

PENCIL Foundation: Math Partners Program

Interim Report 2008-09

Overview:

For the past nine years, dedicated volunteers in the Math Partners Program of PENCIL Foundation have helped boost math achievement for struggling students in Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools. Working with students who are at risk of failing, volunteers use a variety of hands-on activities to increase understanding, nurture an enjoyment of math, and show the relevance of math for everyday life. Through the course of weekly meetings with students, community volunteers become mentors, role-models and caring adults in the lives of students.

PENCIL Foundation recruits, trains and places volunteers in schools throughout the county-wide district of 75,000 students. Volunteers meet weekly with a group of up to four students. Utilizing a curriculum developed by the Math Partners Director in consultation with the Math Coordinator of MNPS, Math Partners help students build essential math sense and strengthen math skills.

Evaluation:

Success of the program is demonstrated by improved math achievement scores for students as measured on the state-mandated TCAP test scores and on the interim measurements of ThinkLink Test Scores.

Outcomes:

- Math Partner volunteers helped 248 children in 24 schools during fall semester 2008.
- At the request of Metro Schools, PENCIL developed grade-appropriate curriculum and training to pilot Math Partners for 3rd and 4th graders who needed extra assistance. A total of 90 elementary school children received help from volunteers this past semester.
- PENCIL collaborated with the Fall-Hamilton and the Bordeaux Family Resource Centers to address the needs of the at-risk students in their area.
- Supplemental curriculum has been developed for Math Partners to help English Language Learners (ELL) students to gain the math skills they need to catch up with their peers. A total of 39 ELL students received help from Math Partners. When available, Spanish-speaking volunteers assisted students with limited English proficiency.
- College volunteers assisting in an AVID classroom have been both important mentors for middle schoolers thinking about college as well as math tutors.
- Collaboration continues with the Meharry-Vanderbilt Medical Student Alliance to promote African-American male mentorships with young male students and support math achievement.
- PENCIL is collaborating with Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Middle Tennessee to provide math training for their volunteers who want to help their "Littles" with school work.

Program Funding:

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