

## Literacy Luncheon

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*John W. Raper School  
Cleveland, Ohio*

While summer is traditionally a time for taking a vacation from teachers, books, and homework, parents at the John W. Raper School wanted ways to help their children maintain the skills they learned during the year while on their break. In response, the school's family liaison invited parents to a Literacy Luncheon in May to provide strategies for supporting learning after school ends for the year.

The school's literacy specialist directed the luncheon program, providing information and answering parent questions. The principal spoke about student academic and behavioral expectations. Parents received an *Options Workbook*, designed to reinforce skills from the past grade and introduce skills for the upcoming one. Students who returned with the book completed in the fall could receive prizes from a drawing. Those who did not finish the activities worked on them when they completed in-class exercises. Teachers from all grade levels attended the luncheon so that parents could ask questions regarding academic expectations for their children in the upcoming year. Tutors from the Retired Seniors Volunteer Program (RSVP) also attended to answer questions parents had about the tutors' work with their children. As a special bonus, the local librarian came with library card applications and announcements about children's activities at the library during the summer.

Funding for the luncheon came from Title I and Options, which greatly discounted the price of the workbooks. The School Parent

Organization (SPO) publicized the luncheon at its monthly meeting and in the monthly newsletter that students take home. Teachers sent home a tear-off flier two weeks before the event. Parents who did not return the form received a phone call personally inviting them. Parents unable to attend the luncheon could come to the school at their convenience to pick up the distributed materials. All students received an *Options Workbook*, even if their parents did not attend.

In the fall, teachers noted that students who completed the workbooks performed better on tests and homework and struggled less with new concepts. Parents liked the program and appreciated that their children had something constructive to do during their break. As one parent put it, "My children won't be bored this summer, because they will always have a productive activity to complete."

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