

Section 1: Getting Started

In each school involved, the Home–School Partnership: Numeracy sessions are led by a team of teachers and parents from the school. Before the sessions start at a school, the roles and responsibilities of the key people need to be assigned. One of the crucial roles is that of the principal as the school leader; the others are that of the lead teacher and lead parents. It is preferable that both lead teachers and lead parents have certain qualities. For example, it helps if the lead teacher has good organisational skills and relationships with the staff and community and if the lead parents are known in the community and have the confidence to work with groups of parents. However, in saying that, there have been many nervous parents whose confidence has developed over the course of community sessions.

Responsibilities

Principal:

1. To promote the agreed aim (see page 4) of Home–School Partnership: Numeracy;
2. To select the lead teacher(s) and parent team and negotiate times and dates;
3. To support the community sessions, for example, by attending them in a welcoming role and providing release time and funding for planning and preparation.

Lead teachers:

1. To help with selecting lead parents;
2. To support the team of lead parents with planning, preparing, and facilitating the community sessions;
3. To communicate with and involve the staff, principals, and BOT.

Lead parents:

1. To encourage other parents to attend parent meetings;
2. To be involved in planning, preparing, and facilitating the community sessions;
3. To work with the lead teachers, when appropriate, to inform staff and BOT.

Numeracy facilitators may be available to:

1. provide support and encouragement;
2. help with resources and/or planning sessions;
3. provide mathematical knowledge and background if needed.

To contact a numeracy facilitator, call your local university and ask for the Regional Numeracy Co-ordinator.

The above people become the *lead team*, whose role is to facilitate community sessions in a sensitive, warm, and nurturing way that encourages people to take part. One way to encourage participation is to have small-group discussions during each session, with each member of the lead team having responsibility for a group of parents. Another lead-team role is to keep the school staff informed and to encourage their participation.

The partnership is based on clear lines of communication between home and school, so it is important that all staff understand what is involved. The following questions may provide a framework for conveying the key ideas to school staff:

- Do all staff members know about the school's commitment to Home–School Partnership: Numeracy?
- Do they understand its purpose and intended outcomes?
- Do these sessions fit within their understanding of communicating with parents?
- Does the school have a policy or strategy regarding communication with parents?

Preparation, Action, and Reflection for Lead Teachers

When the decision is made to implement Home–School Partnership: Numeracy sessions in your school, it may be worthwhile to examine the current student assessment data for numeracy. This will encourage all teachers to be involved as part of the partnership and to see both themselves and the parents as learners. Below is a suggestion of one way to involve teachers at each stage of the partnership, with the expectation that, as the partnership develops, aspects of Home–School Partnership: Numeracy will become an integral part of school and staff meetings.

Part 1:

For a teachers' staff meeting and for a board of trustees' meeting, before Home–School Partnership: Numeracy sessions begin

Discuss the following questions and share answers:

- What are your beliefs about the value of Home–School Partnership: Numeracy?
- What might the results or changes be for your school?
- What are some of the challenges and issues your school might face?
- How will the school benefit from Home–School Partnership: Numeracy?
- What are the benefits for the community?

Part 2:

For a teachers' staff meeting when Home–School Partnership: Numeracy is underway

Each teacher chooses one or two students who have some difficulties with mathematics. The teachers discuss the following questions in regard to language needs, culture, home situation, language at home, parents' aspirations, and so on.

- What does the teacher know about this student? What don't they know?
- How could they find out what they don't yet know?
- Are the child's parents/caregivers attending Home–School Partnership: Numeracy sessions?
- If not, how can they be encouraged to attend?
- If Home–School Partnership: Numeracy is not for them, what strategies will you put in place so that they know how numeracy is taught in schools and how to help their child(ren)?

Part 3:

For a teachers' staff meeting, at the end of the Home–School Partnership: Numeracy sessions, with the aim of reflection and sustaining the numeracy partnership

- Reflect on what went well and what changes could be made for another time.
- Discuss school-wide data in numeracy.
- Does a particular group need further support from school and from their family? (For example, junior or senior syndicate or class level)
- Does a group need to be more closely monitored? (For example, a class level or a group within a class)
- Is more specific teaching needed as well as home support?
- Are there any teacher professional development needs related to numeracy or effective teaching and learning?
- Once the decisions are made, write simple action plans to help achieve your goals.