

## CHARTER

### THE SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP OF THE MAA ON MATH CIRCLES FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS (SIGMAA MCST)

#### Article I. Identification

Section 1. The name of this SIGMAA is the SIGMAA on Math Circles for Students and Teachers (SIGMAA MCST). It will usually be referred to as SIGMAA on Circles.

Section 2.

a) A math circle is broadly defined as an informal or semi-formal educational enrichment experience that complements the pre-collegiate mathematical instruction by bringing mathematicians and mathematical scientists in direct contact with pre-college students and/or their teachers in order to explore over an extended period of time mathematical themes, problems, and topics beyond the typical K-12 curriculum. Although the styles of math circles vary considerably, the goal of any math circle is to foster passion and excitement for mathematics.

There are multiple aims, goals and types of Student Math Circles (SMCs). Some seek to provide enrichment opportunities for students who are already interested in mathematics or who are identified as gifted; some focus on competition preparation; some seek to open new possibilities for students without regard to previous academic success through research experiences, discovery of mathematical concepts, or problem-solving experiences. All SMCs seek active engagement in mathematical activity and work towards developing a deep sense of perspective of mathematics and an appreciation for its intrinsic beauty. Students and mathematics professionals meet on a regular basis, usually outside of scheduled class time, or possibly as an organized summer experience. Undergraduate and graduate students can help with one-on-one interaction with the pre-college students.

The goal of a Math Teachers' Circle (MTC) program is to provide opportunities for teachers to engage in mathematics as an intellectual endeavor, enhance their teaching, and to provide a professional support community. MTCs equip pre-college teachers with an effective problem-solving approach to teaching mathematics. By presenting interesting and challenging problems as an incentive, the task of teaching mathematical methods and techniques is endowed with both a reason and a goal. MTC's participants meet regularly with mathematicians for presentations, practice and discussions of how to incorporate problem-solving into their classrooms. Undergraduate and graduate students working on teacher certification can participate and enhance their preparation for the classroom.

b) The goal of this SIGMAA is to give math circles – both SMCs and MTCs – greater visibility and a permanent presence in the mathematical and educational landscape. This

SIGMAA will support MAA members who share an interest in developing, supporting and running math circles and will facilitate vertical integration of elementary, middle and high school students, their teachers, undergraduate and graduate students, and faculty up through high-level research mathematicians. It will work to achieve these goals by:

- i) Providing a forum for exchanging ideas and fostering increased understanding among professional mathematicians of goals and issues of math circles for students and teachers.
- ii) Promoting the formation of new math circles around the country and supporting new math circle leaders through mentoring partnerships with experienced practitioners.
- iii) Providing resources and activities to college and university faculty conducting math circles with teachers and students. Fostering collaboration and sharing of ideas and materials between math circle leaders by maintaining a network of people who can provide this support.
- iv) Working to promote continued involvement and constant collaboration of professional mathematicians with elementary, middle and high school mathematics teachers conducting math circles.
- v) Increasing participation in mathematics competitions, especially the MAA's AMC competitions program, through math circle involvement.
- vi) Providing a venue to present talks and panels on stimulating activities involving professional mathematicians with pre-college students and teachers.

## **Article II. Activities**

Section 1. This SIGMAA will engage in activities such as, but not limited to, the following:

- a) Holding an annual meeting at the Joint Mathematical Meetings (JMM) or at the MathFest.
- b) Sponsoring sessions and workshops for MAA members at the JMM and at MathFests.
- c) Encouraging similar activities by regional sections of the MAA.
- d) Maintaining an e-mail list to facilitate communication among members.

- e) Maintaining a web site for exchanging ideas, announcements, commentary on successful math circles and practices, and links to materials relevant to the development, maintenance, and on-going support of math circles of all types. This web site will also provide a forum for general commentary and feedback.
- f) Promoting the publication of articles related to the math circle experience and its organization, mathematics, and pedagogy.
- g) Encouraging site visits of SIGMAA MCST members in order to promote math circles, guide new math circles and encourage the cross-pollination of ideas.
- h) Supporting activities of other groups of the mathematical community with interest in promoting the math circle experience.

## Section 2. Relationships with MAA activities.

- a) SIGMAA MCST will coordinate its activities and cooperate with organizations both within and outside of the MAA as appropriate.
- b) No activity of this SIGMAA, including publications, shall be represented as coming from the MAA at large, but rather from this SIGMAA, unless such activity and representation have been approved by the Executive Committee of the MAA.
- c) Reports of this SIGMAA's activities shall be included in an annual report submitted by the SIGMAA to the MAA Committee on SIGMAAs, with copies to the chair of the Coordinating Council to which the SIGMAA is assigned.

## **Article III. Meetings**

### Section 1.

A quorum at membership meetings, including electronic meetings, shall consist of at least 20 members and at least three officers. At least two of the three officers must be from among the Chair, Chair-Elect, Past-Chair, Program Coordinator, and Secretary-Treasurer.

Note: The use of the term "electronic" throughout this document shall be understood to refer to any widely accepted form of electronic communication, such as e-mail, internet, web-conferencing, web-surveying, discussion board, et cetera.

### Section 2. Frequency and Place of Meetings.

General membership meetings of SIGMAA MCST shall take place at the JMM or at the MathFest. Other activities may be scheduled for the MathFest or MAA Section meetings. SIGMAA business may also be conducted electronically provided that a quorum is attained.

### Section 3. Conduct of Meetings.

The SIGMAA MCST Chair will preside over the annual business meeting held during the JMM or the MathFest. The Chair will circulate an agenda via e-mail one month in advance and will ask for additional agenda items at that time. The Chair will allow ample time for discussion and will seek to achieve consensus. If a consensus is not reached, decisions will be made by a vote in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order.

When the Executive Committee of the SIGMAA decides that an issue requires attention of the entire SIGMAA in advance of the next general meeting, the committee may decide to conduct an electronic business meeting. The same definition of a quorum as given in section 1 applies to any vote taken electronically, and it is expected that ample time for discussion will be allowed. Members will be given at least two weeks to vote on any issue requiring an electronic vote.

### **Article IV. Membership**

Section 1. Membership in SIGMAA MCST shall be open to all MAA members.

### **Article V. Administration**

Section 1. Officers and Executive Committee.

Elected officers of this SIGMAA will be the Chair, Chair-Elect, Past-Chair, Program Coordinator, and Secretary-Treasurer. These five officers comprise the SIGMAA Executive Committee. In addition, the Newsletter/Web Page Editor will be an appointed officer.

SIGMAA members with special expertise may be appointed, after consultation with other SIGMAA officers, by the SIGMAA Chair to two-year terms as ex-officio members of the SIGMAA Executive Committee to work on special projects related to the SIGMAA.

An appointed SIGMAA Executive Committee will serve during the SIGMAA's initial years, until the appointed officers are replaced by officers elected in regular elections as described in Section 3.

Section 2. Duties of the officers.

The Chair will preside at SIGMAA meetings, will organize and direct the activities of the group, will serve as liaison with the MAA administration and with other organizations, and will be the chief spokesperson for the SIGMAA. In this last capacity, the Chair will write a regular column for the Web page to keep members apprised of SIGMAA activities. The Chair also appoints the Newsletter/Web Page Editor.

In addition to assisting the Chair, the Chair-Elect will maintain the membership roll and will have primary responsibility for membership development and retention. The Chair-

Elect will also perform other duties as may be prescribed from time to time by the Executive Committee.

In addition to assisting the Chair and the Chair-Elect, the Past-Chair will chair the Nominating Committee. The Past-Chair will also perform other duties as may be prescribed from time to time by the Executive Committee.

The Program Coordinator will propose and arrange for invited speakers and the implementation of special sessions at the JMM and MathFests, after consulting with other officers. The Program Coordinator will help to arrange speakers and special sessions at sectional MAA meetings, workshops, conferences, et cetera. The Program Coordinator will correspond with the Associate Secretary of the MAA on matters related to activities at national meetings of the Association. The Program Coordinator will assist the Secretary/Treasurer, as needed, with correspondence, and recording and disseminating information about the activities of the SIGMAA.

The Secretary-Treasurer will keep a record of the affairs of the SIGMAA, handle correspondence, and submit written reports to the MAA as required. In addition, the Secretary-Treasurer will be responsible for all finances of the SIGMAA and for preparation of financial reports as required.

The Newsletter/Web Page Editor will be responsible for maintaining the SIGMAA's web site and for dissemination of information to the SIGMAA membership, and will also maintain and moderate the SIGMAA's listserv.

### Section 3. Election, Appointments, and Terms of Office.

a) The Chair, Chair-Elect, and Past-Chair will serve for one year in each office. The Program Coordinator and Secretary-Treasurer will serve a two-year term. The Program Coordinator will be elected in even years, while Secretary-Treasurer will be elected in odd years. The Newsletter/Web Page Editor will serve for a two year term. Terms will begin at the conclusion of JMM in January of the year following the election.

b) A Nominating Committee will consist of the Past-Chair and two SIGMAA members selected by the Executive Committee. The Nominating Committee will solicit suggestions and volunteers for office from the membership and then select a slate of one or more candidates for each of the two offices (Chair-Elect and Secretary-Treasurer in odd years, Chair-Elect and Program Coordinator in even years) open in any year.

c) Election of officers will take place by electronic ballot of the membership. By October 1 the MAA will distribute to the SIGMAA members instructions for voting by October 31. The electronic ballot will indicate that write-in votes are permitted. The winner will be the candidate receiving the most votes. Ties will be broken by a fair, unbiased random process supervised by the MAA.

If fewer than 20 members vote, the current officers will remain in office until further deliberate actions are successful in achieving a quorum.

d) Should an office other than Chair become vacant midterm, the Executive Committee of the SIGMAA, in consultation with the most recent Nominating Committee, shall appoint a member of the SIGMAA to fill that office for the remainder of the term of office. Should the office of Chair of the SIGMAA become vacant midterm, the Executive Committee shall appoint a member of the Executive Committee to fill the office of Chair for the remainder of the term and, should this appointment create a vacant office, shall fill the vacant position according to the rules just given.

All business outside the annual meeting during JMM or MathFest will be conducted electronically.

## **Article VI. Finances**

Section 1. An annual MAA dues supplement shall be assessed for each member of this SIGMAA. The dues supplement will be used to support in part the activities of this SIGMAA. The manner of collection and disbursement of these funds will be determined by the MAA Executive Committee. This dues supplement will be \$10 per year. This SIGMAA may formally request a change in this amount through a request to the MAA Committee on SIGMAAs, which after consideration will forward a recommendation to the MAA Executive Committee. The MAA Executive Committee may also initiate a request for a change in the dues supplement.

Section 2. This SIGMAA shall submit a budget for each calendar year to the MAA Director of Programs and Services no later than March 15 of the preceding year. It shall include the projected cost for any regularly planned activities, including receptions, room charges, equipment, et cetera, at national meetings. The budget is subject to the approval of the MAA Executive Committee.

Section 3. This SIGMAA may apply to the MAA for specific funding beyond that provided by the dues supplement. All requests for funds shall be substantiated in a budget for the proposed expenditures.

## **Article VII. External Funding**

Section 1. This SIGMAA may write grant proposals to be submitted by the MAA. The SIGMAA will follow the policies and procedures of the MAA for all such submissions.

Section 2. Neither this SIGMAA nor any officer nor any representative thereof shall have any authority to contract debts for, pledge the credit of, or in any way bind the MAA.

## **Article VIII. Changes**

Section 1. Changes to this Charter may be proposed by this SIGMAA if a recommendation for such changes is supported by two-thirds vote either of the members present at a general meeting or of the members voting if the vote is taken by email, provided that a quorum is attained. Notice of the proposed changes must be sent to the membership via e-mail, allowing at least one month for discussion. The proposed changes must then be submitted for consideration to the Committee on SIGMAAs, which will forward a recommendation after approval to the MAA Executive Committee.

Section 2. Changes to this Charter may also be initiated by the MAA Executive Committee, which will forward such a request to the MAA Committee on SIGMAAs. In turn the Committee on SIGMAAs will work with the SIGMAA to develop specific new language for the charter that is acceptable to the SIGMAA. The Committee on SIGMAAs will then forward the revised charter to the MAA Executive Committee to be considered for approval. In this event, changes must be approved by the Board of Governors.

## **Article IX. Dissolution**

Section 1. This SIGMAA shall be dissolved for either of the following reasons:

- a) Failure to maintain at least 30 members for two consecutive years
- b) Reasons agreed to by a majority vote of the Board of Governors.

Section 2. If dissolved, any unspent funds of this SIGMAA shall be returned to the general fund of the MAA.