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Mission Statement

At Gateway Intermediate School, our philosophy is to develop educational programs based on the unique characteristics and needs of young adolescents. Our mission is three-dimensional:

** to strive for academic excellence by maintaining high expectations of our students, staff and parents. Every child can and will succeed academically;*

** to develop a strong personal sense of discipline and social responsibility in our students;*

** to create within our school, a community of learners and leaders where teachers, staff, students, parents and community work collaboratively in order to enhance the quality of education.*

Our two academies (Grades 6 – 8) are focused on standards-based curriculum in preparation for admission to the top city high schools.

Overview

Gateway Intermediate School is part of the Children First Network 211 headed by Mr. Donald Conyers. Currently I.S. 364 houses grade six through grade eight in the Scholars program as well as in general education classes; classes are located in two academies approximately two blocks apart. Our total population consists of 400 students in 16 classes. Ninety-three percent of the students are of minority background with 71.6 percent below the poverty level. I.S. 364 has a multicultural population with 67.2% Black, 23.4% Hispanic, 2.9% Asian and 6.4% white.

Gateway Academy offers an enriched and accelerated curriculum designed to prepare adolescents for the 21st century. Gateway Academy was founded based on a core curriculum, which integrates literacy skills within the framework of Bloom's Taxonomy for higher order thinking as well as the new standards in English Language Arts; Mathematics, Social Studies, Science and Technology. The program provides the highest quality education for academically gifted children.

The teachers create learning environments which support and nourish communities of young learners. A mentoring component has been built into the program to allow each student to pair with a teacher; this partnership provides a follow through mechanism for the youngster's cognitive, social, physical and emotional progress. It also promotes a more effective transition from elementary into intermediate school.

Since its inception, Gateway Academy's rigorous academic program coupled with a highly-skilled and experienced staff has proven successful. Many of our students have received acceptances to select public high schools while others have accepted placements in private day and boarding schools through scholarship programs such as Prep for Prep 9, The Oliver Program, The Teak Program and a Better Chance (ABC Program). Ultimately all our students are expected to attend top universities and colleges of their choice across the country. This is evident by the achievements of many of our former students.

The school's mission is to prepare all of its children for the challenges of the 21st century. They must be highly literate, capable of effective communication, and demonstrate an uncanny ability to utilize acquired knowledge which fosters their personal and professional growth.

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

English Language Arts

The Gateway Academy literature-based reading program is organized around a daily structure that provides time for the following components:

Interactive Read Aloud – The purpose of an interactive read aloud is to help students discover meaning from the written word. The teacher stops before, during and after the reading of a story, engaging the students' thinking by previewing the text, by stopping at moments of suspense, ambiguity, climax and by focusing on author's intent.

Shared Reading – The purpose of shared reading is for the whole class to hear a piece of text read by the teacher with fluency and expression. This serves as an opportunity to introduce literacy elements and reading strategies.

Guided Reading – The purpose of guided reading is to enable small groups of learners to use independent strategies successfully with increasingly difficult text.

Independent Reading – The purpose of independent reading is to provide many opportunities for students to practice reading. Students will keep a reading journal to record the title, author, thoughts, feelings, memories and opinion of text.

In addition, students receive instruction focused on the following literacy and comprehensive skills:

- Character analysis and story development
- Internal and external conflicts
- Flashback, foreshadowing and circular stories
- Fact, opinion, irony, satire, parody, morals, persuasive and biased points of view
- Drawing inferences, symbolism, political cartoons, author's purpose, evaluation
- Compare and contrast, cause and effect relationships

Children will read at least 25 books or book equivalents each year and produce book reviews, literacy response papers, research reports and position papers.

Writing

Our balanced literacy program includes writing in response to literature to enhance students' understanding and enjoyment of the text. In addition, it gives the student the opportunity to interpret what has been from a personal perspective. There are several essential components to our writing program.

Write Aloud – The teacher demonstrates purposeful writing and explains decisions such as audience, word choice, format, spelling and punctuation.

Shared Writing – The purpose of shared writing is for the student and teacher to compose together.

Guided Writing – This takes place as the teacher moves among the student writers. This may involve the teacher working with one or two students or a small group.

Independent Writing – Children select their own topics, draft, revise, edit, and make decisions about publishing. Individual writers are supported also through conference, peer responses, and sharing opportunities.

Through writing children will:

- Recognize the power of language (through writing) to shape ideas and beliefs
- Make comparisons among a variety of genres
- Develop written responses to literature and support them by reference to details to the work
- Write short stories, plays or scenes to explore a specific theme
- Write poetry, letters, persuasive pieces and keep a journal
- Write personal narratives, biographical accounts (memoirs), historical accounts, articles, and fiction and non-fiction writing
- Evaluate the role of the media in focusing attention and in forming opinions

Beginning with the 2005 – 2006 school year, the New York City Department of Education has required that the curriculum for middle school students include a daily average of 90 minutes of reading and 75 minutes of mathematics for students in grades six, seven and eight. This model is in line with much of the program that is currently in place at the Gateway Academy. Implementation of a CORE program in Language Arts and Social Studies was implemented at the Gateway Academy. Humanities teachers teach the CORE subjects for consecutive periods. This initiative affords teachers multiple periods that often exceed New York City's Department of Education future literacy, mathematics, science and foreign language mandates to develop an interdisciplinary curriculum.

Mathematics

Students attending the Gateway Academy are introduced to a nationally validated mathematics curriculum called Impact Mathematics. It helps students to develop proficiency in conceptual understanding, computational and procedural skills, and problem solving. Each chapter in this program supports differences in learning styles with alternative teaching strategies, language support, advance learners, and extra support. Students' understanding is continually assessed through daily activities and the use of four formal assessments during each unit. Based on ongoing assessment throughout the

school year, some eighth graders will be placed in an advanced mathematics class. Students selected from that class will be allowed to take the Integrated Algebra Regents in June, 2012.

Science

A new science curriculum has been implemented by the state. This new spiraled curriculum includes all three branches of science: life, physical, and earth. For the first time 6th graders will be assessed in science. All eighth grade students will be prepared rigorously to take the state performance exam in science. Based on ongoing assessment throughout the school year students will be placed in an accelerated science class. Students selected from that class will be allowed to take the Living Environment Regents in June, 2012

All chosen curricula address the New York State Learning Standards for Math, Science, and Technology, New York City Science Standards, National Science Education Standards. Within each aspect of the curriculum students are encouraged to use critical thinking as well as discovery and hands on exploration to do original research. This research may begin as an outgrowth of regular class work and may result in investigation carried out in or out of school.

Social Studies

Social Studies will be aligned with the state curriculum as well as with the core knowledge sequence. American History will be fused into the sixth grade curriculum. Students in Grade 6 are introduced to world cultures, religions, economic and political systems through the study of Global History and Geography. Students in grades 7 and 8 explore people, places, events and critical issues in the context of American History and Government. The coursework concentrates on the integration of Social Studies and Language Arts to develop students' reading, writing, and critical thinking skills. Students read and critically analyze primary and secondary source documents, developing writing techniques for Document-Based Questions and Constructed Response Questions.

Spanish

Students learn to read, write and speak Spanish through active participation. Practice is obtained through listening centers and computer drills in writing. Students also learn to apply their knowledge to real life situations in skits and mini-dialogues, which are routinely written and performed by them.

Also, students explore and acquire knowledge of Hispanic cultures throughout the world. Sixth and seventh graders learn about the Mexican holiday Cinco de Mayo by making some of the traditional foods of Mexico. The sixth graders experience some of the Hispanic

Caribbean through a performance at the Repertorio Espanol. "Esta era una vez ..." is a dramatic retelling of some of the most popular folktales from Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic and Cuba. Students gain an understanding of how Spanish, African and indigenous cultures of the Caribbean are integrated into the folktales of these countries. The seventh graders get a taste of the Spanish writer Cervantes through a performance of the classic "Don Quijote y Sancho Panza".

Active learning ensures that the language will be retained; and an understanding of the culture and language aids students in a multilingual and multicultural world.

Technology

With our transition into the 21st century, we at I.S. 364 believe that technology provides enhancement to the curriculum. At the Gateway Academy, computer work stations are in every classroom; also there are lap tops which are secured and stored and moved from room to room on an as-needed basis. All computers are used extensively by both staff and students. The Gateway Academy also has an itinerant technology teacher who works closely with student and staff supporting the integration of technology into curriculum. The use of websites such as Teachscape, the Grow Network, and Princeton Review will be used as a tool to engage teachers in greater professional discourse.

The Arts

The Project Arts Program has served as an enrichment component to the Gateway Academy social studies and fine arts programs. Students have experienced performances by dance and musical companies which specialize in the Asian, African and American art forms. Students participate in song, dance, and art activities; as well as in our Annual Art Auction in order to gain an understanding of the cultures represented in their social-ethnic studies. Students in both grades 6 and 7 work with experienced musicians to play the violin and recorder.