

**Michigan Association of Teacher Educators  
Executive Board Retreat  
MEA Building, September 19, 2008**

**RETREAT NOTES:**

The group initially seemed to agree about what MATE does, the value it adds to the educational community and factors that distinguish it from other organizations.

However, as the discussion continued a number of concerns were voiced:

- The “real” mission of the organization is not clear. Does it really add value? Does it truly stand for something?
- There is an inability to reach all teachers.
- Are we trying to be too much?
- How do we, or should we, define “teacher educators”?
- Can we sharply define MATE’s focus and still have an impact on the whole system?
- Too few people are doing the work of the organization. More needs to be done to more fully engage board members and involve faculty from other universities and K-12 teacher educators.

In response to the concern about standing for something, it was agreed that, while the mission statement captures the purpose of MATE and is consistent with ATE’s mission, a focus or theme is needed. The group enthusiastically embraced equity, social justice and achievement for all students as such a theme. It was felt that this could help shape future publications, conferences, and outreach efforts.

In response to defining whom we do this for, it was suggested that MATE primary constituency includes teacher educators in universities and K-12 schools.

Guiding images – continuum or railroad tracks: Both of these images helped the group articulate the need to be clear about its audience and mission while recognizing that MATE functions in a larger system. So...this embraces Olivia’s concern that the group stays focused but develops a broader continuum of outreach activities and Frank’s railroad track metaphor that was so well captured by Ilene Ingram. Ilene graphically explained that the groups overriding concern should be equity and social justice with a focus on learning and growth for all students. Her chart showed one rail dedicated to teacher educators and the other focused on society’s expectations for public education. Each of the cross ties represented ATE/MATE’s role in reaching out to the broader educational community.

Having agreed on what MATE stands for and whom it seeks to reach, five possible goals were suggested. Through a simple “sticky dot” voting system priorities or first steps were identified. Some board members expressed concern noting that priority-based linear thinking limits the potential effectiveness of the group. All agreed that future

activities of MATE must reflect the social justice, equity theme and recognize that teacher educators work in two environments: higher education and K-12 schools.

1. Marketing the association including staffing booths at other professional meetings (e.g. MEA Professional Development Conference), finalizing the draft brochure, linking with other organizations, etc. (4 votes)
2. Structure conferences and workshops so that they reflect the group's theme and focus on the two tracks: higher education and K-12. (3 ½ votes)
3. Connect to the membership at large. (2 ½ votes)
4. Define and publicize the social justice theme through website and other links (1 vote)
5. Organize this year's student teacher conference around the social justice theme.

(Submitted by C. Robert Maxfield, September 22, 2008)