

# Math Mates

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*Mill Street Elementary School  
Naperville, Illinois*

**B**P Amoco isn't just a company that provides fuel for cars. It also is a company that helps put schools on the road to meet the goals in their School Improvement Plans! Take Mill Street Elementary School, for example. The School Improvement Team (SIT) at Mill Street identified improving students' math skills as a priority, and determined that some students needed more math instruction and experiences. Out of the SIT's decision came Math Mates, a parent and community volunteer tutoring program.

Employees of BP Amoco joined parents as volunteer tutors, known as Math Mates. They worked with students chosen by their teachers for extra help, thus multiplying the time these students spent on math.

Working in small groups or individually with tutors, students used different approaches, such as math games and manipulatives, to improve their math skills and understanding. Math Mate tutors also provided weekly feedback to the teachers about student achievement in the program.

Teachers and parents on the school's math committee were instrumental in getting Math Mates up and running. Mill Street Home & School bought math games and manipulatives. Selected parents and staff members offered to train the volunteers -- a vital component to the success of such a program.

Increased student achievement, measured on formal standardized tests and with district math objectives, and informal assessments including classroom observations attest to the success of Math Mates. In addition, classroom teachers noted that students acted with more confidence in math by raising their hands and participating in math lessons and class discussions.

Students were not the only Math Mates participants to experience positive outcomes.

Parents and volunteers also learned more about the math curriculum and how to work with students. The training they received helped them better assist their own children. Teachers greatly appreciated the extra help and support for their struggling math students.

In addition, teachers were able to use the Math Mates materials with other students in their classrooms, increasing the benefits of the program. About 35 teachers and staff members, 20 parents and 30 community volunteers were involved.

Thanks to good planning and positive feedback, Mill Street Elementary plans to implement Math Mates next year. "The one-on-one involvement is irreplaceable," said one teacher. A parent added: "My child enjoys math now that he feels more confident."

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