



Math in the Middle

Frequently Asked Questions



What is the Math in the Middle Institute?

The Institute is a graduate program for middle school mathematics teachers. By investing in the graduate education of outstanding teachers of mathematics, we hope to create a community of master teachers who become strong leaders as their school, district and ESU strives to strengthen the mathematics education of middle level students.

What is the Math in the Middle Institute (M2) Partnership?

Math in the Middle is a five-year grant awarded to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln by the National Science Foundation as part of their Math Science Partnership program. Although Math in the Middle originally had a focus on working with rural teachers, new NSF funding enables us to partner with the Omaha Public Schools. The partnership focuses on middle school mathematics education.

What is the goal of the Math in the Middle Institute Partnership?

Our long-term goal is to improve student achievement in mathematics and to significantly reduce achievement gaps in the mathematical performance of diverse student populations. We believe that investing in high-quality teachers is the single most important step we can take if we want to achieve our long-term goal.

Will the Math in the Middle Institute enable me to earn a Master's Degree?

Yes. To date, 125 teachers have earned a Master's Degree through the Institute. We anticipate that each OPS teacher chosen for the program will also earn a Master's Degree.

When is the Math in the Middle Institute application due?

Applications are due Tuesday, September 8, 2009.

How quickly will applicants learn whether they have been selected for the M2 Institute?

We intend to select the Omaha Public Schools participants by Friday, September 18, 2009.

How many teachers will be selected to participate in the M2 Institute?

We have funding for 10 teachers.

What will it cost me to participate?

The costs are minimal. Participants are responsible only for a limited number of fees such as the Application to Graduate Fee (\$25), and a university identification card fee (\$20).

Does the grant give the partnership the capacity to support the teachers who are chosen for the Math in the Middle Institute?

Yes. During the academic year, teachers chosen for the program will receive \$5,000 per semester for four semesters. During the summers of 2010 and 2011, teachers will be paid \$1,000 per week for their participation in a summer institute.

What are the keys to an outstanding application?

While all part of the application are important, we offer the following suggestions for assembling a strong application:

- * Evidence that you have been active outside your own classroom is valuable, especially activities that focus on mathematics such as participating in professional development opportunities or attending NCTM or NATM meetings. Previous leadership opportunities are a plus, but younger teachers typically have not had many such opportunities.
- * The essay questions are important, both for the insight they provide about a teacher's views on teaching mathematics in our schools and as evidence of one's ability to write. Be sure to have a friend read your essays to guard against misspelled words, poor grammar or punctuation problems.
- * The letters of recommendation are very important. They provide evidence that a peer and a building administrator have high regard for the applicant's abilities and for what the applicant can contribute to OPS as a result of this opportunity. They also offer evidence of the administrator's support for the applicant and the priority that the school places on strengthening mathematics teaching and learning. Unfortunately, sometimes letters of recommendation seem to be almost generic and do not strengthen the application.
- * Be sure to complete all parts of the application and have responded to all requests for information. Missing information invariably results in an application being rated lower.



Math in the Middle Institute Partnership

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