To:  The kind of parents that every teacher dreams of having,

Last night we had 100% of our class doing extra math!  Last night we had 100% of our class succeeding in math because we had 100% of our class improve in their rank.  Yesterday we started the day on the podium with the bronze.  We were knocked down to 5th by 10 am.  So 100% of us played and we took back the podium!!!!  By the end of the day we were 48 points away from the bronze medal again.  We closed the gap to 2 and 1/4 points by the end of the night!!!  Apparently we are nocturnal. :)  The competition ends tonight at midnight. (Did I mention that we are nocturnal)?

Now for the most important part.  We have already had a parent donate money for an ice cream party to celebrate all our determination and improved math skills.   We will have to think of something even more special to add to our celebration if we can persevere and figure out a way to reach our goal of being on the podium.  All of you reading this are invited to our celebration!  It will take some time to pick a date and time.  I will try to have the details in next week's newsletter.

Highlights from this week to discuss with your child:

1. One of our strategies for figuring out math problems that we have been using all year is to draw a picture of the problem.   We do this with tallies or circles or sometimes very detailed and intricate pictures of flowers or sharks.  We always focus on the procedure to figure out the answer so it is great if they take pride in and enjoy their drawings.  This is why we do not do worksheets that would encourage them to skip the procedure and rush to the answer.  We usually use individual white boards for this.  So it is helpful to have a lot of paper and pencil next to them while they play Matific.

2. Another strategy used to solve math problems is to make a chart or a graph.  This organizes the information and helps us to compare and contrast.  These strategies are used for all ages but as you get older you do them without realizing what strategy you are using.

3. MATH IS PATTERNS.  So another strategy we use is to look for patterns.  In the Meerkat Matific games and the Cherry Chomp games things come sometimes in sets of two.  If you recognize this pattern, it helps in figuring out the answer.  The brain has to practice at seeing and recognizing patterns.  So the matific games with picture patterns are an excellent foundation builder!

4. Working backwards is another strategy that helps when finding a missing number in an equation.  For example if you don't know what (13 - 9 =  ?) try (9 + ? += 13).  In our case, we would usually draw a picture as we work backwards.

5.  Guess and Check is another strategy. This works well for the sequence game and the triangle same sum game.  Once again, you can guess a number, then draw a picture and see if it matches the answer you are looking for.  There are other strategies...tune in next newsletter for some more.

Your partner in education and the Math Olympics!  Mrs. Teresa Pape  :)

P.S.  YES, I WILL BE UP AT MIDNIGHT!!!!  Remember you can go to Matific Games and click on Top Classes and first grade to see how close we are to getting OUR spot back on the podium!