

From: **Jo Boaler** joboaler@stanford.edu
Subject: email
Date: December 17, 2021 at 11:29 AM
To: Gould, Robert rgould@stat.ucla.edu

JB

Hi Rob,

Good to chat with you. Below is an email I have sent to Laurene Jobs etc (and I already heard back and am speaking to her tomorrow).

The email address for getting things to the governor is this:

Brooks Allen BrAllen@cde.ca.gov He is executive director of the state board

Thanks, Jo

I hope you do not mind me getting in touch – I try to only contact you when it is extremely important, and now is one of those times.

You may know I am one of the authors of a proposed new California Mathematics Framework. This has brought the attention of the extreme right – I was ridiculed on Tucker Carlson (Fox News) some months ago, which resulted in death threats, and the framework has now been featured in mainstream news - The New York Times, USA Today, The Wall Street Journal etc (see an example below) with a lot of misinformation.

An organized group is now gathering a lot of support using claims about the framework that are completely inaccurate. They know that the proposals would mean getting more students – and more diverse students - to higher level mathematics, and they clearly do not want that.

Their latest tactics have included contacting the president of Stanford, and trying to get me removed from the framework, as we have the youcubed site. Apparently a “big donor” of Stanford is opposed to the framework and making their opinions known – sadly because they are believing what is written about the framework, not what is in it.

Gavin Newsom knows that a group of mathematicians are opposed to it, and apparently is not too concerned about them – but now tech leaders in Silicon Valley are weighing in and he is concerned about that.

The people opposing the framework are organized and well funded – the educators proposing changes are not, and I fear that this will be another case of losing the opportunity to make important educational changes. If this framework gets withdrawn in California, I don't think any other state will try and make mathe

withdrawn in California, I don't think any other state will try and make math changes.

This is a summary of the situation from the mathematician leading the MAA (a very good group of mathematicians):

This is a political perspective issue -- and that those who are vocal in criticizing need to be called out for defending the status quo which has failed so many students, and that those critiques come from privileged and uninformed (and/or misinformed) individuals, ultimately driven by a desire to preserve their privileged positions (using a deeply flawed defense of meritocracy that, if closely examined, should be called out as social Darwinism).

I would ***really*** appreciate your support, which could be in the form of a letter to the governor, or helping me get in touch with industry leaders who might be prepared to make a stand? to communicate with the governor, some communication with Stanford – anything.

I am also happy to come in and share more details? Or jump on a call? Anything that could be helpful?

Warmly, Jo



Squaring Up to Defend Mathematics

America's top scientists warn about the political erosion of education standards.

By The Editorial Board

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A teacher helps students during math class at Neil Armstrong Elementary School in Bettendorf, Iowa, Feb. 13, 2020.

Photo: Kevin E. Schmidt/Zuma Press

The last few years have seen a proliferation of “open letters” by academics in politics and the humanities in favor of progressive causes. The hard sciences are different, and when mathematicians, physicists and engineers speak up to defend the integrity of their fields, Americans should pay attention.

The latest example is a new [public statement](#) from hundreds of the country’s top quantitative scientists warning about the assault on math in schools. “We write to express our alarm over recent trends in K-12 mathematics education in the United States,” the statement begins. The social-justice wave of 2020 accelerated efforts to eliminate standardized testing and lower standards in math to give the appearance that achievement gaps don’t exist.

The scientists delicately describe the politicized erosion of standards as “well-intentioned approaches to reform mathematics education.” They zero in on the

California Department of Education's proposed new math framework, which [encourages](#) math teachers to take a "justice-oriented perspective." The signatories say the course roadmap will reduce the "availability of advanced mathematical courses to middle schoolers and beginning high schoolers" and discourage students from taking calculus.

This is supposed to advance "equity." But in addition to damaging America's global competitiveness, the letter says, the decline of rigorous math in public schools "may lead to a de facto privatization" of top-tier instruction and "harm students with fewer resources."

The growing list of 471 signatories includes four winners of the Fields Medal in math; two winners of the Turing Award in computing; a Nobel laureate in physics and another in chemistry; 25 members of the National Academy of Sciences; and faculty at Stanford, Berkeley, CalTech, MIT and every top U.S. university for hard science.

No doubt many if not most in this group are politically left of center. But they warn against the elevation of "trendy but shallow courses over foundational skills" like algebra and calculus. Those disciplines "are centuries old and sometimes more," the letter says, but "arguably even more critical for today's grand challenges than in the Sputnik era."

The debate over course content in history and social science has been the center of educational controversy, as progressives aim to rewrite the country's civic contract. But the erosion of math and science education to accommodate identity politics is even more threatening to America's prosperity and survival in a competitive world. Credit to the mathematicians for recognizing this threat, and squaring up in defense of their field.

Also, a twitter thread by Matthew Yglesias, co-founder of Vox who has 500,000 followers:

** My working day is probably different from yours. Please don't feel obliged to reply to this e-mail outside of your working hours**

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