

**Educational Transfer Plan**

**Engineering Success for At-Risk Students**

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**Sponsored by  
Solectron Global Services**

## **Background**

At Solectron I did data analysis using Business Objects which is an application based on Access and SQL to determine which factors in the service department cause the most delays and/or errors. I then prepared reports that were given to the engineers in charge of the different product lines, so that they could make adjustments if necessary. I also used Excel to create spreadsheets detailing the different information. The information that I generated was used to help make the process in the service department more efficient, find ways to improve the service department, and to document what was actually happening on the lines.

My job at Solectron led me to decide to apply the same process to evaluating the intervention process for at-risk students at River Glen School where I work. I want to use data analysis to evaluate what was working and what wasn't and how we could improve the process.

## **Abstract of Project**

This project examines the strategies that are most effective in helping at-Risk students succeed. A literature search and telephone survey of parents and students were used to determine which interventions are most helpful. Recommendations for how River Glen School can increase student success are included in a PowerPoint presentation that will be presented to the teachers in the fall. Teachers will then decide which recommendations to implement.

## **Contents of Plan**

This plan will include the objectives, standards to be met, materials and resources needed, a review of literature on factors affecting student success, copies of the student and parent surveys, a paper copy of the PowerPoint presentation to be given to the teachers in September with recommendations and the findings from the literature review and surveys, and the rubric to be used to evaluate the implemented suggestions.

### **Objectives:**

1. To inform teachers of research related to factors that increase student success in At-Risk students.
2. To gather data on the types of interventions that were offered to students who failed three or more classes in at least one semester during the 2004-2005 school year.
3. To gather data on what interventions were felt to be the most effective by the students and parents.
4. To gather recommendations on what further interventions students and parents felt would be useful.

5. To use the gathered data and information to design an intervention program to increase student success, focusing especially on At-Risk students.
6. To design a PowerPoint presentation to be used at a meeting with teachers in September to familiarize them with the background information and data as well as the proposed plan.
7. To design a rubric to evaluate the implemented recommendations at the end of the first semester.

## **Standards:**

These standards come from Middle Childhood / Generalist Standards (National Board Standards):

Standard I - Knowledge of Students – Accomplished teachers draw on their knowledge of child development and their relationships with students to understand their student’s abilities, interests, aspirations, and values.

Standard V – Instructional Resources – Accomplished teachers create, assess, select, and adapt a rich and varied collection of materials and draw on other resources such as staff, community members, and students to support learning.

Standard IX – Family Involvement – Accomplished teachers initiate positive, interactive relationships with families as they participate in the education of their children.

Standard X – Reflection – Accomplished teachers regularly analyze, evaluate, reflect on, and strengthen the effectiveness and quality of their practice.

## **Resources and Materials Needed:**

A computer with Internet access and with Microsoft Office installed is necessary for completing the research on factors that influence student success, for preparing the survey forms and the rubric, and for preparing the PowerPoint presentation. A LCD projector is needed for the PowerPoint presentation for teachers and for a possible presentation for parents.. Some books and/or articles to use in the research might need to be purchased.

For this project to yield results that will make a difference for the At-Risk students at River Glen, at least four of the middle school teachers need to agree to be involved in implementing some of the recommendations. I am confident that out of the nine middle school teachers there will be at least four who will be willing to participate in implementing a program to help the At-Risk students. The River Glen middle school staff is very committed to helping our students succeed. Time at a staff meeting to present the findings will also be needed. A once-a- week planning session to track the progress of the At-Risk students would also be helpful.

## **Specific Plan:**

The steps to be completed during the summer that are involved in completing this project are as follows:

1. Use the resources available through the San Jose University database to conduct a review of literature on factors that affect student success in middle school.
2. Divide the list of factors between those that are present at River Glen and those that might need to be developed in the River Glen middle school program.
3. Make a list of recommendations based on the review of literature.
4. Compile a list of the students who were on academic probation (i.e., those students who were failing three or more classes) at the end of the second semester, 2005.
5. Review state test scores, language dominance records, language proficiency, and grades for students who were on academic probation.
6. Develop surveys to be used with the parents and students during a telephone interview.
7. Use Excel to compile the results of the surveys and to make charts of the results.
8. Develop a list of recommendations based on the survey results.
9. Develop a PowerPoint presentation that includes the results of the review of literature, the student information review, and the surveys, as well as the recommendations.
10. Develop the evaluation sheet to be used with the teachers after the PowerPoint presentation, as well as the one to be used at the end of the first semester to evaluate the implemented recommendations.

The following steps will be completed during the 2005 – 2006 school year:

1. In September present the PowerPoint presentation to the middle school teachers at a staff meeting.
2. Facilitate a discussion about which recommendations included in the PowerPoint presentations should be implemented.
3. Work with the middle school teachers to implement the chosen recommendations.
4. At the end of the first semester distribute the evaluation rubric which will be used to evaluate the implemented recommendations.
5. Share the results of the evaluation with the middle school teachers.

## **Evaluation:**

Evaluation will consist of two parts. The first evaluation will take place at the staff meeting where the research and the recommendations are presented. It will consist of a response sheet evaluating the presentation and reacting to the recommendations. The second evaluation will take place at the end of the first semester, where a rubric will be

used to evaluate the students' performance in the first semester. This rubric will include an evaluation of degree of participation in the recommended programs by the students, of improvement made by students, of the difficulty in implementing the recommendations, and of amount of extra time required for the implementation of the recommendations by the teachers. There will also be a form where suggestions can be recorded for changes to be made in the second semester.

# Factors Linked to Student Success in School

## Review of Literature

This section is divided into two parts. The first part outlines the factors that River Glen might want to look at to improve the school success of at-risk students. The second section is a list of factors which have been shown to be successful and that already exist at River Glen School.

### Factors to Examine:

1. Peer approval is especially important in middle school. Do the students as a group value academic achievement? What are the most important values in the student culture at River Glen? (Juvonen & Cadigan, 2002; Brooks, Burns, & Murdock, 2000)
2. Home factors limit school influence. How can we can parents more involved? How can we meet parent needs? (Nesin)
3. Middle school students stress the importance of education as a way to get ahead, but place little emphasis on the effort necessary to achieving this goal. How can we get students to understand the effort necessary to succeed in school? (Oghu, 1990)
4. Self-confidence and self-esteem are important factors in determining student success. How can we help students feel confident of their ability to succeed if they make the effort? Focusing on learning strategies is one suggestion. (Kallman, 1991)
5. Reading is an important skill for students to have mastered by middle school. Reading instruction is often hit or miss in middle school classes. We have a reading class for sixth graders during the first semester and then a reading club for some of the sixth graders during the second semester. Do we need to continue something for the seventh and eighth graders who are still not reading at grade level, but don't qualify for special education services?(SREB, 1999)
6. Every middle school student should have an adult mentor. Should we try to get specific mentors for the At-Risk students? (SREB, 1999)
7. There needs to be a system of extra help and time. Students learn in different ways and at different rates. We have a homework club at River Glen. Is it really meeting the At-Risk students' needs? Is there a better way of doing it?(Gitman & Cassata, 1994)
8. Individualized instruction is important. Are we doing enough to individualize the instruction of our At-Risk students? (Kallman, 1991)
9. One of the factors linked with being at risk for failure in school or dropping out is having been retained. What are we doing as a school to make sure that the students that are retained are successful in their school careers after the retention? (Frymer & Others, 1992)

10. Parental lack of education and low level jobs are also linked to school failure in students. Should we offer a series of classes for parents? If we do want to offer classes, what kind of classes would be beneficial? (Frymer & Others, 1992)

## **Factors Present at River Glen:**

1. Faculty and staff supportive and involved with students. (Kallmann, 1991)
2. Emphasis on academic pursuits
3. Orderly social environment
4. Small school environment (SREB, 1998)
5. Good communication with parents (Jesse, Davis, & Pokorney, 1998)
6. Shared norms of behavior
7. High standards and clear expectations (SREB, 1999)
8. Teachers working together (SREB, 1999)
9. Qualified teachers (SREB, 1999)

# Student Survey

1. How do you feel about how your classes went last year at River Glen?
  - a. Good
  - b. OK
  - c. Not so good
  - d. Awful
  
2. What activities did you participate in that helped you with your homework or class work? Mark all that apply.
  - a. All-Stars Homework Club
  - b. Sacred Heart Homework Club
  - c. Other Homework Club
  - d. Individual help from teachers
  - e. Worked with study buddies
  - f. Had a tutor
  - g. Other What? \_\_\_\_\_
  - h. None
  
3. What activities helped you the most?
  
4. What are the hardest things about doing your homework? Circle all that apply.
  - a. Finding time to do it
  - b. It's too hard
  - c. I keep forgetting to do it
  - d. Getting started
  - e. Getting organized
  - f. There's other things that I would rather do
  
5. What was the hardest thing about doing your homework?
  
6. Where do you usually do your homework? What is it like?
  
7. Do your parents help you get your homework done? How? Mark all that apply.
  - a. Check my agenda
  - b. Make me do it
  - c. Help me when it is hard
  - d. Other \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. They don't help me
  
8. What would have helped you do better in school last year?

# Parent Survey

1. How do you feel that \_\_\_\_\_ did last year in school?
2. Why do you think that he/she had so many challenges?
3. What do you think helped him/her the most?
4. What was the most difficult thing about getting him to do his homework last year?
5. What activities did \_\_\_\_\_ participate in that helped him/her with his/her homework or classwork?
6. What are the hardest things at home about getting \_\_\_\_\_ to do his homework?
7. What can the school do to help \_\_\_\_\_ do better in school?
8. What would help you help your child do better in school?
9. How can the school support you in helping your child?

# Evaluation of PowerPoint Presentation

1. What factor(s) from the review of literature did you find especially relevant to the middle school students at River Glen?
2. Which factor(s) from the review of literature do you think could be implemented at River Glen?
3. What information from the student and parent surveys did you find especially interesting or surprising?
4. What suggestions from the students or parents do you think would be good to implement at River Glen?
5. What further questions should have been included on the surveys?
6. How would you rate the PowerPoint presentation?

Rubric Made Using:  
**RubiStar** ( <http://rubistar.4teachers.org> )

## Intervention Effectiveness

Teacher Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Intervention: \_\_\_\_\_

CATEGORY	4 Much Improved	3 Some Improvement	2 Slight Improvement	1 No Effect
Student Understanding of Coursework	Students improved significantly in their understanding of coursework.	There was some improvement of the students' understanding of coursework.	There might have been some improvement of the students' understanding of coursework.	Absolutely no effect or the student seems to have less understanding than before.
Student Completion of Work	The students' completion of work increase to a significant degree.	There was some improvement of the students' completion of work.	There was inconsistent improvement students' completion of work or just a slight improvement.	No improvement or the student is doing less than before.
Teacher Impact	The intervention was easy, not requiring really any extra effort on the part of teachers.	Teachers mainly had to monitor intervention. It didn't take a lot of extra time.	Teachers had to put in an extra 10 to 20 minutes each day to make sure intervention was successful.	Teachers had to put in an average of more than 20 minutes a day to make sure that the intervention was successful.
Cost	Free	Minor cost for materials like binder dividers, etc. or costs paid for by non-school source such as All-Stars.	Cost to school was from \$20 to \$200, but no personnel costs. Other costs paid for by non-school organization.	The school had to pay a teacher for extra-duty time.
Parent Involvement or Participation	Increased parent involvement significantly, as shown by parents initialing agendas, attending meetings, and helping with homework.	Some increase in parent involvement.	Slight increase in parent involvement, but no necessarily any follow-through.	No improvement in parent involvement.
Students Helping Students	Improved students' ability to effectively use other students to help them understand their coursework and homework.	Some improvement in students' ability to effectively use other students to help them understand their coursework and homework.	Students tried to work with other students, but often just copied the other students' work or was inconsistent	No effect on students helping each other.
Student Attitude	Improved student attitude toward school and course work.	Some improvement in student attitude toward school and course work.	Maybe a slight improvement student attitude toward school and course work.	No improvement student attitude toward school and course work or attitude got worse.



# Helping At-Risk Students Succeed

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- n Best Practices at River Glen
- n Recommendations Based on Literature
- n Results of Surveys
- n Recommendations Based on Surveys.



# Best Practices at River Glen

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Research supports many of the practices already present at River Glen:

- Faculty and staff are supportive and involved with students
- An emphasis on academic pursuits with high standards and expectations
- An orderly social environment
- Small school environment with programs to help students



# Best Practices (Continued)

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- Good communication with parents
- Shared norms of behavior
- Teachers work together
- Qualified teachers



# Recommendations from Literature

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1. School climate recommendations
2. Interventions for at-risk students
3. Program changes
4. Parental Support



# 1. School Climate

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1. Students need to value academic achievement.

Recommendation: Maybe we could institute a program similar to Peacebuilders where students give praise notes, etc., for academic achievements.

2. Self-confidence and self-esteem are important factors in determining school success.

Recommendation: We might involve the school counselor in helping us develop a program to increase the self-confidence and self-esteem of our at-risk students.



## 2. Interventions

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1. Research shows that a system of extra help and time is important for the academic success of at-risk students. Our after-school homework club does not seem to be meeting the needs of the students on academic probation.

Recommendation: Pay a teacher to teach one section of the homework club. Assign students on academic probation to that section and make it mandatory. Help families with transportation issues to arrange car pools.



# Interventions (Continued)

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1. Mentors are important for middle school students' success:

Recommendation: We should try to find a mentor for the students who are on academic probation.

2. Middle school students understand the importance of education, but often don't realize that effort is necessary for achieving their goals.

Recommendation: In our study skills classes and units we need to emphasize the need for effort and what effort involves.



## 3. Program Changes

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1. Reading is an important skill for students to have mastered by middle school:

Recommendation: Continued extra reading instruction for those at-risk students who are below grade level in their reading skills.

2. Individualized instruction is important for the academic success of at-risk students:

Recommendation: At our meetings to discuss students, look at whether changing teacher instruction or assignments on an individual basis would help the student succeed.



# Program Changes (Continued)

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1. One factor linked with being at risk for failure in school or dropping out is having been retained.

Recommendation: At the SST meeting recommending retention, outline other interventions that will ensure the student's success with review dates in the next year. Have review dates scheduled for SST meetings in the year after as well.



## 4. Parental Support

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1. Parental support is important for school success:

Recommendation: Plan a parent meeting early in the school year that will discuss how parents can help their child at home. Specifically call and invite the parents of students who were on academic probation last year.



# The Students

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- 19 students were on Academic Probation at the end of last year (11% of middle school). Three of these students did not fail any classes the first semester. One student who failed three or more classes the first semester did not fail any classes the second semester.
- 14 boys and 5 girls
- 9 low, 8 medium, and 2 high on state tests
- 93% of the students felt their classes went well last year. 80% of the parents felt their child did poorly last year.



# The Students (Continued)

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- 11 entered kindergarten as Spanish-dominant, 8 entered as English-only or Initially-Proficient. That makes 58% of the students on Academic Probation initially Spanish-dominant versus about 45% of the middle-school population. Only 3 students were not reclassified as Fluent English Proficient.
- The most common class for 7th and 8th grade students to fail was science. The most common class for 6th grade students was language arts.
- 15 students and their parents completed the surveys.



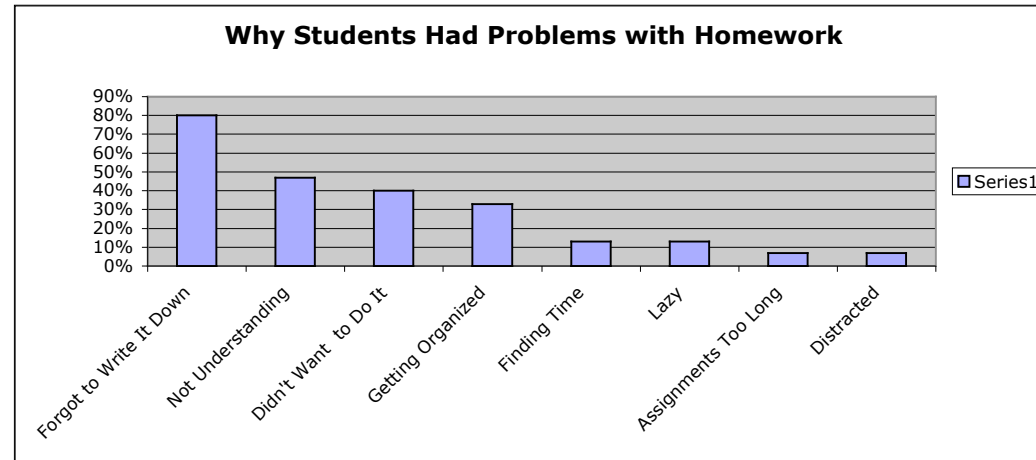
# Survey Results

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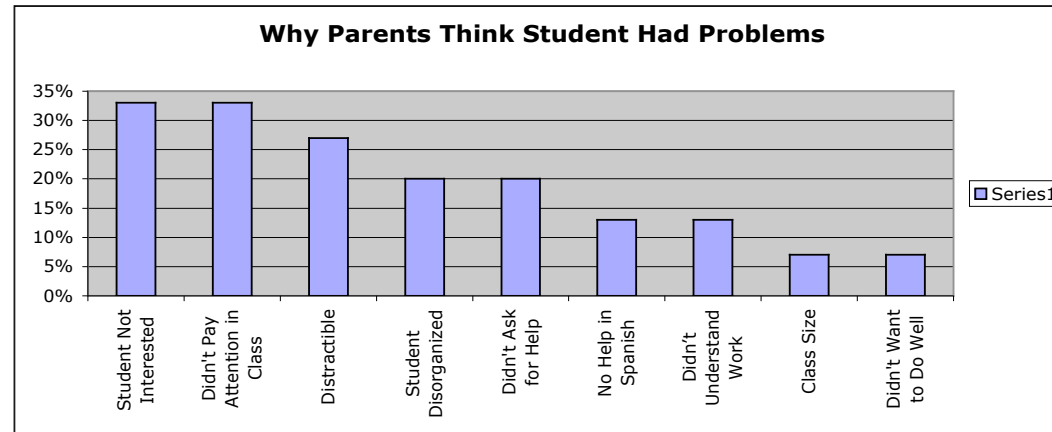
- Why were there Problems
- What helped?
- How did parents help?
- What were the problems at home?
- Suggestions from students
- Suggestions from parents

# Why Were There Problems?

Students:

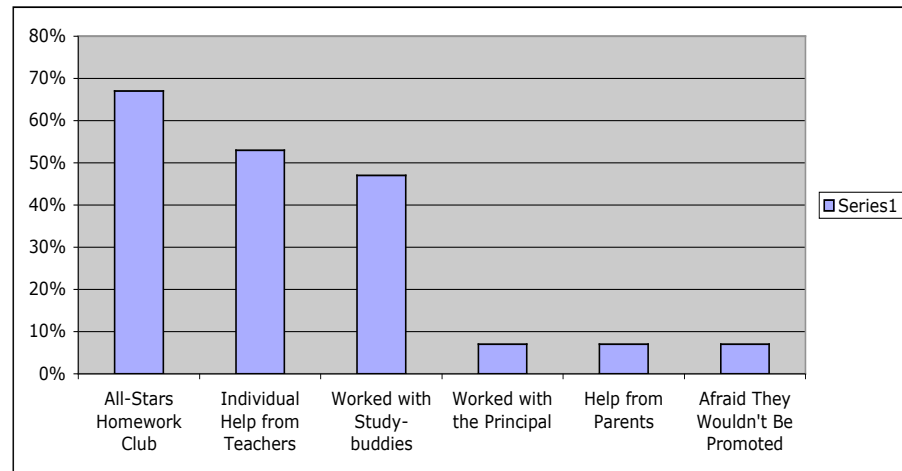


Parents:

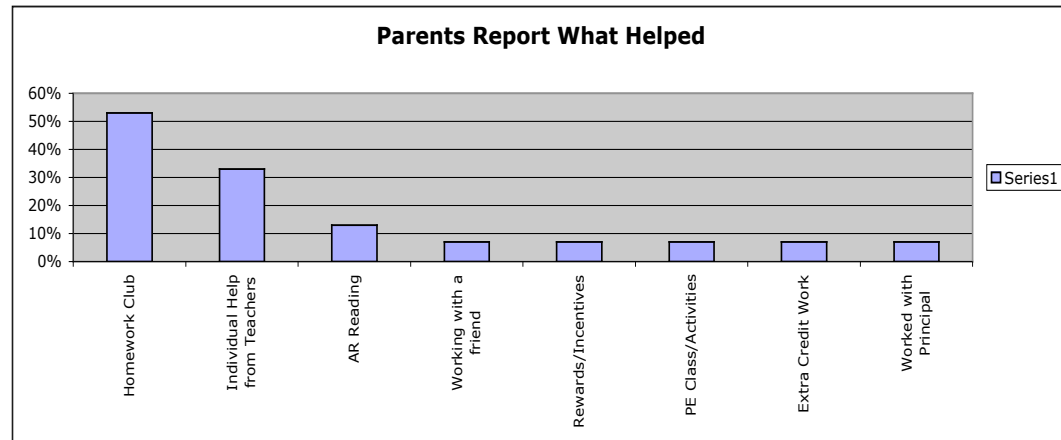


# What Helped?

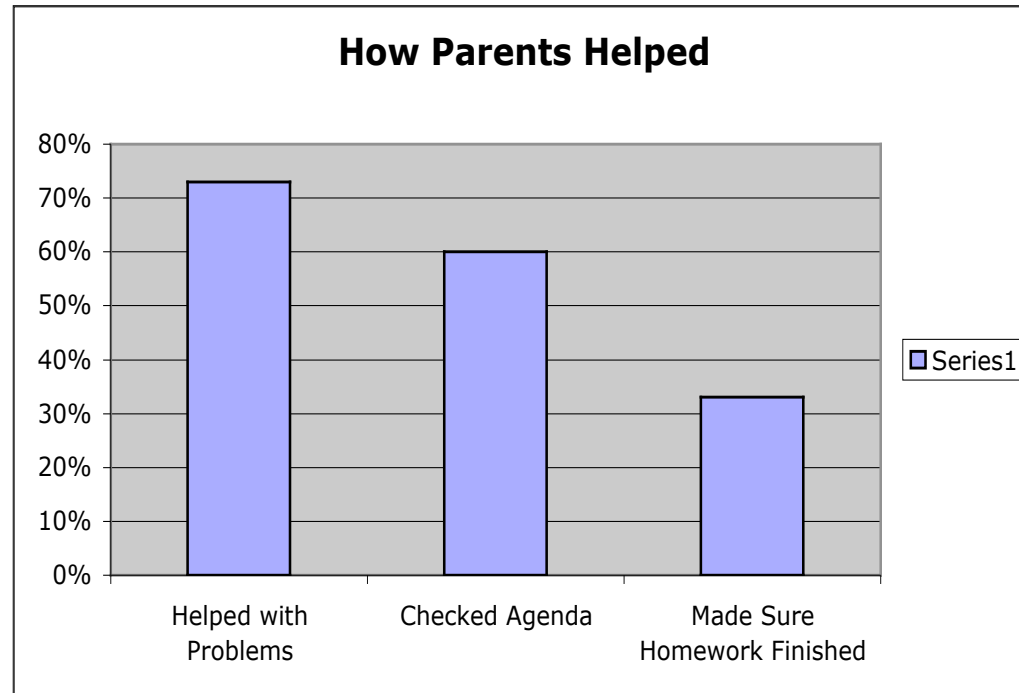
Students:



Parents:

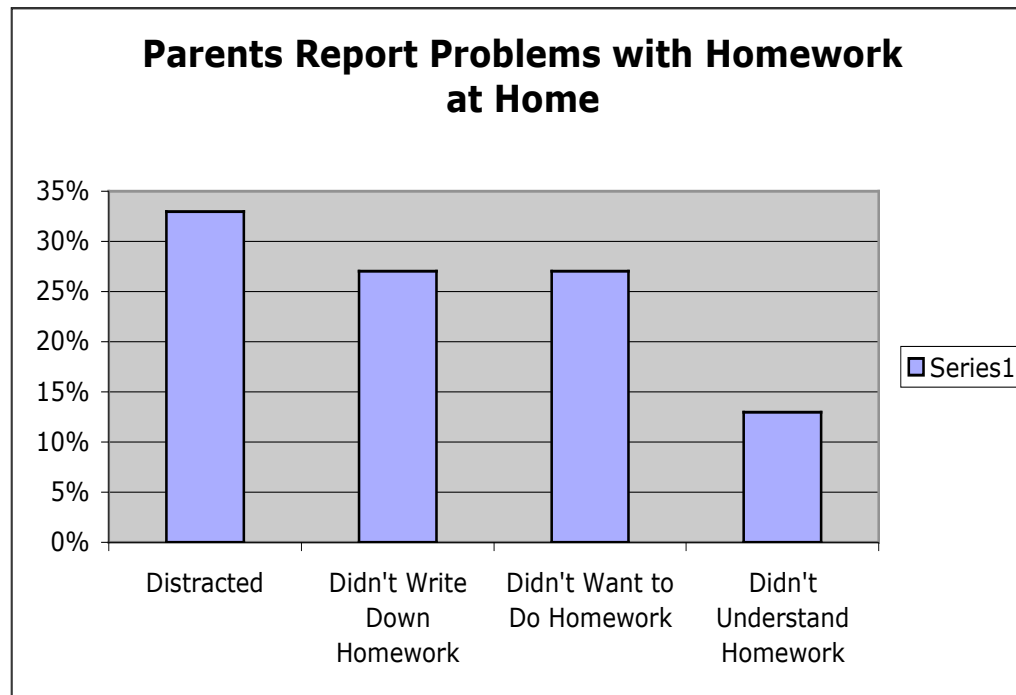


# How Did Parents Help?



As reported by students

# What Were the Problems at Home?



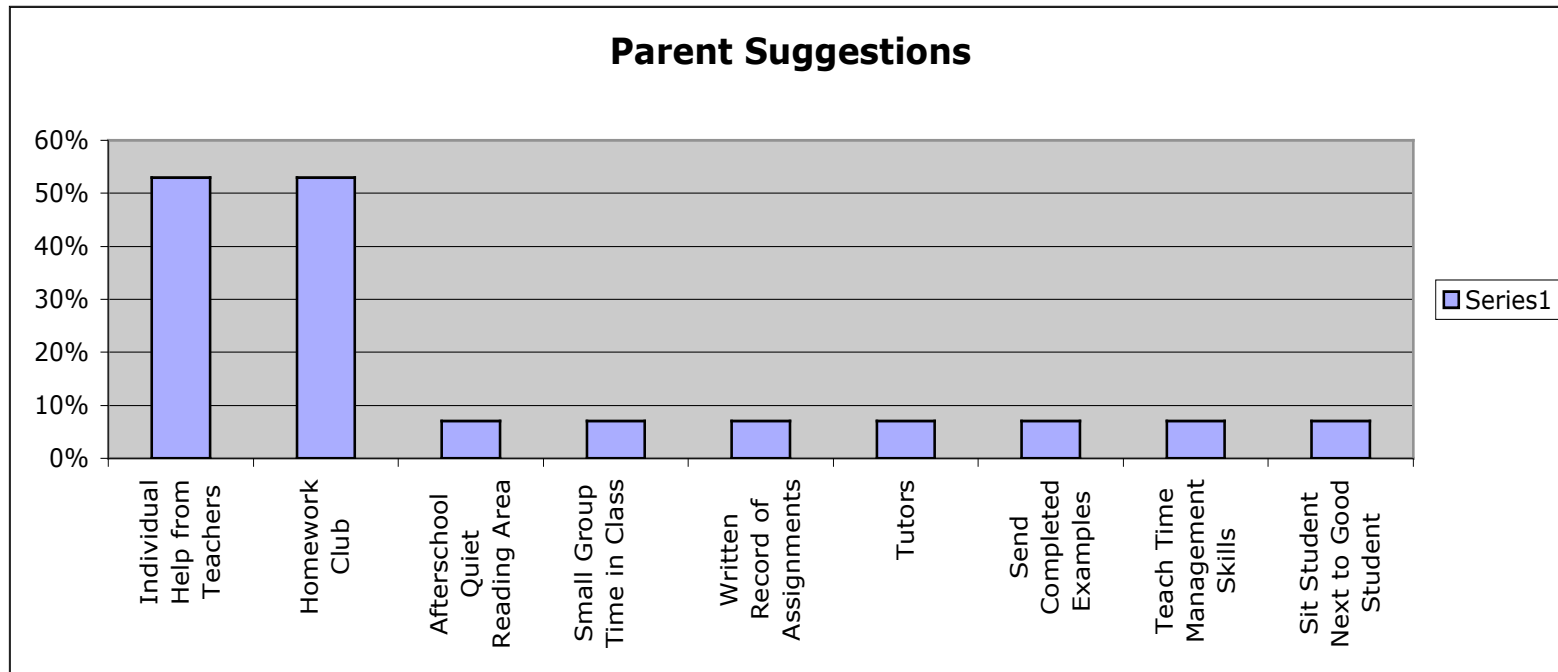


# Suggestions from Students

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- Make students stay in a lunch to do their homework.
- Give extra examples of homework problems in math.
- Keep giving extra individual help. Have teachers make a schedule like Mr. Tivol does.
- Make sure students have time to write down the homework. Have the homework posted on the board. Don't just say it.
- Don't give so much homework, especially in math.
- Have more field trips, so school would be more interesting.
- Make me sit by myself so I don't get distracted.

# Suggestions from Parents





# Other Parent Suggestions

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- 60% wanted frequent communications between teachers and parents about problems - weekly reports, e-mails, telephone calls, etc.
- 47% wanted suggestions, classes, counseling about how they can help their child better, how to motivate them, etc.



# More Parent Suggestions

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- A class to help parents understand the math taught in school
- Help with parenting time-management issues
- Send home the e-mail addresses of all the teachers
- Websites with the homework assignments
- Better information given in class on how to do the homework
- Make sure all the parents know how to access the on-line grades and that they're kept up-to-date.
- Students who go to daycare should have time to do their homework.



# Recommendations Based on Surveys

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1. Continue with homework club, but have teachers also schedule time when they are available to give individual help to students.
2. Send home teacher's e-mail addresses.
3. Send home weekly reports for students on academic probation.
4. Have a class for parents on how they can help their child.



## Recommendations (Continued)

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5. Check the agendas of students on academic probation to make sure that the homework is written down.
6. Have a written record of assignments kept in a binder or posted.
7. Establish a quiet reading room as part of homework club.
8. Make sure students on academic probation get regular help to stay organized.



# What Is Our Plan?

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