

**Parent Engagement Opportunity Fund
October, 2009**

Miscouche Home and School Association

President: Mary MacKay

Principal: Andy Doran

**Name of Project: Increase Volunteer Opportunities and Information
 Session for Parents to Update Math Strategies**

Goal(s):

- To bring information to parents so they will have a clear understanding of where they are needed within the school.
- To provide information to parents so they will know how to help their child with math.

Description:

First we met with the school staff to determine where volunteers were needed within the classrooms. It was our belief that by providing parents with specific options such as assisting in the computer lab, or providing reading partners, it will be easier for them to commit their time. Then we sent home forms to the parents outlining the areas where they might provide support. As well, we offered two concurrent math seminars for parents. Refreshments were served during these sessions.

Did you achieve your goal?

Yes and No! We received a large number of signed volunteer forms which provides us with a great resource list when we sponsor activities and provide treats to teachers and staff. But the Math Night did not attract any additional parents so we did not reach anyone new with that endeavour.

Who did the project benefit?

The Home and School executive benefitted from the list of possible volunteers and the parents who did attend the math workshop found it very informative.

What challenges are you still facing with parent engagement?

We still have the same core group of parents who do the bulk of the work. We will try to

encourage more opportunities for engagement. Having said that, though, it is important to note that we are a small school (Grades 1 - 9) and we have a very strong parent group to begin with.

Thoughts about the project topic (provided by project partners)

Seeking parent volunteers and offering math awareness sessions: The Miscouche experience is an excellent example of the reality many Home and School associations face, i.e. parent engagement. Many parents, when asked, indicate that they are prepared to volunteer for specific school related activities. Most schools have parents who volunteer to help children with mathematics and reading during school time.

Transferring the concept of volunteerism to their own children as it relates to parents helping children learn has, for the most part, not been made, yet most parents actually volunteer hundreds of hours per year helping their children with school work.

What the Miscouche Home and School association wants to do is provide these parent volunteers with skills and activities to do their volunteer work more effectively. Good idea!