

## Your Help is Urgently Needed! Challenge for Funding

By Walt Rathkamp, MSTA Past President (2000-2002)  
and member of MSTA, MCTM, and MSCN

In the state of Michigan we are very fortunate to have two main volunteer organizations, the Michigan Science Teachers Association (MSTA) and the Michigan Council of Teachers of Mathematics (MCTM), with the purpose of supporting mathematics and science education. These organizations, composed of mainly professional volunteers, have worked tirelessly for 57 years and 61 years respectively, to provide the best education opportunities in mathematics and science for our students, parents, teachers, and professionals with little or no outside support. MSTA and MCTM provide professional development for teachers, parents, and administrators throughout the state, scholarships for students, and grants for teachers.

In 1986, with the leadership of the Michigan Department of Education (MDE), Governor James Blanchard, Senator Dan Degrow, and many others, a new idea for a statewide network of mathematics and science centers surfaced. The result in 1989 was the establishment of the Mathematics and Science Center Network (MSCN). The network started with about 15 centers and over the years evolved to an organization of 33 Mathematics and Science Centers distributed across Michigan supporting Kindergarten - Higher Education mathematics and science education for the entire state. It is funded by the legislature and has an extensive self evaluation process that has ensured the absolute best Professional Development (PD) that could be provided for mathematics and science education with the funding available.

Unfortunately, with the economic disaster of the past 10 years, funding for the MSCN's is now only 20% of what it was and is not enough to provide services to everyone. The centers struggle to survive but because of the unbelievable dedication of MSTA, MCTM members, M/S Centers and their supporting partners of Intermediate School Districts (ISDs), universities, and foundations, they are still providing services to enrich students' lives in mathematics and science.

I have been a member of MCTM and MSTA for over 35 years and the MSCN for 25 years. As I move toward retirement (maybe in 10 years or so), the need to support these groups has never been more important. I call on all members of MSTA, MCTM, and people who have been impacted by the MSCN to budget a monthly check to one or more of these organizations: MSTA endowment fund, MCTM endowment fund, and/or the MSCN endowment fund. These organizations are all 501 (c)(3) organizations which means your donation is tax deductible.

One cup of coffee a day, or \$30 a month, to one or more of these organizations is not too much to give. This will have an incredible impact on enabling each of these organizations to continue to function and to do the incredible job they do for mathematics and science education and the residents of Michigan.

I personally will be writing a monthly check to each endowment and I challenge you to follow my example. At this critical time, we need to commit to supporting Mathematics and Science education. As individuals, we have tremendous power to do something for our children which will make a difference. Nobody else really seems to be doing anything and we need to step up to the plate.

### Send your tax deductible donation to:

- **MCTM Endowment Fund**, Attn: Christopher Berry, 4767 Stadler Road, Monroe, MI 48162-9424
- **MSTA Endowment Fund**, Attn: Sue Campbell, 3300 Washtenaw Ave., Suite 220, Ann Arbor, MI 48104
- **MSCN Endowment Fund**, Attn: Connie Duncan, 765 Upton Ave., Battle Creek, MI 49037

Thank you for listening to the ramblings of an aging mathematics and science educator who thinks this is the most important thing he can do to try to make a difference.

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