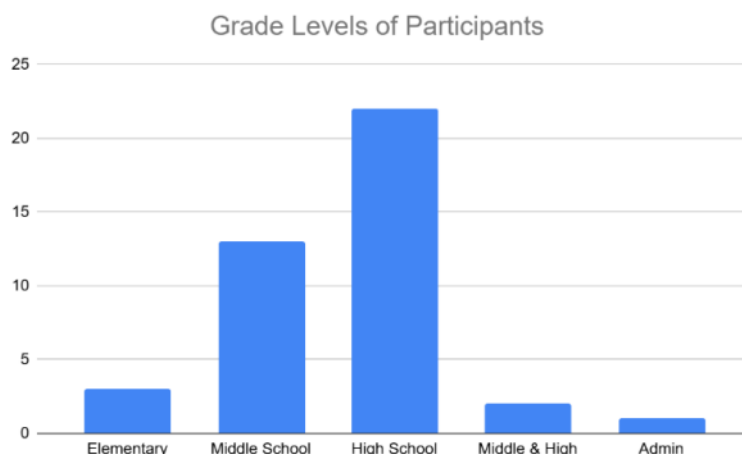
### Presidential Ponderings

I hope that all of you have had some time to relax and regroup this summer. I know how important that is for teachers. We can only be good in the classroom if we take care of ourselves—as I get older, I realize how important that is.

On July 15<sup>th</sup>, we had our annual Summer Symposium at Dakota Wesleyan in Mitchell. We were fortunate to have Jessica Strom from Minnesota come and share her wisdom on Building Thinking Classrooms. It was a great event, and we did a feedback form, so I have some data to share with all of you. We had 41 participants in the workshop; 17 of those registered for 1 credit through DWU. I want to thank DWU for their hospitality (Joan Lubben) and their willingness to offer it for credit (Ashley Digmann)! I also want to give a shout-out to Sheila McQuade for her help with registration and invoicing, Jay Berglund for tracking the money and paying the bills, and Liz Pettit for her work on advertising. I feel so fortunate to have such great colleagues who are involved in SDCTM.

The participants in the symposium represented a wide range of grade levels, as seen in the chart below. We gained 25 new members of SDCTM due to the membership cost savings for the symposium! For the feedback form, we had 28 responses (68.3%), and of those, 25 (89.3%) gave the symposium a 4-star (highest) rating. All respondents (100%) said that the content was very relevant or extremely relevant to their teaching role. In response to the question, “What was your favorite part of the symposium?”, some responses were:

- *I really liked that Jessica gave us usable resources and structured time to work with peers to create something that we can implement into our classrooms!*
- *There was a lot of really good in-depth information about parts of the BTC book that I haven't gotten as much info on previously.*
- *Interacting with teachers that are already using BTC in the classroom and being able to ask questions.*
- *The breakdown of the planning process. Very concrete, clear explanation.*



Fall 2024-2025

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## Presidential Ponderings (*continued*)

As we prepare for the 2026 SD STEM Education conference, the joint conference board decided to try using Wild Apricot for 1 year for the registration process. It will also be used to track memberships for both organizations (SDCTM and SDSTA) and allow us to share our newsletters. Our hope is that it will streamline the work of our conference leaders!

We will still be using a Google form for speaker proposals, and we are currently accepting session proposals. We would love for you to share something fun that you are doing in your classroom. Your ideas don't have to be completely polished; share what you are doing and get feedback from your peers. To submit a session proposal, complete this [form](#).

SDCTM has secured our second featured speaker for the 2026 conference, John Golden, Grand Valley State University. I have been Twitter friends with John for years and always enjoy his posts. He and I are both on BlueSky now. He works with elementary pre-service teachers and will be sharing great ideas for teaching elementary mathematics. You can also check out his [blog](#).

As we prepare for the upcoming school year, I wish all of you a fantastic start to your year. Consider trying something new, as it helps you grow as a professional! My plan is to add some BTC components to both of my classes this fall—focusing on having groups do mathematical proofs on the board! I will share how that is going in my next column.

Thank you for all that you do for math education in South Dakota!

Sharon Vestal  
President—SDCTM  
Sharon.Vestal@sdstate.edu

Let's make our social media presence heard, SD Math Teachers!

You can follow SDCTM on the following social media platforms:



Instagram: SDCTM\_Math



Facebook: South Dakota Teachers of Mathematics



X (Twitter): @SouthDakotaCTM



Be sure to watch for updates on all platforms!



## Higher Ed Viewpoint

When the calendar  
flips, the vibe  
gently shifts.

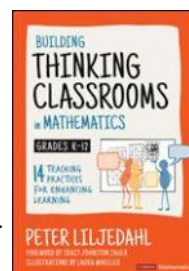


As July comes to an end, most teachers I know start thinking about their classrooms, while simultaneously trying to enjoy the last parts of summer. We are avoiding mosquitoes while gardening and creating lesson plans, while still fitting in that final trip or excursion. My family loves camping, so while I am preparing for August and the beginning of a new school year, I am also excited to still have time for family fun.



The fall has always been a time of new beginnings for me, even as the trees begin to change, flowers start to fade, and the daylight starts to shorten. A new class, a new group of students, and a new chance to try something different gets me excited about all the possibilities.

I know many of you are experimenting with the concepts from Building Thinking Classrooms, and I can tell you from personal experience, it is worth the exploration. This summer, the SDCTM symposium provided several teachers with the opportunity to work with an expert on BTC, to collaborate with colleagues who have already started implementing these ideas, and to learn more about how this approach might work in their classrooms. I had the opportunity to share my own experiences with a national audience this past year at both the NCTM Annual Conference in Chicago and the NCTM Spring Conference in Kansas City. With over 80 participants at each of my sessions, the enthusiasm for BTC is palpable. If you have not heard about these ideas, reading Peter Liljedahl's book *Building Thinking Classrooms in Mathematics* would be a great place to start. Perhaps a little light reading before the school year begins?



As you enjoy the last weeks of summer, I hope you are also excited to begin a new year, with all the possibilities that come with a fresh start.

Christine Larson  
SDCTM Post-Secondary Liaison  
Christine.Larson@sdstate.edu



*"...Building Thinking Classrooms... I can tell you from personal experience, it is worth the exploration."*



## Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching

The Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST) is the highest recognition that a kindergarten through 12th grade mathematics or science teacher may receive for outstanding teaching in the United States. Since 1983, more than 5,200 teachers have been recognized for their contributions to mathematics and science education. They represent a network of outstanding STEM educators who inspire students and who are teaching the next generation of STEM and workforce leaders.

As you know, there has been a lot of slashing of federally funded programs in the recent months. The National Science Foundation's budget has been reduced by over 50%. On June 4<sup>th</sup> we received word that NSF submitted its [FY26 Budget Request to Congress](#) and it's not good news for PAEMST. As a result of budget reductions, several programs are proposed to be zero funded in FY26, including all EASE programs where PAEMST is housed.

The PAEMST alumni organizations (CPAM, APAST and SEPA) are collaborating to determine the next steps for messaging and advocacy. We do not know if the PAEMST program will be eliminated or if it could possibly be housed at another federal agency. We currently have two cycles of state-level finalists awaiting word of awardee status. The timeliness of an announcement is uncertain, so patience will once again be necessary.

Even with the uncertainty mentioned above, the PAEMST website is still up and running (for now). If funded, the next cycle will recognize K – 6<sup>th</sup> grade mathematics and science teachers and will be accepting applications in the fall. I truly hope this is the case. Remember, anyone--principals, teachers, parents, students, or members of the general public--may nominate a teacher by completing the nomination form available on the PAEMST website. For more information, please visit [www.paemst.nsf.gov](http://www.paemst.nsf.gov).



*“As a result of budget reductions, several programs are proposed to be zero funded in FY26...”*

Allen Hogie  
SD PAEMST  
Mathematics Coordinator  
Allen.Hogie@k12.sd.us  
605.553.8095



Ann Anderson  
SD PAEMST  
Science Coordinator  
Ann.M.Anderson@k12.sd.us  
605.639.3102



# RURAL MATHEMATICS EDUCATION LANDSCAPE



## Online Professional Learning for Rural Mathematics Teachers and Instructional Leaders

### PROJECT

Are you a 5th–9th grade math teacher or an instructional leader looking to enhance your skills and connect with other educators?

We are offering two years of professional learning designed specifically for mathematics teachers and instructional leaders from grades 5 to 9 in rural communities. You also will receive a stipend for participating!

Whether you're looking to refine your teaching strategies, incorporate new strategies, or collaborate with peers, this opportunity is for you!

### PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMPONENTS

#### 1. Online Course: Orchestrating Productive Mathematical Discussions

Eight synchronous course sessions (4 per year) to support instruction through the facilitation of mathematical discussions and research-based teaching practices.

#### 2. Online Video Teaching Labs

Four synchronous online teaching video teaching labs (2 per year) to investigate mathematics teaching and learning in grades 5 to 9 mathematics classrooms.

#### 3. 1-on-1 Online Video Coaching for Teachers

Four personalized 1-on-1 coaching cycles (2 per year) to support participants' learning through supported planning, implementation, and reflection.



### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

#### SYNCHRONOUS DATES

All synchronous components of the project will take place from October 2025–May 2027 (excluding summer months).

#### STIPENDS

Upon successfully completing the components of the project, participants will receive a \$2,000 stipend.



[CLICK HERE FOR MORE DETAILED INFORMATION ABOUT THE RURAL LANDSCAPE PROJECT](#)



## SDCTM Executive Board Members



[www.sdctm.org](http://www.sdctm.org)

SDCTM President  
Sharon Vestal  
South Dakota State University  
(605) 695 - 1489  
Sharon.Vestal@sdstate.edu

SDCTM Past President  
Dan VanPeurse  
University of South Dakota  
(605) 624 - 6368  
Dan.VanPeurse@usd.edu

President-Elect  
Elizabeth Pettit  
Sioux Falls Jefferson High School  
(605) 367 - 6184  
Elizabeth.Pettit@k12.sd.us

Vice-President  
Susan Gilkerson  
Rutland School  
(605) 586 - 4352  
Susan.Gilkerson@k12.sd.us

Secretary  
Amy Schander  
Gayville-Volin High School  
(605) 267- 4476  
Amy.Schander@k12.sd.us

Treasurer  
Jay Berglund  
Gettysburg High School  
(605) 765 - 2436  
Jay.Berglund@k12.sd.us

Elementary Liaison  
Jodi Neuharth  
Freeman Public Schools  
(605) 933 - 0642  
Jodi.Neuharth@k12.sd.us

Middle School Liaison  
Allison Schmitz  
Northwestern Area Schools  
Allison.Schmitz@k12.sd.us

Secondary Liaison  
Diedra Nissen  
Sioux Falls School District  
(605) 367 - 6184  
Diedra.Nissen@k12.sd.us

Post-Secondary Liaison  
Chris Larson  
Department of Mathematics and Statistics  
South Dakota State University  
(605) 690 - 4957  
Christine.Larson@sdstate.edu

NCTM Representative  
Kevin Smith  
Dakota State University  
(605) 256 - 5177  
Kevin.Smith@dsu.edu

SDCTM Newsletter Editor  
Amy Schander  
Gayville-Volin High School  
(605) 267 - 4476  
Amy.Schander@k12.sd.us

SDCTM Webmaster  
Cindy Kroon  
Montrose High School  
(605) 363 - 5025  
Cindy.Kroon@k12.sd.us

SD STEM Ed Conference Coordinator  
Cindy Kroon  
Montrose High School  
(605) 363 - 5025  
Cindy.Kroon@k12.sd.us

SD STEM Ed Treasurer & Registrar  
Sheila McQuade  
Sioux Falls O<sup>+</sup>Gorman High School  
(605) 336 - 3644  
SMcQuade@sOGKnights.org

Conference Coordinator Emeritus  
Jean Gomer  
(605) 629-1101