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(coach or club leader login required)

TIPS TO RECRUIT STUDENTS TO MATHCOUNTS

*Welcome! This page is part of the MATHCOUNTS for Educators series
to support registered coaches and club leaders.*

We'll keep adding to and updating the materials in this series, so please keep checking back for tips, guidance and curated math resources.

Have questions or need help? Please email programs@mathcounts.org or info@mathcounts.org to get support from Emily, Brody or Naomi.

GO TO MATHCOUNTS FOR EDUCATORS SERIES

Looking to grow your MATHCOUNTS program this year?

Use this page to get the message out in your school, bring in students who may not see themselves as math people (yet!) and build a strong math community.

Veteran coaches and club leaders shared the tips below based on what worked for them!

Key Resources to Download

- [PDF Guide: Tips to Recruit Students](#)
- [Slides about MATHCOUNTS](#) for an info session
- [Intro emails to parents/guardians](#)
- [6 flyers to promote MATHCOUNTS](#) – *color and grayscale*
- [Snack Info Packet](#) to get donations from local businesses



GO TO DASHBOARD

Ways to Encourage Students to Join & Stay

PERSONALLY INVITE STUDENTS (yes, really!)

This may sound small, but there's a big difference between a group announcement and a personal invitation. Kids who already feel like they "belong in STEM" may respond right away to an announcement made at the beginning of class (which is wonderful!), but for your kids who may have doubts, being asked *individually* to join can make all the difference.



Before your next meeting, personally invite 3 students to join the math team or club. Let them know you think they have a ton of potential and really hope they consider participating.

So many of our alumni have told us they joined MATHCOUNTS simply because their teacher asked them to...sometimes more than once. Here are just a few examples:

"I originally wasn't planning on doing MATHCOUNTS. **My teacher had asked for volunteer during the middle of class and I had stayed quiet. It wasn't until afterwards that she confronted me and I agreed.** I made the right decision. My experience at MATHCOUNTS made me realize my passion for math." —Sarah K., alumna from NE

"[MATHCOUNTS] is one of my favorite memories from middle school...During my 8th grade year, **my math teacher asked me** if I wanted to participate in MATHCOUNTS...**I initially told her no** [because] I wasn't very good at math and didn't want to deal with math any more than I had to. **Eventually she convinced me to join.**" —Ernesto R., alumnus from TX

ESTABLISH A "BRING A FRIEND" POLICY

Are you more likely to attend a social event if you'll know some of the people attending? For most of us, the answer is yes. The same is true for your kids attending MATHCOUNTS meetings! Mathletes can play an active role in recruiting new MATHCOUNTS participants, and one of our favorite ways was shared with us by coach and club leader Tyler Erb: the "Bring a Friend" policy.



Ask 2 of your Mathletes to bring a friend with them to the next math club meeting or team practice. Use your MATHCOUNTS pencils (competition schools) or water bottle stickers (clubs) as a reward.

This works both for bringing in new kids and for keeping all your Mathletes coming back and feeling supported:

"If you are interested in math club or just doing advanced math in general, bring a friend along with you. You are going to have a much better time when you have someone there that you like to hang out with. When you get frustrated about a topic or know that you are struggling, **you have a friend to have your back right from the get-go.**" —Tyler Erb, coach and club leader from NC

ASK OLDER STUDENTS TO BE MATH MENTORS

Research shows near-peer mentorship can be powerful for all students, and especially for girls and students from other groups underrepresented in STEM. Pairing up current 6th graders with 8th graders, for example, or asking local high schoolers to volunteer as co-coaches, can motivate students to attend MATHCOUNTS meetings and inspire them.



Brainstorm which of your current or former Mathletes would make great mentors for new participants. Ask them if they are interested in the leadership role. If they're a high schooler who needs community service hours to graduate, offer to sign off on their volunteering.

This is beneficial for both your younger Mathletes and your student mentors, who gain confidence and meaningful leadership experience.

"Training these kids the last two years have been the most life-changing experiences of my life...There was one girl this year that I especially connected with, not because she performed far better than the other students in the group, but because **she reminded me so much of myself all those years ago**. She would walk into practice extremely annoyed at the pace of her classes earlier that day, but then within the hour, she would enthusiastically be showing the others how to evaluate probabilities or label geometry diagrams. **Math club was her sanctuary, just as it had been mine.**" —Kaylee D., alumna from FL who coached and led a math club as a high schooler

USE MATHCOUNTS MATERIALS IN CLASS

Pique your students' interest by using club activities, [Problem of the Week](#) and handbook Warm-Ups in your classroom instruction. MATHCOUNTS activities and problems are creative and unique, so exposing students to these materials can help them see how your team practice or club would be different from math class, plus build their confidence that they can tackle advanced math.



Use next week's Problem of the Week as a Do Now activity for your math class and choose a club exploration or game to introduce a new math concept in class this month. Our online resources can be searched or filtered by math topic!

Another benefit? It saves you time on lesson plans for your classroom teaching!

"[I use] the Problem of the Week problems for my Algebra and Geometry classes. I offer up homework passes for every 3 correct. I hear the students collaborating on the answers and they all want to show me the different ways they came up with the answer. **I again explain that these are MATHCOUNTS problems and should not be feared. This has worked so many times to get students to join.**" —Chantelle Normand, coach and club leader from FL

"**I wish I had known how valuable the materials from MATHCOUNTS were in my daily instruction.** My first few years, I tended to think of MATHCOUNTS and my classroom math instruction as two disjoint sets. Instead, there are plenty of natural instances where the two overlap and can provide more opportunities for my students to tackle tough problems in a variety of ways." —Taren Long, coach and club leader from MD

PROVIDE SNACKS

Especially if you are hosting meetings before or after school, having snacks at your meetings is a great way to bring students in and keep them coming back. You don't have to buy all the snacks yourself, but be sure to ask about allergies and follow any school/district/group policies for sharing food.



Bring the letter in our [Snack Info Packet](#) and your school ID to your next grocery run and ask customer service if they have any snacks, gift cards or coupons you could use to reward local students in your math club or team.

Asking your community to help out may feel a little awkward, but worst case, they will decline or not respond...and best case, you'll be pleasantly surprised! Here are some suggestions from teachers:

- 1. Ask families to help.** Email parents or send home a flyer with your math team or club students asking them to donate snacks. Even if each student brings a few extra individual snacks with them on MATHCOUNTS meeting days, you'll likely have enough for everyone. If you have a well-established club or math team, try putting the members in charge of the food by creating a snack schedule.
- 2. Ask grocery stores or fast-food chains in your area to donate snacks or gift cards.** Bring your school ID and a [request letter](#), share some info about your MATHCOUNTS program and offer to give a shout out to the store during your next meeting.
- 3. Ask your school administration or PTA if there are funds available to help.**

“...so many students stand in front of [the posters] and tell me, ‘Hey, I can do that! Is this the answer?’ Then you can encourage them to explain how they [solved it] and show them these are the kinds of problems in MATHCOUNTS.”

-COACH CHANTELE NORMAND ON WHY SHE HANGS MATHCOUNTS POSTERS IN HER SCHOOL'S HALLWAYS



Spread the Word in Your School & Community



Tap into School Comms

Ask to post on your school's website, events calendar, social media pages, newsletter or morning announcements. Include MATHCOUNTS on your own classroom webpage.



Ask an administrator to post MATHCOUNTS meeting info on your school's website.



Host an Info Session

Invite students to learn about the academic and social benefits of MATHCOUNTS, hear anecdotes from current/past Mathletes, and play a mock competition or club game.



Download our slides and schedule an info session by September.



Talk to Parents

Meet with your school's PTA or talk about MATHCOUNTS during Open House. Email [parents/guardians](#) directly or [send home an info flyer](#) with students.



Download and personalize one of [these flyers](#) to send home with your students.



Present to Other Groups

Stop by a National Honor Society, debate, athletics or art meeting to invite students to join MATHCOUNTS. Highlight the features it shares with their extracurricular program.



Message an extracurricular organizer about presenting at their next meeting.



Get Help from Teachers

Teachers in your grade level or math department can share info about your math club/team with their students or use MATHCOUNTS materials in their classrooms.



Share info about MATHCOUNTS at your next department team meeting.



Get Help from Mathletes

Ask your Mathletes to have a table at your school's extracurricular activities fair or share info about MATHCOUNTS during their homeroom, study hall or free period.



Talk to your school to see if/when your school will host an activities fair.

Learn More from the Teachers We Quoted

We pulled info from past interviews with some amazing coaches and club leaders who all served as DoD STEM Ambassadors. Read their full interviews by clicking their names below.



TYLER ERB
(NC)



**GENEVIEVE
ESMENDE (CA)**



**COURTNEY
HEIKKILA (NC)**



TAREN LONG
(MD)



**CHANTELLE
NORMAND**
(FL)

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