

Urgent Call for AMTE Members' Action

Dear AMTE Members,

I am writing to inform you of an urgent call for AMTE as an organization and our members as individuals to comment on how teachers of mathematics, science, and teachers of STEM disciplines at the K-12 level, should be classified in the federal government's Standard Occupational Classification (SOC). The SOC is the official federal taxonomy for collecting occupation data in the U.S. This taxonomy is required to be used by all federal statistical agencies when collecting data on jobs. The problem for our community is the draft of the 2018 document does not include a separate classification of mathematics and science teachers at the pre-college level. If this draft goes forward as the final document there will be negative consequences for our community for the next 12 years. **The deadline for commenting is Tuesday, September 20, 2016 at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time.** The link to the Federal Register notice which has been published for comments on the draft 2018 SOC is provided below.

Information received from a National Science Foundation Program Officer states there are differing viewpoints among the federal agencies on the SOC Policy Committee regarding whether there should be separate classification of mathematics and science teachers at the pre-college level in the SOC. The draft does not include this type of separation, although there were some proponents of this. Part of the reason why this didn't happen was that the SOC Policy Committee didn't see any requests from the public for this type of separation during the first Federal Register open comment period

The AMTE Emerging Issues Committee was asked to investigate specific ways in which our community may be impacted. The EIC submitted a document which is attached for your review and [is posted on the AMTE website](#). Here, I share excerpts from the document submitted to the Board by the EIC that are specific to our community: *(a) not accounting separately for secondary level mathematics teachers can contribute to a lack of clarity in realizing the shortage of mathematics teachers for students in grades 9-12; (b) the problem of teacher shortage is not uniform across subject areas and grade levels; (c) many subject areas and grade levels do not experience shortages as mathematics; d) it would be helpful to know to what extent mathematics teachers leaving the profession have contributed to the mathematics teacher shortage; (e) if mathematics teachers leave the profession at greater rates, greater attention could be paid to developing tailored ways to address the problem.*

I strongly encourage you to submit a response. If you would like to do so, you may use the following comment: *"As a mathematics teacher educator, I am writing to encourage you to separate the classification of the teacher workforce so that the mathematics teacher workforce is more effectively counted and identified in the 2018 SOC. With the general trend of teachers leaving the profession at alarming rates and the phenomenon of teacher shortages, in particular in mathematics education, it is critical that we know to what extent mathematics teachers leaving the profession have contributed to the mathematics teacher shortage. If mathematics teachers leave the profession at greater rates, greater attention must be paid to developing tailored ways to address the problem. Until official documents record the occupation of teachers in terms of specific subject matter, the problem of teacher shortages will remain unaddressed. Thank you for the opportunity to submit this request for a detailed accounting of the occupation of secondary mathematics teachers; a separate category is needed."*

To submit your comment, visit:

http://www.regulations.gov/comment?D=OMB_FRDOC_0001-0183

The Federal Registry Notice is available here:

http://www.bls.gov/soc/2018/frn_july_22_2016.pdf

Results of the first FRN including, complete details on the 2018 SOC definition and structural changes are on the BLS website:

<http://www.bls.gov/soc/>

Thank you for your attention and response to this urgent call for action.

Sincerely,

Christine D. Thomas
AMTE President