

Helping Parents = Helping Students

*Clara E. Westropp Fundamental Education Center
Cleveland, Ohio*

Knowing that students need family support in order to be academically successful in school, the Clara E. Westropp Fundamental Education Center planned a series of workshops to help parents support their children's learning at home. The monthly workshops focused on topics suggested by parents of kindergarten through eighth-grade students.

Helping Parents = Helping Students hoped to achieve the following goals:

- Increase Ohio Proficiency and standardized test scores by 3%;
- Increase parent participation to 25%;
- Foster communication between parents and teachers; and
- Foster parent-to-parent communication.

Parents completed a survey asking for input on the kinds of workshops they would like to attend and the times they would be available. Westropp's Family Liaison and math and English language arts professional developers scheduled parent workshops each month, from October through May. Workshop topics included:

- Maintaining Literacy Skills at Home;
- Practicing Literacy Skills;
- Maintaining Math Skills at Home;
- Practicing Math Skills;
- Test-Taking Skills; and
- Improving Homework.

During the last two months, the workshops focused on parents' concerns and a parent appreciation ceremony.

The Family Liaison, as well as the math and English language arts professional developers, actively recruited and enrolled parents in

the workshops through word of mouth, fliers, newsletters, and incentives to the students whose parents participated. These three staff members also worked with the 30 or so parents who attended each workshop.

Teachers received a grant of approximately \$3,500 to fund the workshops. Staff believe the workshops helped increase students' scores on proficiency and off-grade tests. Parents showed increased interest in and willingness to support their children's achievement. Greater numbers of parents have volunteered at the school since the workshops started. Clara E. Westropp staff will offer the workshop series again next year in hopes of even higher parent participation.

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