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## **BREAKFAST AND A BOOK**

### **43 Academy**

#### **Buffalo, New York**

On March 2, 2002, the school hosted a parent breakfast called “Breakfast and a Book” to kick off the Parents As Reading Partners Program (PARP) and to celebrate Dr. Seuss’s birthday. The program supported the school-wide goals of increased reading achievement and increased parent involvement. Over 75 parents and 115 children participated.

At the breakfast, parents learned about Project Flight, a three-year literacy project sponsored by Buffalo State College. The project donated over \$2000 worth of books to the school to create a lending library for parents. The goal of Project Flight is to help the school become a resource to parents who want to improve their own literacy skills as well as their children’s skills.

Evaluators monitored book usage and reviewed pre- and post-test reading scores of children who participated in using the lending library. During Breakfast and a Book, parents signed books out to read with their children for the PARP Program.

The PARP program, a PTA-sponsored program throughout New York, was offered to third-through eighth-grade students. Over sixty-five children participated in the month-long program that required a parent to actively participate with their child in reading at home for fifteen minutes a day, five days a week, for one month. Parents were invited to a PTA meeting the following month where they received recognition for their participation with their children. The PTA provided thank-you gifts to the parents, as well as reading medals for the student participants.

Action Team members, the Parent Education Coordinator, PTA members, and school aides jointly organized the breakfast. School administrators and a police officer served as readers for the Dr. Seuss celebration. The cafeteria manager provided a full breakfast for the parents and students. The PTA decorated the cafeteria and provided all of the reading incentives for the PARP program. The Title I Reading Teacher and the Title I Aide, (both members of the Action Team) established the lending library for the Project Flight materials, and maintained records of usage. They also compiled the documentation required at the year’s end.

The costs for the breakfast event were minimal. The PTA spent about \$50.00 on the parent and student incentives for the PARP Program and about \$20.00 for refreshments served at the PTA

meeting. The cafeteria manager provided free student breakfasts, and the PTA paid \$175 for the parent breakfasts. A local business donated breakfast pastries.

The success of the PARP Program and Breakfast and a Book was measured by the number of participants and the informal comments that were made throughout the program. Parents and community members felt welcome in the school, and seen as valued partners in their children's education. Students realized the importance that the school places on reading, at both their level and at the adult level. They saw adults as role models who enjoyed reading. Hopefully, this focus on reading will result in increased reading achievement.

Other schools might want to conduct the PARP Program and Breakfast and a Book because they involve the PTA, parents at home and at school, and independent reading.

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