

Managing a Math SuperStars Program



The Math SuperStars Program is a project of:

**Volunteer Services
Broward County Public Schools
Telephone: 754-321-2040**

www.getinvolvedineducation.com/volunteer_services.html
www.browardschools.com



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Welcome to Math SuperStars

Welcome to Math SuperStars and thank you for your willingness to take a leadership role in bringing this exciting mathematics experience to students in Broward County.

Your opportunities are unique. By coordinating the Math SuperStars Program you will:

- 🍏 **Impact the education of students.** Literally tens of thousands of students in elementary and middle schools participate in this exciting math program. Through their weekly work sheets, students will practice real-life applications of mathematics and build higher order thinking skills.
- 🍏 **Impact parent involvement.** Helping parents connect to their children's learning enables parents to communicate in powerful ways that they value what their children achieve. Through Math SuperStars, many parents will encounter the different kinds of mathematics their children deal with daily.
- 🍏 **Impact school volunteer programs.** This volunteer-driven program often utilizes a segment of the volunteer force who must limit their service to schools due to work hours or job location. However, they can very often check Math SuperStars papers during the evenings, on the weekend, or during their lunch breaks.
- 🍏 **Impact your skills and experiences.** Managing a program like Math SuperStars, will help you gain valuable organizational and management skills.

Does this sound both worthwhile and fun? We hope so! We also hope that you will take advantage of the information in this guide. It is a compilation of the advice and experiences of many great people who also serve as Math SuperStars' coordinators throughout Broward schools. Feel free to adopt these ideas directly or use them to develop ideas that will work best for your school's students, volunteers, and staff. Also, share your best tips with others by telling Volunteer Services. We'll be happy to include your best practices in later editions of this manual.

Lastly, always feel free to contact the Volunteer Services Department whenever we can answer a question or lend a hand. Just telephone 754-321-2040 during normal business hours.

What is Math SuperStars?

Overview

Math SuperStars, also known as Sunshine Math, is an enrichment opportunity designed for self-directed learners in mathematics. The Sunshine Math program was conceived and coordinated by the Florida Department of Education's Mathematics Department. There are many effective variations of the program; the goal of all models is to enhance students' appreciation and knowledge of mathematics.

The basic program model in Broward (Weekly/Volunteer Assisted):

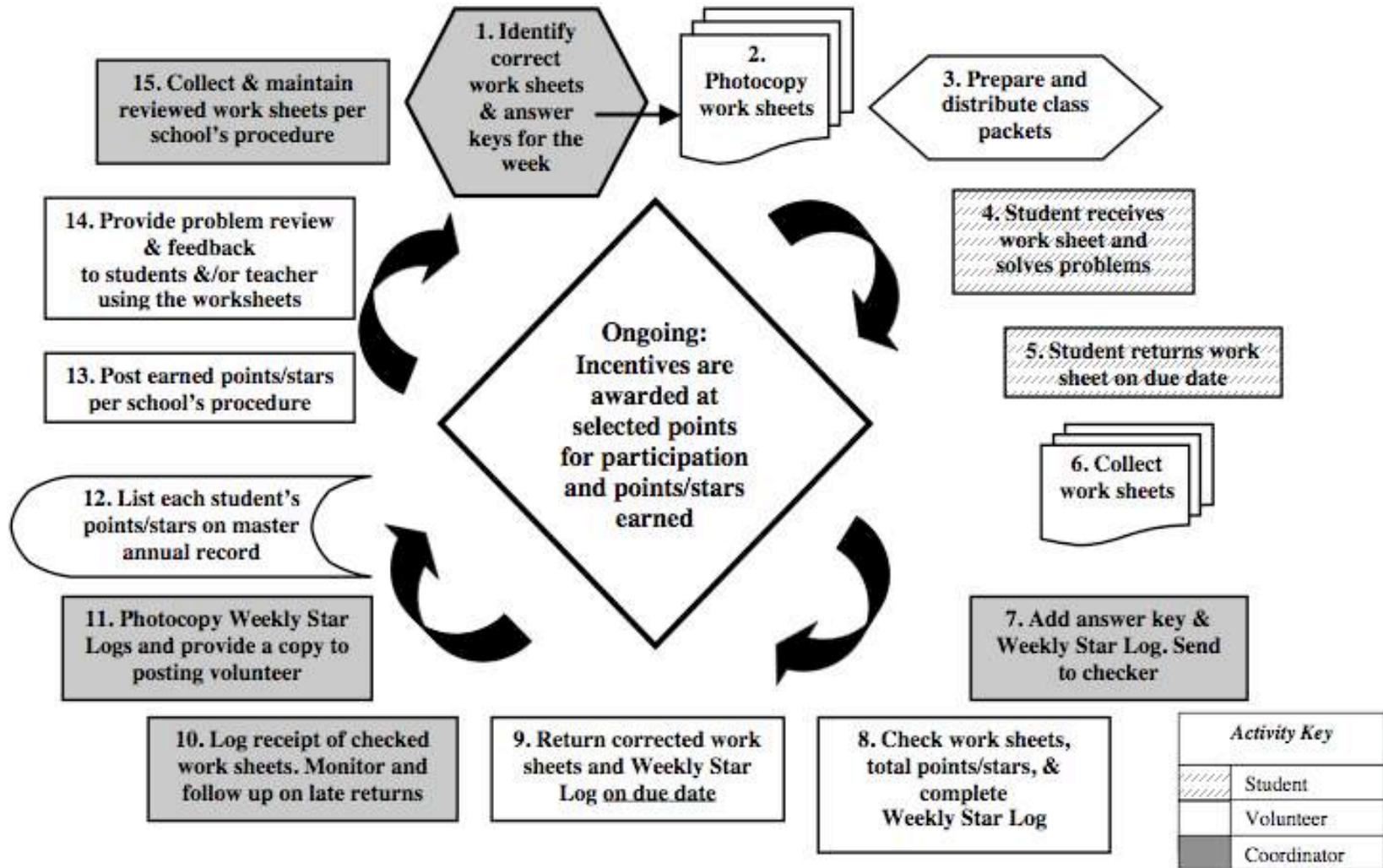
- On a planned day each week, on Friday for example, work sheets are distributed to those students who have voluntarily joined the program. Students have until the stated day, Tuesday for example, to complete the problems, working entirely on their own. Ideally, the classroom teacher hosts a brief problem-solving session for the students in the program, let's say on Wednesday. The more difficult problems on the work sheet for that week are discussed, with students describing their thinking about how to approach and solve the problems.
- Students get double-credit for problems they complete before the problem-solving session, and regular credit for those they complete successfully after the teacher's discussion. On the required day, on Friday for example, all papers are handed in. The SuperStars volunteer picks up the week's completed work sheets on Friday and drops off the next week's work sheets. SuperStars volunteers then score these work sheets, and stars are posted for problems successfully worked. This completes the cycle for the preceding week and allows for new work sheets to be passed out in the same trip to the classroom.
- In this model, only students who are self-motivated and who are not easily frustrated by challenging situations are involved in SuperStars. This process does not diminish the value of the program, but rather makes us realize that there are children of all abilities and socio-economic levels who are self-directed learners and who need challenges beyond those of the regular school day.

Variations on the Basic Model:

- This model retains the weekly cycle and the assistance of a school volunteer. However, the teacher involves the entire class in SuperStars participation or at least in the problem discussions. Thus, all students are exposed to the benefits of the program.
- Another variation in the program is that the assisting volunteer is allowed access to the classroom to review the problems, under the teacher's guidance, when the work sheets are returned after checking.

Both models offer students the benefit of learning at which point or step they made errors in solving the math problem.

Math SuperStars' Process at a Glance



* Activities not illustrated include preliminary program planning, volunteer recruitment, and training.
It is advisable that the photocopying of work sheets be done during the summer break or other less busy time.

Explanation of Math SuperStars' Process at a Glance

1. The program coordinator identifies each grade level's correct weekly work sheet and answer key. These can be found in the Math SuperStars Program manual provided to the school by Volunteer Services. The SuperStars' manual (also known as Sunshine Math) should be maintained at the school site and in a supervised setting. This manual is not replaced annually. If pages are found to be missing, contact Volunteer Services.

The manual is organized by grade level, with answer keys or Commentaries, in the back of each grade level section.

2. SuperStars' volunteers photocopy the weekly work sheets. The task of preparing work sheets for distribution to the students can be done in advance if the school has knowledge of approximately how many students will be participating in the program. It is recommended that preparing the photocopied work sheets may be done during the summer or at other times when the photocopy machine is not busy. Remember to keep the work sheets in order by grade level and/or classroom teacher and by the applicable week.
3. Volunteers prepare and distribute class packets on the day established for your school. The classroom teacher may need a list of those students who are participating in the program, or may want the SuperStars volunteer to enter the classroom and distribute the papers. The teacher may also prefer to receive the work sheets a day or two early, but must understand that the papers must be distributed on the assigned day.
4. The students receive the appropriate work sheets and solve the math problems. SuperStars is an independent project, usually completed at-home, though some teachers may allow students to work on it during classroom time. Be sure that all students understand when their papers should be returned.
5. Students return the work sheets on the selected due date. Establish a policy to handle late papers due to the absence of the student, holidays, and work sheets that are late without a valid reason. Whatever policy is established it should be uniformly followed throughout the school.
6. Volunteers collect the work sheets on the due date or on the following day. It is recommended that the work sheets be collected in each classroom, not in a centralized location. The individual teacher can collect the work sheets, or the SuperStars' volunteer can collect them when she/he arrives to pick-up the week's work. Whichever method is used, it is important to the checker that the work sheets for each class are kept separate, and that students understand the late paper rules.
7. Add answer key and Weekly Star Log (shown on page 25) to the work sheets and send the packet to the checker assigned to the classroom. (Remind the checker when you expect the packet to be returned.)
8. The checker then scores each work sheet, totals the points and records each student's information on the Weekly Star Log. Refer to *Checking & Scoring the Work Sheets* on page 24 of this booklet for further information.

9. After scoring, the checker returns the work sheets and Weekly Star Log to the program coordinator on the date established by the school for work sheet return.
10. The coordinator logs receipt of the scored work sheets. It is important that the coordinator tracks the status of the work sheet packets and makes reminder calls to the checkers. If a checker is habitually late in returning the packet, perhaps another checker should be added to assist in the workload, or the checker may not enjoy this job and need to be assigned to another task.
11. The coordinator or a volunteer needs to provide the Weekly Star Log to the volunteer assigned to keep the master records for the year and to the volunteer who will post the students results for the week, if the school is posting points/stars.
12. The volunteer record-keeper needs to track the number of points/stars each student receives by the week. Also desired is scores by classroom, and perhaps even by grade level. These records are especially important in determining the recognition/prizes each student should receive
13. The volunteer posts each student's number of points/stars in the selected location and in the manner decided by the school.
14. A volunteer needs to review the problems with the students, providing feedback on how the problem should be correctly solved. The classroom teacher may also provide this review task, particularly if the SuperStars' volunteer is not comfortable in this role. It is important in the learning process that students receive this feedback.
15. The coordinator then collects all Math Super Stars worksheets. These scored work sheets should **NOT** go home with the student because the math problems do not change year-to-year. We recommend that the coordinator keeps the completed work sheets until the school year is over, in case the teacher or administrator requests to see the students' completed work.

Roles and Responsibilities

School Principal

- √ Become familiar with the philosophy and component parts of the program.
- √ Introduce Math SuperStars to the faculty early in the school year and encourage use.
- √ Explain the philosophy of the program to classroom teachers and provide a copy of the student work sheets and commentary for the teacher's particular grade level.
- √ Speak to parents, explaining the purpose of the program and the long-term value to student achievement.
- √ Offer assistance to the coordinator, including necessary resources.

Classroom Teacher

- √ Allow program into classroom.
- √ Encourage students to participate.
- √ Welcome and advise program volunteers.
- √ Use a review of the week's problems to reinforce math skills.

Math SuperStars Coordinator

- √ Prepare plan of action and budget for program needs.
- √ Acquire and maintain a master manual of work sheets and answer sheets.
- √ Purchase necessary materials, incentives/prizes to be used during the year.
- √ Recruit several volunteers who are enthusiastic and dependable people.
- √ Provide the volunteers with the training, information, and materials necessary to do their job successfully.
- √ Establish a telephone or E-mail system so that volunteers can contact you, and that you can regularly communicate with them.
- √ Plan for the distribution of work sheets.
- √ Plan for the collection and posting of scores.
- √ Plan and implement incentive programs, special events, certificates, etc.
- √ Offer the program to new teachers and to teachers who have not used it before.
- √ Maintain good communication with the classroom teachers.
- √ Handle any problem situations promptly.
- √ Recognize program volunteers for their contributions to Math SuperStars.

Math SuperStars' Volunteers

- √ Complete an annual Volunteer Application, as required by the School District.
- √ Read and understand the Guidelines for Volunteers, as required by the School District.
- √ Attend the Math SuperStars' orientation/training.
- √ Learn the process and schedule for the school's program.
- √ Make a personal commitment to doing your assigned activity on time.

Math SuperStars' volunteers may be asked to do any of the following activities:

- 🍏 Copy weekly work sheets for the students
- 🍏 Distribute work sheets on designated day
- 🍏 Collect the returned work sheets
- 🍏 Check the work sheets
- 🍏 Collect the scores and post the stars earned
- 🍏 Plan incentive programs
- 🍏 Plan and implement special events, certificate programs, etc.
- 🍏 Assist with recognition activities

Parents

- √ Encourage your child to participate in the Math SuperStars Program.
- √ Schedule a regular time and place for homework and program work sheets.
- √ Express the value of mathematics by home practice in basic skills.
- √ Allow your child to work independently, but encourage him/her to talk through problems.
- √ Encourage your child to think aloud when solving a real problem. Talk about the steps you would take to solve the same problem.
- √ Encourage your child to continue the program—even when the problems are difficult.
- √ Give your child positive feedback and encouragement throughout the year.
- √ Join in celebrating accomplishments!

Planning the Program & Schedule

The Math SuperStars Program offers great flexibility. It can be easily modified to meet the unique learning environment found in each school. However, consistency at the school is critical to a smoothly operating Math SuperStars Program.

There are several issues with Math SuperStars that differ from school to school. Only a discussion with the principal can clarify how Math SuperStars will be used within a particular school. We suggest meeting with the principal before the program begins. The following is a list of discussion points developed after many years of experience:

1. Should parent permission be required for student participation?
2. Should we restrict volunteers from checking work sheets for their own child's classroom or grade level?
3. Should we allow work sheet checkers the flexibility of using partial credit in scoring?
4. Should we balance the students who participate faithfully with relatively low points and those who participate occasionally, but who achieve high points?
5. How can we encourage more classrooms to participate in the program?
6. How can we encourage classroom teachers to review particularly challenging math problems with their students?
7. Should your work sheet checkers correct the problems, showing where any errors were made?
8. Should the graded papers be returned to the students for review? If so, should the students be allowed to keep them? (Remember the program work sheets do not change year-to-year.)
9. Are volunteers allowed time to review the answers with the students, or does the teacher?
10. Should the Star Charts be posted in each classroom or in a central location?
11. Should the individual students be identified on the Star Charts by first and last name? Should they be shown by first name only, or should the school refrain from individualized scores?
12. Who provides the financial resources for Math SuperStars?
13. What is the system for processing expenses?
14. Is there a day and time when using the photocopier to prepare the work sheets is convenient?
15. Will the school provide photocopy support, (manpower and/or paper)?
16. Are there preferred days and times for the Math SuperStars work sheet distribution and pickup?
17. Will the school and/or Math SuperStars students participate in the School District's annual Math Competition?
18. Will the principal encourage program participation to teachers, parents and students by explaining the benefits of the program?

Broward's Best Practice

Use the slower summer months to photocopy all the work sheets for the year. Just keep them in a safe place, sorted by grade level and week.

Planning the Math SuperStars Schedule

1. Access a copy of the annual School District Calendar. The calendar should be available in the school's office. It is also available on the Internet at: www.browardschools.com.
2. Consider the calendar for holidays, teacher's planning days, and early release days. Also consider the advantages to the participating students of having the work sheets over a weekend or the advantages to your volunteer work sheet checkers of having the completed work sheets over a weekend. Perhaps there are so many three-day weekends scheduled that you choose not to distribute work sheets or pick them up on Mondays.

Your school may have unique requirements that would contribute to your schedule. For instance, do your students tend to be assigned more homework on any particular night? Are their special school functions scheduled that would conflict with the SuperStars' schedule?

3. We suggest that you review your proposed calendar with the school principal, who will be able to inform you of any factors that require attention in scheduling.
4. When approved, adjust the student and parent letters to reflect your school's Math SuperStars' schedule.
5. Provide all volunteers with the schedule and ask that they review it periodically.

Broward's Best Practice

Remember to adjust the program weeks by grade level. Following is a summary to assist you:

<u>Grade Level</u>	<u>Number of Weeks</u>
Kindergarten	10
First – Third Grades	25
Fourth Grade	26
Fifth – Eighth Grades	27

Volunteer Recruitment

Math SuperStars' volunteers can be found throughout the school community. They may be a parent volunteer, a retired person, a senior citizen, a business partner, a college student or a high school student who is earning community service hours.

The Math SuperStars Program has several unique factors that can make it highly attractive to volunteers. These include:

- 🍏 There is a finite volunteer period—a beginning and an end. The program takes approximately 20 weeks.
- 🍏 Many of the tasks can be completed in a short time period. It doesn't take long to check the papers for one or two classrooms.
- 🍏 Math SuperStars' volunteers can do many of their tasks away from school and at various hours. Only those who distribute and collect the work sheets, post the points/stars, and distribute incentives need to spend time on campus.
- 🍏 A high level of competency in mathematics is not needed. The answer sheets are included in the program.

These components make the Math SuperStars Program ideal for business partners and others who want to limit their number of hours, or who cannot be on campus during the regular school day. Additionally, if your school can solicit support from a business partner to provide the work sheet copies, gift coupons, etc. this can be a meaningful financial and manpower savings!

Broward's Best Practice

- √ Set up a booth at the open house and sign up volunteers.
- √ Ask teachers to recruit for the program, but don't assign parents to their own child's classroom.
- √ Participate in the school's "Boo Hoo" Breakfast for kindergarten parents!
- √ Ask your Business Partner Liaison to solicit support from the business partners for the program. (A good way to get incentives/prizes too!)
- √ Meet with the PTA/PTO's volunteer coordinator and ask for volunteers to be assigned to you.
- √ Call last year's SuperStars' volunteers. They might be waiting for your call.
- √ Ask your present volunteers to bring a friend to the training.
- √ Advertise in your school's newsletter and on the website.
- √ Have a "Dad" volunteer to recruit other Dads.
- √ Display a recruitment message on a bulletin board or school marquee.
- √ Send letters to parents asking them to volunteer.

Volunteer Orientation

The purpose of a volunteer orientation is to inform and listen. This will be your opportunity to build a well-trained, committed force of Math SuperStars' volunteers. Do not ignore the orientation. A well-trained volunteer staff will be happier and more committed to the program and you will have fewer problems to deal with throughout the school year. When planning the orientation agenda include the following:

- An opportunity to register as a school volunteer
- An overview of the Guidelines for School Volunteers
- The volunteer procedures for your school
- In-depth explanation of the Math SuperStars Program
- Your school's Math SuperStars Program schedule
- Specific steps in the program process
- Your school's guidelines on scoring work sheets, partial credit, and posting of scores/stars.

Registration and Coffee-time

Refreshments are very important in setting the tone of the meeting.

Workshop sign-in sheets should ask the following questions:

1. What is your name and contact information (telephone number and E-mail address)?
2. Are you a parent of child in this school? Which classroom?
3. Are you a veteran SuperStars' volunteer or a new volunteer?
4. How often are you available to volunteer?

Use name tags for everyone; making new friends is a reason for volunteering.

Welcome and Introductions

Try to schedule your orientation when the principal or math chair is available to participate.

Include your school's volunteer coordinator and/or staff liaison for volunteers for overall discussion of the volunteer program. (This person may be ideal for presenting the "Do's and Don'ts for Volunteers", including good techniques for working with teachers and students.)

Broward's Best Practice

Perhaps the principal, curriculum specialist, or math chair can discuss how the program benefits students.

Program Details

Explain the program and your school's system for workflow, checking the work sheets, totaling the points, posting the points, and giving prizes. Include an explanation of your school's philosophy on volunteers participating in their own child's classrooms and/or grade level, showing the correct answers on the returned work sheet and giving partial credit for good attempts.

Volunteers may be interested in seeing a sample work sheet and the answers that they will be provided for each week. You might consider reviewing a "sample" work sheet and discussing how you would grade the student's attempts.

Volunteer Requirements

Though being a math expert is not a requirement to serve as a volunteer, but there are requirements necessary to maintain an effective program. Use the orientation to discuss the importance of the Math SuperStars' volunteers working as a team. Without the full cooperation of each participant the entire process will break down. It is important that all volunteers know how crucial it is to maintain the program schedule, and how to contact the program coordinator whenever the volunteer will not be able to fulfill the assigned activities. To help all volunteers understand the program:

- √ Diagram the school's program process in a workflow chart for easy reference.
- √ Provide a program calendar, either the one available from Volunteer Services or one designed for your specific program.
- √ Provide communication information; telephone numbers, E-mail addresses, etc.
- √ Review and share these **General Volunteer Guidelines**:
 - 🍎 A Volunteer Application is required annually.
 - 🍎 Teachers supervise all volunteer activities in the classroom.
 - 🍎 Volunteers do not disagree with teachers in front of students.
 - 🍎 Volunteers do not diagnose student strengths or weaknesses, prescribe learning activities, evaluate student progress, discipline students, or issue grades.
 - 🍎 Maintain consistent and regular attendance.
 - 🍎 Record attendance for each visit by signing in and out or for work done at home.
 - 🍎 Follow all regulations and procedures of school.
 - 🍎 Wear a school volunteer nametag.
 - 🍎 Call your contact if you cannot fulfill your important role in the program.
 - 🍎 Observe discretion in commenting on school matters.
 - 🍎 Volunteers do not divulge individual student's grades, records or abilities.
 - 🍎 School attire should be neat, clean, and appropriate for school.

Volunteer Recognition

A quality Math SuperStars Program requires considerable time for planning, coordinating and supervising. Thus, you will want to create and maintain a climate where volunteers will wish to continue donating their time and talents. To be successful, you must ensure that each volunteer feels that:

- 🍏 Their task is important.
- 🍏 Their special skills and talents are needed.
- 🍏 They are valued as unique and worthwhile individuals.
- 🍏 If they are absent, they will be missed.

One element to success is volunteer recognition activities. These activities can be both informal and formal, one-on-one or group, by the classroom or the school. Just as no two people are alike, the type of recognition appreciated by your volunteers will not be alike.

Rules for Volunteer Recognition

Give it or else!

Give it frequently.

Use a variety of methods.

It must be honest.

It should be given to the person, not the work.

It should be appropriate to the achievement.

It should be consistent.

It must be timely.

It should be individualized as much as possible.

Suggestions for Showing Your Appreciation

Everyone should show volunteers their appreciation! Don't forget to include the students and staff members in saying thank you to all those who contribute to your school. Though formal activities are great, nothing beats a sincerely felt thank you.

1. Greet the volunteer by name; encourage students to use the volunteer's name.	10. Give the volunteer more challenging tasks and increased responsibilities. Enable the volunteer to grow on the job.
2. Thank the volunteer personally each day, noting special contributions.	11. Write a letter of recommendation when the volunteer requests it.
3. Keep in touch with the volunteers. Ask how they're doing and if they are happy in their service to your school.	12. Write an article on the volunteer's contributions for your volunteer newsletter, school newspaper or community paper.
4. Celebrate the volunteer's birthday, and encourage students to write occasional thank-you notes.	13. Call, E-mail or drop a note to the volunteer when he/she is absent.
5. Request the classroom teacher to thank the volunteers personally.	14. Ask volunteers to help evaluate the program and suggest ways to improve.
6. Use your school newsletter to focus attention on the program and the volunteers who make it possible.	15. Nominate your volunteers for any suitable volunteer awards.
7. Celebrate outstanding contributions or achievements.	16. Ask the volunteer coordinator or school's community relations staff person about a feature story on volunteers for the newspaper, radio or television station.
8. Invite experienced volunteer to train new volunteers.	17. Be sure your volunteers are included in any school volunteer recognition events.
9. In assigning tasks, use the volunteer's special talents, knowledge and interests.	

Program Commitment Letters

It is recommended that both students and parents be informed about the Math SuperStars Program. Some of the information that both students and parents may need includes:

- 🍏 How will the student benefit from participating?
- 🍏 What are the specific requirements?
- 🍏 What is the schedule for the work sheets?
- 🍏 What incentives/prizes will the student earn?
- 🍏 What role can the parents play in the program?

Parents and students should understand that there are no “grades” given for participation in the Math SuperStars Program.

In some program models, the school simply informs the students and parents of the program. Other models require that the parent(s) give permission for their student’s participation and/or a promise to allow their student to work independently. In others, the permission contains a promise to allow the student to work independently (no parent help).

In the following pages, you will find sample student and parent letters that may be used at your school. Please modify these letters as necessary to make them conform to your school’s program and schedule. The volunteers who are managing the Math SuperStars Program should collect these signed letters prior to the distribution of the first work sheets. Select from the following letters:

- #1: For lower elementary level students
- #2: For the parents of younger elementary students
- #3: For upper elementary level students
- #4: For the parents of upper elementary students
- #5: For middle school students
- #6: For the parents of middle school students

Broward’s Best Practice

100% of Broward schools send a letter of information to the parents. Most schools ask parents to give permission for their child to participate in the program. Many use the letter to recruit more Math SuperStars’ volunteers.

1. Letter for Students of Lower Elementary Grades

* Remember! Change the program days to fit your school's schedule!



WELCOME TO MATH SUPERSTARS! We are happy that you want to try some new and different kinds of math problems! As you read the problems, you may find yourself *PUZZLED*. Your teacher will be helping you each week with some of the hardest problems. Also, your parents may read the problems to you and offer hints for solving them.

If you would like to begin earning ★STARS★ for solving math problems, sign your name below.



I am ready to begin the Math SuperStars Program.

I promise to do my own thinking on each problem.

(Your name) _____

(Your teacher's name) _____



Source: Florida Department of Education

2. Letter for the Parents of Lower Elementary Grade Students

*** Remember! Change the program days to fit your school's schedule!**



Dear Parent,

We welcome your child and you to MATH SUPERSTARS, a program designed to enhance your child's journey through mathematics. By expressing an interest in more challenging problem solving, your child has taken the first step toward becoming an independent learner who is capable of addressing many types of problems.

Each **Monday** your child will receive a work sheet of problems that he or she may work during the week. Each problem is ranked according to its level of difficulty. The number of stars you see beside a problem indicates the level of difficulty and the number of stars your child can earn for solving it.

Each **Friday** your child's teacher will conduct a "help session" to discuss the most challenging problems of the week. If your child has already correctly solved any of the problems that are discussed, the teacher will initial the problem, and the child will receive double stars or double credit when the work sheet is turned in on Monday. After the session, your child may complete or rework any of the problems before that week's work sheet is turned in to the volunteer.

Your role in MATH SUPERSTARS is to *encourage* and *facilitate* your child's problem solving skills. During the week, allow time for him or her to think about each problem. You may need to read the problem to your child, explaining any new words encountered. Feel free to suggest a strategy for solving the problem, offer "counters" or manipulatives, or listen as your child shares her or his thinking, but please **DO NOT GIVE THE ANSWERS**. In order for this program to be effective, the students must do their own thinking.

It is normal for a child NOT to be able to complete every problem on a work sheet. The process of reading, understanding, and approaching the problems is a valuable step in the solving of many types of problems. Remind your child that she or he is not expected to know the answer to every problem.

Thank you for allowing your child to embark on this mathematical adventure. Your signature gives permission for your child to begin.

(Student's name)

(Parent's signature)

(Teacher's name)

(Grade level)

Source: Florida Department of Education

3. Letter for Students of the Upper Elementary Grades

* Remember! Change the program days to fit your school's schedule!



WELCOME TO MATH SUPERSTARS!

Congratulations for choosing to participate in this exciting mathematics program! As you work through the program, you will face many types of math problems, stretching and expanding that gray matter of yours in exciting ways!

Expect to receive a work sheet each **Monday**. You will have the rest of the week to think about each problem. In a "help session" on Friday, the most challenging problems of the week will be discussed. For any of the challenge problems you solve before **Friday**, you will receive double credit. You may complete or rework any problem before your work sheet is collected on the following **Monday**.

Do not expect to be able to solve each problem on every work sheet. You may ask for help during the help sessions, but please do not ask your parents or your teachers to work a problem for you. Your work sheet should show **your** thinking only.

We wish you the best as you expand your thinking in mathematics.
Reach for the STARS!



I am ready to begin the MATH SUPERSTARS Program. I agree to do my own thinking on each problem.

(Your name) _____

(Your teacher's name) _____



Source: Florida Department of Education

4. Letter for the Parents of Upper Elementary Grade Students

*** Remember! Change the program days to fit your school's schedule!**



Dear Parent,

We welcome your child and you to MATH SUPERSTARS, a program designed to enhance your child's journey through mathematics. By expressing an interest in more challenging problem solving, your child has taken the first step toward becoming an independent learner who is capable of addressing many types of problems.

Each **Monday** your child will receive a work sheet of problems that he or she may work during the week. Each problem is ranked according to its level of difficulty. The number of stars you see beside a problem indicates the level of difficulty and the number of stars your child can earn for solving it.

Each **Friday** your child's teacher will conduct a "help session" to discuss the most challenging problems of the week. If your child has already correctly solved any of the problems that are discussed, the teacher will initial the problem, and the child will receive double stars or double credit when the work sheet is turned in on **Monday**. After the session, your child may complete or rework any of the problems before that week's work sheet is turned in to the volunteer.

Your role in MATH SUPERSTARS is to *encourage* and *facilitate* problem-solving skills. During the week, allow time for your child to think about each problem. Listen as your child shares her or his thinking, and feel free to guide your child toward certain strategies, but please **DO NOT GIVE THE ANSWERS**. In order for this program to be effective, the students must do their own thinking.

It is normal for a child NOT to be able to complete every problem on a work sheet. The process of reading, understanding, and approaching the problems is a valuable step in the solving of many types of problems. Remind your child that she or he is not expected to know the answers to every problem.

Thank you for allowing your child to embark on this mathematical adventure. Your signature gives permission for your child to begin.

(Student's name)

(Parent's signature)

(Teacher's name)

(Grade level)

Source: Florida Department of Education

5. Letter for the Students of Middle School Grades

* Remember! Change the program days to fit your school's schedule!



Welcome to MATH SUPERSTARS, a program designed to enhance your journey through mathematics. Be prepared to face challenging problems that require *thinking!* As you work through the program, you will address many types of math problems that stretch and expand that gray matter of yours in exciting ways!

Expect to receive one work sheet at the **beginning of the week**. You will have the rest of the week to think about the problems on it. The thinking must be YOUR VERY OWN!!! Once a week, **on Friday**, you will attend a "help session" to discuss the most challenging problems of the week.

Your journey will be recorded by charting the stars you achieve. Each problem is ranked according to its level of difficulty. The more stars you see beside the problem, the higher the level of difficulty and the more stars you will earn for solving it. You can earn double stars for solving any of the challenge problems prior to this weekly session.

Your signature is just the beginning!

Good luck as you embark upon this mathematical adventure. The rewards will last you a lifetime!



I am ready to begin the MATH SUPERSTARS Program. All of the answers I submit will represent my own thinking.

(Your name) _____

(Your teacher's name) _____

Source: Florida Department of Education

6. Letter for the Parents of Students in Middle School Grades

*** Remember! Change the program days to fit your school's schedule!**



Dear Parent,

Welcome to MATH SUPERSTARS, a program designed to enhance your middle schooler's journey through mathematics. By expressing an interest in more challenging problem solving, your daughter or son has taken the first step toward becoming an independent learner who is capable of addressing many types of problems.

On **Monday**, a MATH SUPERSTARS work sheet will be distributed. Each problem on the work sheet is ranked according to its level of difficulty. As the number of stars beside a problem increases, so does the level of difficulty of that problem and the number of stars to be earned for solving it.

Each **Friday** your child's teacher will conduct a "help session" to discuss the most challenging problems of the week. If your child has already correctly solved any of the problems that are discussed, the teacher will initial the problem, and the child will receive double stars or double credit when the work sheet is turned in on **Monday**. After the session, your child may complete or rework any of the problems before that week's work sheet is turned in to the volunteer.

Your role in MATH SUPERSTARS is to *encourage* and *facilitate* problem solving. You may offer guidance toward certain strategies, but please **DO NOT GIVE THE ANSWERS**. In order for this program to be effective, the students must do their own thinking.

It is normal for a middle school student NOT to be able to complete every problem on a work sheet. The process of reading, understanding, and approaching the problems is a valuable step in solving many types of problems. No student is expected to know the answers to every problem.

Thank you for allowing your daughter or son to embark on this mathematical adventure. We hope the rewards will last a lifetime!

(Student's name)

(Parent's signature)

(Teacher's name)

(Grade level)

Source: Florida Department of Education

Share the Load

Form a committee and share the load. Divide the program into manageable parts. Your program might be divided up as follows:

- ✓ **Work sheets:** Provide the work sheets, photocopied, counted, and ready for classroom distribution.
- ✓ **Distribution:** Deliver the work sheets to the classrooms, pick them up on the due date, and send to the work sheet checkers. These volunteers might also handle the problem review with the students or classroom teacher.
- ✓ **Checking/Scoring:** Review the papers, total the points/stars and return them to the school on the due date.
- ✓ **Record keeping:** Monitor the scoring and post the total points/stars by student.
- ✓ **Incentives/Recognition:**
 - 🍏 Plan the incentive program and special events related to the program.
 - 🍏 Purchase the prizes, trophies, certificates, etc.

Handling Problem Situations

A reality of all volunteer programs is that problems will arise. A volunteer may not feel valued or comfortable working with a specific person or in a specific classroom. A classroom teacher may not be comfortable with a volunteer or with specific situations related to the Math SuperStars Program.

Most of these problems can be resolved if the lines of communication remain open. Assure your volunteers and classroom teachers that you are open to their opinions and suggestions. If necessary, provide additional training and supervision when required. If additional training does not improve the situation, the volunteer can be reassigned to other activities or classrooms.

We suggest that the Math SuperStars' coordinator discuss specific areas of concern with the school's volunteer coordinator, staff liaison for volunteers, or principal. The most important point in handling problems is to deal with them immediately. Remember that problems don't just go away because we have ignored them --- volunteers do!

Identifying and Organizing Program Materials

An effectively operating Math SuperStars Program requires an investment in materials, some of which are available through the Volunteer Services Department. Following is a list of materials needed for the program:

Math SuperStars Program Manual: Contains all work sheets and answer sheets. This manual will be used extensively to make photocopies for students and volunteers. An electronic version of this manual is available to the school's Staff Liaison for Volunteers. Schools are required to print and maintain their own paper copy.

Star Charts: Materials necessary to make posters of the participating students' earned stars. These posters can be displayed in the classroom, cafeteria and in other locations where students can see their progress.

Student Certificates: As part of the incentive program, certificates can be presented based on total points/stars earned or number of weeks the student has participated. Certificates are available in an electronic format on the Volunteer Services website. Access at: www.getinvolvedineducation.com/volunteer_services/html

Other certificates may be used at the school's discretion.

Miscellaneous Office Supplies: Besides lots of photocopy paper, the Math SuperStars Program may utilize program posters, displays, and flyers that require the usual selection of markers, pins, tape, glue, construction paper, etc. And don't forget the foil stars!

Incentives/Prizes: All children love prizes. Whether a sticker, coupon, eraser, ruler or pencil, the use of prizes on a regular basis inspires participation in the program. There are many vendors who specialize in low cost items. Be cautious in selecting safe, age-appropriate incentive items.

"I'm a Math Super Star" Pencils: The Volunteer Services Department arranged for the bulk purchase of these neon colored pencils, a very popular item with students. Contact Volunteer Services for price information and order forms.

Broward's Best Practice

Purchase many different items. Select some to be given as prizes for earning stars. Select others to use as incentives for trying. Remember that students who find the work sheets difficult may be inspired to continue trying when they receive their own incentive prizes.

Some schools reward points/stars by giving "point certificates" that can be redeemed at the school store or at the special "SuperStars' SuperStore" held periodically.

Checking & Scoring the Work Sheets

Consistency in checking and scoring is as important as accuracy! All Math SuperStars' work sheet checkers are working from the same answer sheets. However, these work sheets do not take into consideration the attempt by the student or how critical the error was.

For instance, a student may have followed the solution process correctly and simply transposed two numbers. Does this mean that no points/stars are earned? Another student may find that math is his/her most difficult subject. Though very challenged to complete a weekly Math SuperStars' work sheet, this student perseveres. Every single week, he or she turns in the paper, usually with lots of erasure marks. Yet, the score is low simply because this particular child finds math to be so difficult. Is it fair to score this child in the same way as one who spends 5 minutes on the paper and gets all the answers right?

In order to deal with these "gray" areas, most Broward County Schools allow checkers to use flexibility in scoring papers by giving partial points. These award systems might include a minimum number of points earned each week just for attempting all the questions. Students with high participation levels may be eligible for prizes focusing on "most committed" rather than for "most points earned."

Broward's Best Practice

Almost all Broward schools discourage parents from checking the work sheets of the students in their own child's classrooms. Most refrain from using the parents to check work sheets for students even in their child's grade level. What is your philosophy?

Most schools allow half points in scoring, but rules for consistency must be in place for this to work.

Incentives that are based on weeks of participation will foster student participation better than when given only for the highest performance scores.

Don't forget to plan prizes and incentives for both students who accumulate lots of points/stars AND for those who consistently do their personal best!

Math SuperStars Weekly Star Log

Classroom teacher/grade: _____

Week number: _____ Checker's name: _____

	* Student Name	Attempted Stars	Earned Stars
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			
11.			
12.			
13.			
14.			
15.			
16.			
17.			
18.			
19.			
20.			
21.			
22.			
23.			
24.			
25.			
26.			
27.			
28.			
29.			
30.			

** Enter the names of all participating students before photocopying for weekly use.*

Program Prizes / Incentives

No two adults are inspired by the same incentive. It should be no surprise that it is the same with students. Some would be moved to considerable feats for the latest pencil or neon sticker, while others want a certificate to hang on their wall. Some want individual, well-publicized attention, while others like to just be part of a good team of classmates.

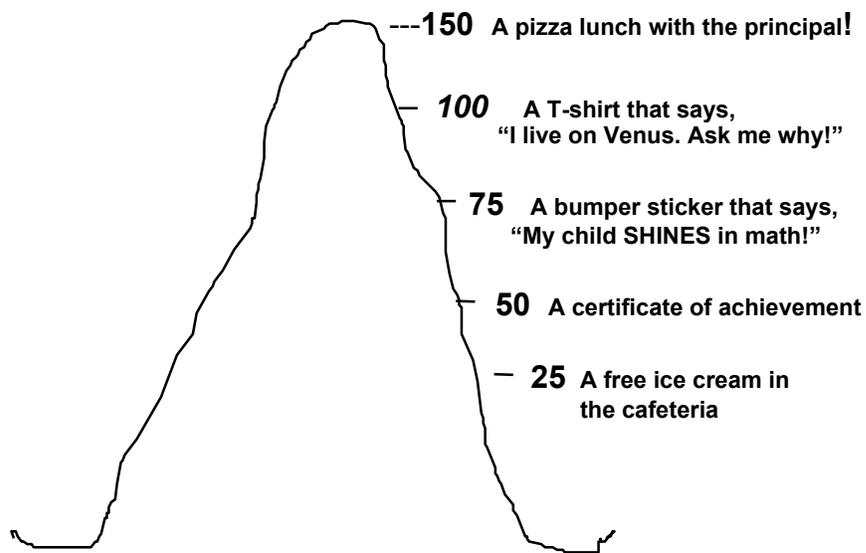
Consider all these students when designing your incentive program. Again consider both levels of participation and levels of accuracy. Also think about building class pride by incorporating classroom participation prizes.

Broward's Best Practice

- * At the end of each four-week session, prizes are distributed based on the number of points or stars earned.
- * An ice cream party is held every fourth session for the classroom with the highest participation and a special certificate is presented.
- * A traveling trophy is used to build participation and a little healthy competition between classrooms.
- * Build excitement by offering a special prize to the class who gets the highest number of correct answers to a specific problem.
- * Use Star Charts to record the number of points earned by each student. Or simply indicate a star for student participation.
- * Plan a special initiative to get students re-energized after the holiday break, or any time you see a drop off in program participation. (Don't panic, plan for it!)
- * All points earned receive credits at the SuperStars Gift Store, open two times a year.
- * A "Lunch with the Principal" celebrates the top scorer in each grade level.
- * A school store certificate is given to every student who completes 4 work sheets.
- * Every student who earns 25 stars chooses a prize from the SuperStars grab bag.
- * A SuperStars pencil is given to every student who joins the program and turns in the first paper.

Broward's Best Practice

Visual reminders help children see that mathematics is challenging and rewarding. Some ideas are presented here merely to start your creative juices flowing:



Climb the Mountain this Year!

Prize Schedule Work Sheet

Define your school's earned points and prize items by grade level using the Math SuperStars Possible Points Table. Remember that not all grade levels earn the same total number of points

Earned Points (Stars)	Prize Item For Primary Grades (K, 1, & 2)	Prize Item For Intermediate/Secondary Grades (3 – 8)
Week 1		
25		
50		
75		
100		
125		
150		
175		
200		
225		
250		
275		
300		
325		
350		
375		
400		
425		
450		
475		
500		
525		
550		
575		
588		
Special Program Activities (Indicate the Activity and the Qualifying Earned Points Level)		

Incentive Schedule for Struggling Students

Use the schedule below to encourage participation of students who may find the program difficult, but continue to do their best and turn in their work sheets. Also consider incentive prizes or special activities for all program students when you observe that the program needs a boost---perhaps in January, after Winter Break!

Program Week	Incentive Item For Primary Grades (K, 1, & 2)	Incentive Item For Intermediate/Secondary Grades (3 – 8)
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		
13		
14		
15		
16		
17		
18		
19		
20		
21		
22		
23		
24		
25		
26		
27		

Broward's Best Practice

Include struggling students in your end of the year celebration. These students are often the ones who have learned the most from participating in the program.

Math SuperStars Possible Points Table

Use the Possible Points Table to schedule your prize and incentive activities.

Week No.	KG Mercury	1st Grd. Venus	2nd Grd. Earth	3rd Grd. Mars	4th Grd. Jupiter	5th Grd. Saturn	6th Grd. Uranus	7th Grd. Neptune	8th Grd. <i>Pluto</i>
1	10	11	14	18	16	22	19	20	24
2	13	12	15	22	18	20	21	20	23
3	15	17	19	18	19	15	21	19	24
4	13	15	18	21	18	17	20	24	23
5	12	21	19	22	21	20	20	22	23
6	15	13	16	18	22	21	22	21	27
7	16	17	14	20	21	24	20	23	23
8	14	18	20	20	20	21	24	23	24
9	12	15	18	21	18	17	22	19	26
10	12	14	19	20	20	17	19	20	22
11	---	15	17	21	25	21	21	25	19
12	---	20	15	24	18	20	20	22	22
13	---	15	13	24	15	21	17	19	22
14	---	14	17	27	19	20	19	20	21
15	---	19	23	21	17	18	20	19	26
16	---	17	15	17	16	21	20	20	16
17	---	14	22	18	23	19	17	26	24
18	---	19	17	23	17	19	22	19	19
19	---	13	17	20	15	19	21	22	22
20	---	12	17	22	18	19	19	21	20
21	---	14	21	19	18	20	22	24	18
22	---	18	24	21	21	18	16	25	24
23	---	16	12	17	19	16	21	23	21
24	---	15	18	23	25	20	18	19	16
25	---	13	18	20	18	17	17	23	25
26	---	---	---	---	4	21	19	24	18
27	---	---	---	---	---	20	21	25	16
Total Points	132	387	438	517	477	523	538	587	588

Budgeting Your SuperStars Program

Math SuperStars is a volunteer driven program. Unfortunately, it is not a cost-free program. Expenses are incurred in numerous ways. In planning your budget consider the following:

- ✓ Cost of paper and photocopy expenses
- ✓ Materials for star charts
- ✓ Purchase of incentives/prizes for the students
- ✓ Expenses of special events like an ice-cream party at the end of the year
- ✓ Tokens of appreciation for the volunteers

Math SuperStars Annual Budget			
Category	Monthly Budget Amount	Monthly Actual Amount	Difference Between Actual & Budget
Income:			
PTA Allocation			
Business Partners			
Misc. Income			
Total Income			
Expenses:			
Paper			
Photocopies			
Misc. Supplies			
Pencils (1,000)			
Stickers (5,000)			
Ice Cream Party			
Trophies			
Pizza Lunch			
Volunteer Recogn.			
Total Expenses			
Net Income (Inc. less Expenses)			

Broward's Best Practice

All surveyed schools reported that a budget was created with allocations for Math SuperStars' activities. In most cases, the program is supported as a line item of the PTA/PTO budget. The allocated amount ranged from \$500.00 to \$2,500.

Look for values in incentives in catalogs such as Oriental Trader and Party City, and search the Internet for low-price children's party favors.

Annual Math Competition

Each April, the Mathematics Department sends each school principal a form requesting participation in its end-of-year SuperStars/Sunshine Math Competition. If the school would like to participate in this competition, it must complete the participation form and return it to Elementary Mathematics, KCW, 13th floor. A school can enter competitions in all elementary grade levels or in selected grades only.

This test is not limited to students actively involved with the Math SuperStars Program. A school may select to invite all interested students to compete, limit it to students who have actively participated in the Math SuperStars' weekly program, or only to those students who have reached a pre-established number of earned SuperStars' points/stars.

The competition is school-based only. Certificates will be provided by the Mathematics Department for the top three students in each grade level, with a maximum of fifteen certificates. The school may augment the Mathematics Department certificates by providing participation certificates or other incentives to all students taking the test. Schools may also choose to purchase small trophies or other prizes for the highest achieving students.

A master copy of the test for each grade level, the answer key, specific instructions, and certificates will only be sent to those schools indicating an interest in participation. The competition is a test, not a take-home work sheet like those done for the weekly SuperStars Program. Some planning for a testing situation will have to be done by school personnel.

The Math SuperStars' coordinator should work with the principal and/or math chair to coordinate the test.

**For questions concerning the Math Department's
SuperStars/Sunshine Math
End-of-Year Competition,
Please contact the:**

**Elementary Mathematics Department
Kathleen C. Wright Administrative Office, Floor 13
Telephone: 754-321-1867**

Advice From the Experts

Broward County Public Schools is very fortunate to have many experienced Math SuperStars' coordinators. We asked these dedicated individuals to offer their best tips for new coordinators. Here is what they offered:

1. Get tons of volunteers. Plan for the unexpected and have a couple of "in emergency only" standby volunteers. Recruit high school students to help with checking and scoring. Since the SuperStars' work sheets are not for a "grade," these students are allowed to assist.
2. Have volunteers capable of setting up record keeping on the computer.
3. Use E-mail to contact your volunteers with reminders and schedule changes, etc.
4. It's easier to give out gift certificates redeemable at a Math SuperStars' store that is held two or three times per year than to carry around all the prizes!
5. It's very important to allow the volunteers to get to know the students and teachers they deal with.
6. Coordinators should not try to do "everything." Use chairpersons or assistants to spread the chores.
7. Plan for lots of awards! The students are motivated by even the smallest reward!
8. Work with the teachers. Be a part of the team.
9. Be ready to adapt to change. There's always something unexpected happening!
10. Request teachers who use the program to talk it up to other teachers.
11. Publicize the program. It encourages participation by the students and builds your volunteer force.
12. **Have fun and enjoy making math come alive for students!**

Contact Volunteer Services anytime you have questions or need advice on operating your Math SuperStars Program. We can either assist you ourselves or put you in touch with an experienced SuperStars' advisor.

Best of luck!



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