

FAMILY READING NIGHT

Sam Davey Elementary School
Eau Claire, Wisconsin

Sam Davey Elementary School in Eau Claire, Wisconsin organized a Family Reading Night to help reinforce our goal of improved student performance in the area of reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Since we wanted to tie our reading night in with a birthday celebration for Dr. Seuss, we held our event on March 1. "The Hat Lady," a storyteller from Waupaca, performed for the students during the day, and again in the evening to kick off the night for families. The fifth graders also acted out the story *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day* (complete with props they had created), asking the audience to participate on the repeated lines in the text. Our students enjoyed this presentation during the school day, and the repeat performance for the families in the evening.

Prior to the event, we advertised using various methods such as sending a flyer home to families, articles in the school newspaper, and reminders in students' daily assignment books. A poem was created about the event and read over the PA system by fifth grade students during morning announcements. Various reading literature was sent home to parents. Students made posters to display throughout the building along with *Cat in the Hat* streamers and decorations.

After the evening storyteller's performance, families visited various stations throughout the school to view the fifth grade play, participate in concert reading (reading poetry to music) with second grade students, observe reading programs in the computer lab, or try Dr. Seuss word puzzles, games, and other reading related activities in the IMC. Dr. Seuss face-painting was provided by a youth volunteer while another youth volunteer, dressed as the *Cat in the Hat*, distributed Dr. Seuss stickers at the "Vote for your favorite Dr. Seuss book" station. What's a birthday celebration without cake? Parent volunteers provided cupcakes decorated in red and white, along with red punch.

Through this activity, parents learned various reading activities they could try at home (Type 4—Learning at Home) and also became familiar with how their child uses computers to learn reading skills (Type 2—Communicating). Volunteers were recruited to provide and serve refreshments (Type 3—Volunteering) and our local newspaper donated papers for the evening's activities (Type 6—Collaborating With the Community).

Motivating families to attend evening activities has always been a challenge at our school. To provide encouragement we offered the storyteller, had a door prize

drawing giving away *Cat in the Hat* hats, and involved the second and fifth graders in the evening presentations. This event was very successful with over 200 participants.

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