NCCTM Western Region Mini-Conference Schedule
April 18, 2026
App State Hickory Campus

8:45-9:30 Check-in and On-site Registration

9:30-9:40 Opening: Room 2168

Coffee and Snacks all day!

9:45-10:30 Session 1

K-5 Room 2168	Secondary (6-12) Room 2166	Secondary (8-12) Room 2167
Session Title: Empowering Students with Manipulatives **Presenter:** Amanda McEwen, Iredell-Statesville Schools Slides Link **Description:** Hands-on, concrete learning experiences are engaging for all students; they naturally provide low floors and high ceilings. Implementing these experiences differ across grade levels but are fundamental to a successful math classroom. As educators, we need to become intentional in implementing hands-on strategies to ensure that every student meets or exceeds their academic potential.	**Session Title:** Simplifying Canvas Workflows with AI **Presenter:** Robert Selby, Hickory City Schools Slides Link **Description:** In this hands-on session, teachers will learn how to simplify course management in Canvas using AI and the Canvas API. We'll work through making a structured spreadsheet for a unit module, creating code using AI to read it, and creating the module in Canvas from the spreadsheet, with the click of a button. This session provides practical, ready-to-use strategies for saving time, reducing repetitive tasks, and leveraging AI to make Canvas course management more efficient, while catering workflows to teacher's unique classes and styles.	**Session Title:** Standing Math: Quality Tasks for Vertical Whiteboards **Presenter:** Karen McPherson, Buncombe County Schools Slides Link **Description:** Vertical whiteboards can transform how students engage with mathematics by making thinking visible, public, and collaborative. In this session, participants will experience math tasks designed for Math 1 and Math 3 while working at vertical whiteboards as learners. We will explore how this instructional routine promotes student discourse, supports formative assessment, and shifts the cognitive load from teacher to students.

10:40-11:25 Session 2

K-5 Room 2168	Secondary (6-12) Room 2166	Secondary (8-12) Room 2167
Session Title: Building Number Sense in the K-5 Classroom **Presenter:** Dr. Brian Bettis, Watauga County Schools Slides Link **Description:** In this session, Dr. Bettis will share strategies and resources to help teachers build a strong foundation of number sense in our elementary classrooms. Participants will engage in hands-on problem-solving tasks that model classroom experiences and deepen their understanding of how children make sense of numbers. The session will highlight key research on early numeracy development and connect those findings to effective instructional practices. Teachers will explore best practices for fostering counting, quantity relationships, subitizing, and flexible thinking with numbers.	**Session Title:** Using Real Data to Ignite Curiosity and Modeling Skills in Algebra **Presenter:** Aleksandra Schilis, CourseKata Slides Link **Description:** Algebra is all about functions: Constant, linear, quadratic, exponential, just to name a few. But students rarely believe that functions are relevant for understanding the modern world. This irrelevance makes functions one of the most challenging concepts for both students to learn and teachers to teach. In this session, participants will explore how authentic data can transform the teaching of functions, making them relevant, engaging, and powerful tools for understanding the world. Using examples from the CourseKata curriculum, we will demonstrate how modern data science tools and practices (e.g., visualization, coding in R, model-building) help students see functions as ways to investigate real questions and reason with evidence.	**(Updated- New Session!)** **Session Title:** Fall in Love with Math Again: How Summer Math Camp Empowers Teachers Slides Link **Presenter:** Rashmi Singh, Appalachian State Univ Nathan Borchelt, Western Carolina Univ Sloan Despeaux Western Carolina Univ **Description:** We will start this session with a fun Math Teachers' Circle Activity on Math and Dart Boards. We will then share results from our study of Math Camp survey data from 2021 to 2025 that examined how our summer Math Camp shaped teachers' mathematical growth, instructional practice, and professional identity. We analyzed responses from 363 participants and found that teachers reported increased confidence, creativity, and commitment to inquiry-based, student-centered instruction, alongside strengthened professional identity and community. Come see how Math Camp could be your next summer adventure!

11:35-12:20 Session 3

K-5 Room 2168	Secondary (6-12) Room 2166	Secondary (8-12) Room 2167
Session Title: We Don't Guess– We Justify: Teaching Mathematical Thinking for All **Presenter:** Tangela C. Blackwell-Stoner, Durham Public Schools Slides Link **Description:** This session supports teachers in strengthening problem-solving instruction by intentionally integrating Structures of Equality, Read–Draw–Write (RDW), and Mathematical Language Routines (MLRs). Participants will explore how these tools deepen conceptual understanding, elevate Depth of Knowledge (DOK), and increase access for neurodiverse learners by making thinking visible, language explicit, and reasoning central. Teachers will engage as learners, analyze student work, and leave with ready-to-use strategies, sentence frames, and reflection tools.	**Session Title:** Capturing Student Voice: Creating Visuals to Honor Student Ideas for Collective Sensemaking **Presenter:** Tierra Fender, Curriculum and Instructional Math Specialist for CMS **Co-Presenter:** Adrienne Ballin-Bowman, Curriculum and Instructional Math Specialist for CMS Slides Link **Description:** During class discussions (i.e., math talks), students verbalize their reasoning, and teachers attribute student ideas while creating quick diagrams/notations. Verbalizing is crucial for mathematical learning as it helps students articulate their thought processes. However, the teachers' associated visuals can unintentionally introduce bias, affecting peers' interpretations of students' ideas. In this session, participants will practice transcribing verbal reasoning into visuals that honor shared ideas and support collective sense making. The session launches with a task that captures participant reasoning to establish a shared understanding of "verbal to visual." Participants then explore through small-group collaboration, creating visuals as peers describe their reasoning for a mathematical prompt and reflect on how teacher interpretation can influence	**Session Title:** Data Investigations Connected to NC Math Standards **Presenter:** Caitlin Ireland, UNC-Charlotte **Co-Presenters:** Travis Weiland and Constant Segbefia Slides Link **Description:** We have developed Statistical Investigation Briefs for the five major analyses conducted in high school courses: one quantitative variable, one categorical variable, two quantitative variables, two categorical variables, and one quantitative variable grouped by a categorical variable. These briefs provide a demonstration of how to conduct a statistical investigation using the Data Investigation Process, which can be translated into activities for classroom use. Furthermore, we created an Argumentation Organizer to help visualize the Claims-Evidence-Reasoning model to guide learners through connecting the components of the chain of reasoning. Using these tools and resources, our session will discuss how we develop teachers' fluency and confidence with performing statistical investigations, while providing opportunities for reflection of how these skills can be applied to their classroom settings with students.

	how ideas are represented and taken up. Strategies groups use to design visuals that maintain the author's voice and promote access will be collected and displayed. The session concludes with a discussion about the strategies, continued application, and strengthening student-to-student sense making.	

12:25-12:30 Closing and Giveaway: Room 2168