

**Parent Engagement Opportunity Fund  
Spring, 2009**

**Belfast Home and School Association**

President: Anne MacLeod

Principal: David Bryand

**Name of Project: Belfast Math Games Night**

**Goal(s):**

- To bring together the parents, teachers and students for grades one - six for a math night.

**Description:**

The whole school community was involved in planning, designing, and preparing games for this Math Games Night! Teachers and parents made up the bags containing the materials necessary to play the games. Students learned how to play the games and practiced playing them with other children so that they would be adept with all of the rules and moves before teaching their parents.

The turnout was more than we had hoped for! Several games were available in each classroom and parents rotated among the games within each time frame. Parent volunteers were available that night so that traffic ran smoothly. Children spent time mentoring parents on how to utilize math skills learned in the classroom. They then taught their parents some of the math games they had learned so they could be used at home by the parents when they worked with their children. Children interacted with their parents and taught and highlighted math skills and games. Parents were then given a math bag that contained the math games and the materials necessary to play them.

**Did you achieve your goal?**

Yes, staff, students and parents participated in a School Math Night. Students became teachers who taught math games to their parents.

**Who did the project benefit?**

Our project benefitted all those present. It had parents working closely with teachers, staff and students to prepare for the event. The greatest benefit was the positive relationship that developed between the school and the community.

**What challenges are you still facing with parent engagement?**

We are still trying to have more parents actively involved in our school. The challenge is to keep building a positive relationship between the school and the community.

**Thoughts about the project topic (provided by project partners):**

The world around us is mathematical and we constantly engage in activities that bring what is learned in a text book to life. The Belfast parent engagement approach is a fine demonstration of how, through games and activities, to bring mathematics off the page into the real lives of the family.

Bringing parents and children together for an evening of math-related activities where friendly competition, sharing, laughter, and learning blossom in an event not soon forgotten. Such a process is particularly powerful for fathers who sometimes leave their children's schooling to their wife or partner. Dads like to "do things" and an event such as this which took place in Belfast is a good example of how to effectively engage fathers with their children's learning.