

Rocky View Elementary School hosts Family Math Night

Written by By Dee Velasco For the Sun
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Students learn fun, easy tools to improve their math skills

Parents, family, friends and students were invited to Rocky View Elementary School's Family Math Night March 1, where they learned fun techniques to handle tricky problems. Parents felt encouraged as they were shown the math learning skills their children are being taught.

The event was hosted by Empower Educational Consulting, an educational consulting firm based out of Chandler, Ariz. Jennifer French Crone and Laura Moore gave the presentation, two educators with the firm who travel throughout the United States discussing and applying new ways for students to learn math.

Crone and Moore emphasized that the way students were taught in the past fails to prepare today's students for the higher demands of college and careers. With efforts like Family Math Night, schools like Rocky View are working to improve teaching and learning to ensure that all children will graduate high school with the skills needed to be successful.

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In mathematics, efforts to prepare students involve three major changes.

Teachers will concentrate on teaching a more focused set of major math concepts and skills, allowing students time to master key math concepts and skills in a more organized way throughout the year and from one grade to the next. This reworked curriculum will also call for teachers to use rich and challenging math content to engage students in solving real-world problems, which the school hopes will inspire greater interest in the subject.

At Family Math Night, Game-based educational materials were handed out to students from Pre-K through fifth grade to take home and practice what they had learned. These consisted of simple addition and subtraction games like Butterfly, in which a player draws three cards from a deck and finds their sum.

Crone wants the students to overcome their fear of math, and also for parents to get excited and motivate the students. She described how Math Night came to Rocky View.

“Family Math night came about because this school does a lot of work with families that try to encourage them to be a part of their kids’ education,” Crone said. “Lots of parents have a phobia of math and we want to empower them to understand how to help their student with math. So, we wanted to have this math night so that parents can learn a little bit of how math has changed since they were in school and to get them to the classes for their kids to show off some of the games they have been learning, and show them how math is fun.”

Moore, who was thrilled so many parents showed up to support the students, echoed Crone’s position on the family’s role in a child’s education – particularly in tough subjects like mathematics.

“Bringing [the parents] here was just an awesome thing, because it tells the child that school is important,” Moore said. “I think any time we can get parents involved and understanding math and what their child is learning, it’s a plus-plus for the parents, kids, and the entire school. “

Beyond their work with students and parents, Moore and Crone also coaches teachers. The

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consultants offer instruction help in English Language Arts, supplying teachers with advice and techniques to become better resources for their students.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUCCESS

Debbie Arthur, the principal of Rocky View Elementary School, was pleased with the event and its turnout.

“It was a great success,” Arthur said. “Math is so important, it’s a skill that all kids need for great opportunities for a good job when they get out of school. We just want to give every kid that opportunity, with the participation of the parents and the kids, it was a great success.”

Like Arthur, Brooke, who teaches first and second grade math at Rocky View Elementary School, was excited about the math skills her students were already learning and showing their parents.

“We had such a lovely turnout and I am so proud of our kids,” Brooke said after the event. “They are teaching their grownups so many great math games. We’ve been focusing on math fluency and it’s so nice for our kids to show that off. The math games are simple addition, subtraction games that can be done with a deck of cards or dice, even simple household items.”

Parents also spoke optimistically of the students’ performance on Family Math Night.

Briana Yazzie, whose son Kayden Yazzie is in the second grade at Rocky View, came to see what additional methods she could utilize to help her son.

“I came because I know my son was having improvement in his math skills and the more I’m interested in it, the better he learns,” Yazzie said. “I wanted to support him tonight and come for the Family Math Night.”

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Students as well showed pride over their achievements. Kayden Yazzie spoke excitedly about taking the games home and bettering his math.

“I’m good at math and I’m kind of having problems in subtraction, but with the games they gave us I can’t wait to play them over the weekend,” Kayden Yazzie said.

Family Math Night left parents with some suggestions on how to be more engaged in their children’s school life. To start, instructors said to partner with your child’s teacher. Parents were reminded to reach out to teachers, as parents are an important part of a child’s education. Other suggestions included asking to see a sample of your child’s work, or to bring a sample with you, and to always ask questions.

For more information on helping your child learn mathematics, visit: www.2ed.gov/parents/academic/help/math/index.html

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