

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Dear Parents:

At P.S. 117Q, we are celebrating the fact that so many children are learning and achieving academic excellence, and I welcome you to share in the excitement. Thanks to the dedication of our outstanding faculty, staff, administrative team, supportive parents/community, our students are outperforming many students in various academic areas throughout the city. Our students are encouraged and motivated to learn and succeed.

Our school continues to achieve many successes. This school provides our students with a strong foundation for learning and success, through an emphasis on academic achievement in all curriculum areas and on our Magnet Program which helps to expand and develop the imaginative life of children through the exploration and expression of the creative arts. Students at PS 117 are gaining insight into their world, culture, history, and lives through the performing arts as a result. At PS 117, there is a focus on developing the whole child socially, emotionally, physically, and intellectually. It is to this end that I am able to announce that our school received a Well Developed on our Quality Review for the 2009-2010 school year. Although Progress Report results have not been released yet, we anticipate that our overall grade will reflect how well our school is performing as it relates to the metrics of School Environment, Student Progress and School Performance.

Our school is a place where effort and achievement are recognized and encouraged in every student, and where no child is being left behind. It is a place where the whole child and whole family are nurtured and supported, and where the school and community are working together to ensure the best possible education for all children. This undoubtedly will be an exciting school year. At PS 117Q, students will receive a sound education from a highly qualified staff. All staff members will be engaged in continuous professional development throughout the school year. As a second year Teachers College Reading and Writing Project School, we will be able to use a balanced literacy philosophy which focuses on differentiating learning for all students in literacy and writing. As a TC school, teachers will receive ongoing on-site professional development from three professionally trained Teachers College staff developers. One TC staff developer will specialize in providing on going support for our English Language Learners. In addition, we will have administrators and three literacy coaches/co-reading teachers on staff to support the work throughout the year. Students in grades K-4 will learn and explore math through HSP, our new math initiative for the 2010-2011 school year. Students in grades 5 and 6 will utilize Harcourt Brace. We also look forward to our partnership with A.U.S.S.I.E. We will have two math consultants work closely with administration, two intervention math specialists and K-6 classroom teachers throughout the 2010-2011 school year. Not only will we begin to unpack the new Common Core State Standards, but we will also develop diverse strategies for diverse learners. Our focused professional development plans will be directed to help all children succeed by providing support for the struggling learner and driving the achiever. This year students in K-2 will follow the Harcourt Core Science Curriculum and students in grades 3-6 will utilize the F.O.S.S. (hands-on) science program. We will infuse content area reading throughout the instructional sessions. In social studies students will continue to follow grade level themes

and units of study in order to become immersed in the curriculum. In addition, select teachers will work closely with artists through a City Lore grant which will allow students to focus on connecting the social studies curriculum through art, music and dance.

Support is offered primarily through a push-in model by licensed ESL teachers for English Language Learners. We offer an ESL Academy after-school and a Title III Saturday program, for eligible students. We also have four Title-I reading teachers who provide support, coaching, and academic intervention primarily through a push-in model. Students in need of smaller group intervention services are attended to in a pull-out model as needed. Targeted students also participate in our Extended Day program two days a week for seventy-five minute tutorial sessions. In addition, we have a Soar to Success after-school academic intervention program in which children receive additional support in the academic areas of mathematics and literacy. This school year, we will be fortunate enough to also provide an intense five week formative assessment preparatory in school program. Three certified teachers will work closely with our staff and students to give our students that extra boost they need to be academically successful. On staff we have two fulltime guidance counselors, two speech teachers, four part-time occupational therapists, one APE teacher, one part-time physical therapist, one SETTS teacher, one IEP teacher, and a part-time school psychologist and social worker. We are also pleased to be able to say all students are well prepared in the arts by teachers licensed in music and visual arts. For enrichment, PS 117 offers a pull-out Talented and Gifted program to identified students in grades 2-6. Through a grant provided by JCAL students in grades 4 and 5 will participate in a fourteen week Hip-Hop Dance residency and students in grade 2 and 3 will participate in a Sculpture residency. For ten weeks, select 4th and 5th grade students will participate in a Visual Arts residency program offered through JCAL. Additional after school curricular activities include an Art/Mural, Art/Photography, Basketball Clinic/Team, Multicultural Dance Troop, Literary Writers Club, School Choir, and a Magnet School for Theater Arts & Music Through Technology program for early childhood students as well as upper grade students. . Although we no longer receive funding as a Magnet school, our PTA donations allow students to participate in this wonderful after-school drama experience.

I look forward to our monthly PTA meetings and Parent Workshops. Selected students will be honored at the monthly PTA meetings and awarded "Student of the Month" certificates. In addition, I hope parents and guardians will be able to be involved by participating in future meetings. I hope to meet you in the near future, as each month I set aside time for "*Coffee and Conversation with the Principal*" meetings. I will share important school updates, provide curriculum resources, and share important instruction and assessment information. It is also a time for parents to meet other parents in the community and to voice suggestions and concerns. Each month our entire school community can also look forward to receiving a monthly parent/guardian newsletter titled, *Stay Connected*.

In closing, as we set new goals for even greater achievement and overall school performance, we are confident that by working together, we will all help ensure that our culture of excellence and success continues to flourish in the 2010-2011 school year. Here is to a wonderful and productive school year!

Warm regards,

Paula Cunningham

