

October 17, 2012

Dear Mr. President and Mr. Romney,

Thank you for supporting education and for being dedicated to improving the math learning in the United States. Americans all know that we may be in trouble when it comes to competing with the world in STEM fields - now and in the foreseeable future.

I am not writing to give my method of how to fix the schools. We have plenty of those - both in theory and in action.

Instead, I am writing to ask that you direct some of your considerable support towards a mission that is in great need of it: parent involvement for positive influence in math.

WHAT'S MISSING

Consider the influence that math-anxious grownups, such as parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles, have on young children. Research has shown that social modeling - parents saying, "I was bad at math too, honey" - has a significant impact on the attitudes and level of engagement kids have when going into a math classroom.

All the money invested in and all the programs that we currently use are ineffective if our children see their role models openly announcing that they don't like or do math.

What if we could get parents to notice the math that they do effortlessly all day, every day, and announce THAT to their children? Children would then see that math is something done daily - not just in a classroom with pencil and paper. Children would enter their math lessons excited to engage in the next math-related discussion. And research bears out that this engagement is what facilitates true learning.

WILL IT WORK?

We have seen this work in the literacy movement of the past decades. Reading is Fundamental, and its competitive and companion programs, have created a society where parents not only read to their children on a daily basis, but also read to their children in utero!

How ridiculous to consider that reading to a child at such a young age will help them learn to read! But what it does do - and why the practice is effective and encouraged - is turn parents into positive reading role models. We have turned a society that was once comfortable with illiteracy into a society of readers. All from positive social modeling!

And what is lacking in our STEM education, nationwide, is this positive influence from adults towards children regarding math. But it CAN be done!

WE NEED YOUR HELP

Please integrate a parent involvement element in your education programs to help parents learn to be a positive influence in math. We're working at a grass roots level but we can enact this change much more quickly if we have your help. We can stop leaving the children behind if we get the parents to start exerting educational influence early.

With kindest regards,

Bon Crowder
Writer & Publisher
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