

Abstract

Middle School 8, located in South Jamaica Queens is a Title I school with more than ninety percent of students entitled to free or reduced lunch. Students are from working class families who reside in the South Jamaica community, and South Ozone Park. The school's population consists of 383 students. 25% of our students are classified as Students with Disabilities (SWDs) and 12% of our students are categorized as, English as a New Language (ENLs). According to our school's 2013-2014 New York State report card, we made a 2% gain in English Language Arts and a 1% gain in Math for students performing on or above grade level. This minimal increase reveals, the majority of our students are struggling readers writers and critical thinkers.

Consequently, students need the benefit of small class sizes with a ratio of 20:1 in general education classes. Remediation in math and reading skills scheduled during the regular school day is necessary. Additionally, the ELLs need the benefit of a computer lab for them to attend at least 90 minutes each day, as the online programs best serve their needs.

At Middle School 8 teachers will teach purposefully with high expectations using cognitive engaged lessons supported by Common Core aligned curricula such as, CMP3 Math, Scholastic-Code X in Literacy, the Social Studies Framework and Glencoe supported by the New Generation Science Standards. Explicit teaching methodologies such as teaching through explanation and demonstration that appeal to diverse learners and cultures will be embedded in that all students will be able to make meaning in multiple ways. Collaboration between teachers will ensure that all subjects will connect to the instructional shifts in literacy and mathematics creating multi-disciplinary curricular.

During expanded learning time students will be engaged in cycles of academic and non-academic learning experiences. A variety of technology tools will be used and monitored such as Achieve 3000, Mathletics, Learn Zillion, and MyOn. Activities will involve students thinking logically, analytically and evaluative as they navigate through instructional enrichment and high quality, high interest content.

For the effective roll-out and sustainability of the aforementioned research based programs at MS 8, we require ongoing professional development for administration and staff. MS 8 seeks to partner with The Emerson School and Merrick Academy, so that students of South Jamaica Queens can benefit from the technology based programs offered at our community schools.