

PENCIL Foundation Math Partners Program 2009-10 Annual Report

Since its inception in 2000, the Math Partners Program has helped thousands of students in Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) achieve math success. Recognizing the need for students to gain strength in understanding word problems while utilizing basic math concepts is the core focus of this direct service program. The recent expansion of the program in 2008 to include elementary school students has helped to provide PENCIL's unique math tutoring opportunities to MNPS students in grades 3 through 8 who are below proficiency based on the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) test.

PENCIL Math Partners are recruited from its 675 PENCIL Partners and other sectors of the Nashville community, including colleges and universities. Each year, a focused training session that is tailored to the standards of the elementary and middle school curriculum is provided by PENCIL. Students struggling in math proficiency are referred to PENCIL by their classroom teachers and instructional specialists. Each tutor participates in honing a child's math proficiency in a variety of ways. PENCIL Math Partners help children adapt math language skills and fluency through active discussion and visualization of word problems, formulas, and basic arithmetic concepts. The materials afforded to each volunteer have been developed specifically to create hands-on, interactive tutoring experiences. Resources include manipulative items such as beans or object counters, as well as worksheets which correspond to a given math activity or area of emphasis. Students are tutored individually or in small groups of two to four for a period lasting anywhere from 45 minutes to an hour. Math Partner sessions occur throughout the school year and take place within the safe environment of a student's own classroom under the supervision of a classroom teacher, instructional specialist, or numeracy coach. This stresses the importance of creating a comfortable space for students that enables them to identify hindrances to success. Furthermore, mentoring relationships are fostered by volunteers on behalf of their students, who interact with them on a consistent basis for at least one semester throughout the school year; many volunteers tutor for longer periods of time. Finally, math activities emphasize collaboration and teamwork as children work with tutors and classmates towards finding solutions.



Through PENCIL Foundation's partial underwriting support, the Math Partners Program accomplished the following milestones throughout the 2009-10 scholastic year:

- A total of 145 volunteers served as Math Partners in Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools from September 2009 to May 2010, contributing more than 2,300 hours of service
- A total of 690 students – 423 in 25 elementary schools and 267 in 16 middle schools – from grades 3 through 8 received tutoring assistance in the form of weekly Math Partner tutoring sessions
- A total of 13 college and university work-study students contributed over 4000 hours of tutoring at 12 schools, helping approximately 110 students
- ThinkLink™ tests indicate that students in the program are making significant academic

progress in math. These tests are used by the school system as a predictor of student performance on the annual state mandated TCAP tests. A large sample of students tutored by Math Partners in 2009-10 showed that 75% exhibited growth in math proficiency growth score within just a few months of tutoring

- Students from a Belmont University class performed a semester-long service-learning tutoring project in Metro schools on behalf of PENCIL Math Partners, contributing over 50 hours of math tutoring at Warner Elementary and Head Middle School
- A local community church has partnered with J.T. Moore Middle School to provide 9 Math Partners volunteers this year, fortifying a history of a strong volunteer presence at the school
- One Math Partners volunteer donated her time as a tutor at Harris Hillman Special Education School, which provides a safe environment for MNPS students with multiple disabilities
- A total of 38 Math Partners also served as ELL volunteers and worked with a number of Spanish-speaking and other students with limited English proficiency, including 4 Math Partners volunteers who tutored among the 43 students at the International Newcomer's Academy
- The Meharry-Vanderbilt Student Alliance remains a supporter of Math Partners in providing tutoring and mentorship opportunities for medical, dental, and graduate students while maintaining its partnership with Haynes Middle Health/Medical Science Design Center. Since 2008, 22 such students have participated in Math Partner tutoring
- Community Family Resource Centers based at Fall-Hamilton and Bordeaux Elementary School coordinated with PENCIL Foundation and Math Partners to provide additional tutoring spaces for volunteers while providing extra resources to meet the social needs of children from particularly at-risk communities
- In a decade, a total number of 3,506 MNPS students have benefited from PENCIL's Math Partners Program



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