COMPARATIVE VIEWS OF
MATHEMATICS GOALS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

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This Research Forum in educational policy research focuses on the differences in perspectives across countries with respect to mathematics goals and achievement. Each of the four participants will present a brief paper on the mathematical goals for three groups of students in their country (non-college-bound students, college-bound liberal arts students, and college-bound mathematics and science students) and on the evidence on achievement of mathematics goals with respect to three levels (knowledge of concepts and procedures, understanding of the relationship of mathematical ideas in specific domains, and the use of mathematics to mathematize unfamiliar problem situations).

These papers provide background information related to the policy implications of the recent international comparative studies (e.g., TIMSS) and of OECD's forthcoming PISA project. Too often politicians and other policymakers fail to understand that differences in student achievement in mathematics need to be seen in light of each country's goals for its students and the quality of evidence related to achieving those goals.