

## Kids and Parents Count: Family Math Night

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*Highwood Hills Elementary School  
St. Paul, Minnesota*

Family Math Night at Highwood Hills Elementary School teaches second-through fourth-grade students and their families games to use at home to prepare for the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments. Individual teachers had successfully held math nights in the past, so the Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) organized a schoolwide event as part of a larger plan to improve student math achievement.

The evening started with two staff members reading aloud from *Measuring Penny*, a story that incorporates math concepts. After the reading, families visited grade-appropriate stations to play math games. Families rotated through different stations for one hour, after which they received math prizes and ate a pizza dinner. At the end of the evening, each child received a copy of *Measuring Penny* for his/her home library and a math kit with game instructions, cards, scissors, rulers, and coins to play the math games at home.

The ATP organized Family Math Night at one of their monthly meetings. Teachers who had conducted similar programs in the past came to explain how best to set up the stations in the cafeteria and contributed games and materials for the event. To encourage a large turnout, teachers called parents and distributed fliers in class. An article was written in the school newspaper, and a grandparent ATP member placed fliers at a housing complex where many of the students live. Weekly school assemblies reminded students and teachers of the upcoming event. Students contributed by counting money for the

math kits distributed at the close of the program. Food came from a local restaurant, which offered a buy-one-get-one-free pizza deal.

Planned to avoid scheduling conflicts with other school events, over 100 students, parents, and staff participated in Family Math Night. Parents and their children worked together on important math skills while teachers enjoyed the opportunity to meet with family members in an informal setting. In the future, the ATP will schedule the Family Math Night earlier in the year to establish basic concepts and to involve parents sooner in their children's math education.

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