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media release

WHY DON'T GIRLS LIKE MATH? YOUR VOICE, TVO'S WEB SHOW FOR PARENTS, INVESTIGATES ON FRIDAY MAY 15

Toronto, May 1, 2009 — It's a fact that there are fewer women in math and science-oriented career fields such as engineering and computer science, but why? Is math just harder to grasp for girls in their school years? The stereotype that boys are better at math has been fueled, in part, by suggestions of biological differences in the way boys and girls learn. But EQAO test scores show that girls aren't lacking in mathematical ability; in fact, data for the 2007–08 school year indicates that 62% of Grade 6 girls were at or above the provincial standard in mathematics vs. 60% for Grade 6 boys. So why do girls often opt out of higher studies and careers involving math? Is it that girls just don't like math?

Your Voice, TVO's web series for parents at tvoparents.com, discusses and debates these questions and more in an upcoming show titled "Why Girls Don't Like Math." The webisode will be available to watch at tvoparents.com starting Friday May 15 and will be broadcast on TVO Sunday May 17 at 6 pm. Host Cheryl Jackson and a panel of expert guests will examine what it takes to keep girls interested and confident in math; the role of schools in developing their interest and ability; and the role parents play in encouraging their girls' math pursuits.

"EQAO testing is coming up for Grade 3 and 6 students at the end of May, and now is a perfect time to look at how girls learn math and more importantly, their attitude toward it," says Jackson. "EQAO student survey data for the previous school year showed that only 40% of girls believe they're good at math, but their marks tell a more positive story. Our experts will help us understand more about girls' EQAO test scores and how parents and teachers can use that information to help our young female students."

Guests include:

- Fiona Dunbar, lecturer at the University of Waterloo's Faculty of Mathematics. Dunbar is organizing the university's inaugural "Think About Math!" weekend conference beginning April 30, which aims to ignite enthusiasm in high school girls for mathematics.
- Patricia Campbell, former professor. Campbell is an author and consultant in educational research and evaluation.
- Lukrica Prugo, an elementary math teacher with the Toronto District School Board. Prugo has taught all-girls math classes.

Parents can send in their questions to the experts in advance at tvoparents.com then watch the show on the site at anytime beginning Friday May 15. (The discussion will also be broadcast on TVO Sunday May 17 at 6 pm.)

Your Voice at tvoparents.com is TVO's online program for parents who want to help their kids succeed in school and in life. It harnesses the power of the Internet to provide parents and caregivers with access to expert advice.

Also: TVO explores math from a child's perspective with the second edition of the *TVOKids Math Homework Hotline* on Thursday May 14. From 3:55 to 7:30 pm ET live on *TVOKids* and streamed live at tvokids.com, host Mark Sykes and math expert Troy Langevine, vice principal at Ellesmere-Statton Public School in Scarborough, will take email and phone questions from Grade 1 to 3 kids on the various math problems they're facing, and to provide coaching on the how-tos of writing math tests.

About TVO

TVO is Ontario's public educational media organization and a trusted source of interactive educational content that informs, inspires and stimulates curiosity and thought. TVO's vision is to empower people to be engaged citizens of Ontario through educational media. For more information, visit tvo.org.

Where to find TVO

Cable channel 2 (channel may vary in some areas), Bell TV channel 265, Star Choice channel 353.

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