

## **PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Judy K. Bethly  
Executive Director  
Volunteers In Public Schools (VIPS)  
(225)226-4700 (office) ( 225) 226-4704 (desk)

### **Math & Me Boosts Summer Math Skills**

June 8, 2021- Baton Rouge, LA -To acknowledge the importance of consistently strengthening basic math skills, teachers often cite the quote, “Math punishes absences.” Due to virtual learning and the summer break, students can lose the equivalent of three months of learning in mathematics and one-and-a-half months of learning in reading. The learning loss is especially acute in schools that predominantly serve students of color.

This summer, ExxonMobil, Volunteers In Public Schools(VIPS), and Baton Rouge Youth Coalition(BRYC) have teamed up to bridge the gap between summer vacation and the start of the new school year by initiating its **Math & Me** project. **Math & Me** pairs kindergarteners enrolled in summer school at Park Elementary with high school Fellows from BRYC to serve as Math Friend mentors. BRYC Fellows will spend one hour each week becoming acquainted with their students and helping them improve basic math skills. BRYC Fellows will use the guided lessons and resources from VIPS EveryOne Counts program to work on addition, subtraction, place value, and measurement. Funding from ExxonMobil supplies the Park students with hands-on activities to enhance counting and measurement skills.

VIPS Executive Director Judy K. Bethly said, “Often when math is mentioned, people scurry. We are excited that we can bring organizations together with a focus on math that supports our public school students. This project makes math fun by using high school mentors and virtual math manipulatives. Plus it demonstrates to the BRYC Scholars the importance of giving back.”

When commenting on their participation in **Math & Me**, Chemical Plant Manager Dave Luecke said, “ExxonMobil recognizes that math is an integral part of our everyday lives. While an aptitude in math is critical to roles in our energy industry, we know that learning complex math skills can sometimes be challenging for students. That’s why collaborations such as **Math & Me** can help our students make significant gains in this subject area and prepare them for a wide variety of quality careers in the future.”

BRYC is a nonprofit that prepares high-achieving, under-resourced high school students to enter, excel in, and graduate from college so they can become full participants in society. Scholars who submit Reflective Outlines at the conclusion of Math & Me earn a stipend to support their back to school needs.

Volunteers In Public Schools works to foster student success and build support for public education. Throughout the school year, VIPS facilitates its EveryBody Reads, EveryOne Counts, and Partners In Education programs in East Baton Rouge Parish public schools. In the fall, VIPS is seeking 500 adult volunteers to pair with underperforming students. Visit [vipsbr.org](http://vipsbr.org) to register for a training.