

Are You Smarter Than a 5th Grader?



Gr. 8 students working on problems created by 5th graders

Fifth grade and eighth grade students teamed up for an unforgettable math challenge at Forrestdale School in Rumson. Grade 8 Algebra Teacher, Mr. Scott Davison challenged his eighth graders to see if they could answer the word problems created by Ms. Meghan Kain's fifth grade class. The fifth grade students had been learning, in their math class, problem solving strategies such as working backwards, and applying critical thinking skills. Ms. Kain knew that they were up for another level of challenge. She had students work together to create the most complex word problem they could think of and invited Mr. Davidson's class to visit from down the hall with their pencils, some paper, and no calculators!

Student, Sienna Frangione, said this about the experience, "Today, we had the 8th graders in our math class and I really enjoyed watching them attempt our math problems. The math problems that they tried to solve required them to work backwards with whole numbers and fractions." Jack Ferguson, Grade 5, noted, "We were riding high, because we were stumping 8th graders! In class, we had learned problem solving strategies and critical thinking skills with Ms. Kain, which was surprisingly fun... AND it was math! Watch out Einstein!"

The two teachers enjoyed teaming up, as many of Ms. Kain's former students were in Mr. Davidson's class and Mr. Davidson enjoyed seeing the creativity and enthusiasm in math these younger students have. Ms. Kain shared, "My students were extremely proud of their work, and were ecstatic about sharing their problems with older students. When 8th graders were stumped with the problems, my class was able to show them the strategies that we learned in class in order to apply them to that word problem." Mr. Davidson added, "My students enjoyed solving the problems that the fifth graders created and expressed an interest in working together in other ways."