
DROP-IN MATH TUTORING CLINICS

Vena Avenue Elementary School

Arleta, California

Student and parent participation in the after-school math tutoring clinics at Vena Avenue Elementary School multiplied during the fourteen-week program. The school designed the daily math tutoring clinics to help students master basic math skills and to familiarize parents with the math curriculum and strategies. These two components added up to successful drop-in math tutoring clinics for all.

Implementation of the program was a two-step process. First, the school set up three drop-in math tutoring clinics open every day for one hour after school: one for first and second grade students; one for multiplication skills; and one for upper grade skills. Teachers referred students, or students referred themselves, to the clinics for help with specific math skills based on difficulties they were currently having in the classroom. The clinics focused on mastering basic skills necessary to succeed in math, and did not serve as a homework clinic. This strategy proved beneficial for participating students.

Once the clinics ran smoothly, parents were personally invited to attend the clinics with their children. Parents sat with their children as the tutors showed them both how to use the manipulatives, games, and other activities. The hands-on materials and simple strategies that they could duplicate at home fascinated parents. Some parents were learning the math right along with their children. Students and parents enjoyed their time together, and parents got the chance to see their children succeeding at learning. In turn, the students felt a sense of pride that their parents cared enough to sit with them in a school setting.

Student attendance at the math tutoring clinics became a challenge because the number of children wanting to participate swamped the program. The clinics expanded from one room initially to three rooms in order to accommodate the number of children and to be able to differentiate instruction. An average of twenty students participated daily in the primary skills room, fifteen in the multiplication room, and ten to fifteen in the upper grades room. The school math coach, the program coordinator, teachers, teaching assistants, some parents, and high schools students all assisted with the program. The high school students volunteered to tutor as part of their community service requirement for graduation.

The fourteen-week daily math tutoring clinics cost about \$7000 to operate. School improvement funds, bilingual and compensatory education funds, and some grant money were used to purchase materials and compensate tutors. The program coordinators also utilized math manipulatives that had been stored away in cabinets at the school. Lots of materials enabled tutors to try a variety of strategies to help students acquire math concepts that they lacked.

Vena Elementary School's drop-in math tutoring clinics were successful for students and parents. Classroom teachers reported noticeable math progress by participating students. Parents described the opportunity to learn with their children as valuable, and many parents have already requested that the program expand next year. In fact, the program will continue next year, and parents will be involved in the program's planning and preparation as well. Inviting parents to attend math tutoring with students earns an A+.

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