

Math Night

Graham Mesa Elementary School

Rifle, CO



COLORADO
Department of Education

Math and numbers are part of our everyday lives and activities. However, this can often be a subject that parents find intimidating to help their students with at home. In order to help dispel this intimidation, Graham Mesa Elementary held a Math Night for their students and families to attend.

The purpose of this Math Night is to give students and their families the chance to practice math skills learned in school in a real-life setting. Additionally, this type of an event allows families who may not regularly engage in school events to do so in a relaxed environment.

The event was held in a local grocery store for a two-hour block of time during regular shopping hours. Students received a developmentally appropriate math activity from their grade level teachers to complete in a particular area of the store, with the support of their families. This demonstrated to families how learning can be done anywhere and not just inside the classroom. Examples of activities included determining which of two fruits weighs more for kindergarten students, looking for geometric shapes for first grade students, or a budgeting exercise for fourth grade students. Teachers provided support throughout the activity for students and families. Upon completion, the students and families met with the teachers in the grade level above theirs, so as to begin to form these new relationships.

Families provided evaluation of the event at the end of the evening through survey. While doing this, prize entries could also be filled out, and several entry forms were drawn at random for prizes such as grocery gift store cards or other gifts generously donated by community organizations and businesses. Over 90% of families indicated that they enjoyed the event and liked the opportunity to participate in academic events outside of the school.

For other schools interested in planning this type of event, it is recommended that a strong relationship be built with local businesses willing both to host the event and to donate prizes. Planning is also very important, as this type of event requires particular attention to detail.

Math Night not only helped to reinforce the math skills that students are learning in the classroom in a real world environment, but also helped parents to learn ways that they can support their students' math learning outside of the classroom. This can lead to an increase in student achievement and parent involvement in academics, and ultimately to family and school partnerships.