

MathPOWER's Best Practices: Arrival

Interview with Emily Duncan, Director of Programs

MathPOWER is a summer learning program that provides classes based on the material students will learn the next academic year. The program also offers remediation based on material covered in the previous academic year for grades 6 through 10.



Photo Credit: MathPOWER

Key Takeaways:

- The program used printed flyers and newsletters to communicate with families, but will be using email in the future.
- All students are greeted by staff and tutor-mentors when they arrive.
- Students complete their homework when they first arrive on site. After their homework is completed they are offered a variety of activities.
- Clear expectations help students arrive to the program on time.
- Arrival is based around each student's individual needs

Q: How did your program communicate program start and end times to families – i.e. print media, phone calls, informal communication, newsletters, etc.?

A: We used newsletters and flyers sent home and in school. In the past, we have printed, rather than emailed, these materials. However, we will be moving toward email in the future.

Q: What was your program's arrival routine? Did staff greet each student?

A: The students arrive after the tutor-mentors. The lead staff greet every student and direct them where to sit and to check-in. As students get seated, the tutor-mentors greet them, ask them about their day, and then we get started on work.

Q: What activities were available for youth to engage in once they arrived on site?

A: When students arrive, first and foremost they work on their homework. Once students have completed this work, we offer quite a number of activities. We also have work that is leveled based on skill needs. If students work really hard, we offer a more fun activity such as a card game.

Q: If your program was having issues with a student arriving late, how was that addressed?

A: It has been difficult because often, if a student is arriving late, it is because they have detention. This aside, I made the expectation that students had to be signed in and in their seats by 2:30. Once this expectation was communicated and understood by students, they were fine with it. Most of the students wanted to be there because they were given snacks upon arrival, which was a great incentive for students to be in attendance and on time. Most of the students have lockers near the room we were located in, so I could easily see what they were up to. Lateness was not a huge issue for this program.

Q: How would you apply this practice to different age groups?

A: I would not really vary it based on age group. Arrival is based around what each individual student needs. I know who arrives and sits down quickly and who needs a longer conversation or activity to get ready to learn.

MathPOWER's Algebra Plus Summer Academy is a math camp that focuses on students going into grades 6-10. The program provides classes based on the material they will learn the next academic year and remediation based on material that they should have learned before, but based on their scores on their previous tests they haven't learned yet. Then, in the afternoon, students participate in math-based enrichment activities run by our teaching assistants.