

Making Math Count:

Educator Jenny Tremonte and Volunteer Neeraj Wadhra work to differentiate math instruction

Neeraj Wadhra has just started her third year volunteering every week with Somerville Public Schools. Wadhra received her B.A. in Education from India, and then worked for many years in the United States in corporate and technology leadership positions. Now retired and living in the neighborhood, Neeraj is tapping into her past enthusiasm for education and mathematics background, volunteering in Jenny Tremonte's third grade classroom at the Kennedy School. Wadhra works with small groups of students on math challenges, helping to differentiate instruction. "I thoroughly enjoy volunteering and working with Jenny. I work with an interesting group of students who are loving and respectful, and the teacher is fantastic," says Wadhra.

Educator Jenny Tremonte is glad she took the leap to work with a classroom volunteer, and the admiration is mutual. 'Neeraj brings so much to students,' says Tremonte. 'It's worth building in some extra time and flexibility to work her into my lesson plans because she's always bringing something new and fun to the lessons. Last year I found that students not in her group also worked harder to try to get into this math group. It was an added motivation for students that I wasn't expecting.'

And there are other immeasurable intangibles at work when a volunteer regularly engages with students. On a trip down the school hallway, Wadhra was greeted by several students with hellos and beaming smiles. These students were Wadhra's last year's math group--clearly left with some fond feelings of their math sessions with her.

Weekly volunteers in Somerville Public Schools serve before, during and after school hours to support, expand, and enrich student learning and engagement.



*Volunteer Neeraj Wadhra and Educator Jenny Tremonte
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