Hello Neighbors

The Neighborhood School

Community School District One
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www.theneighborhoodschool.org
Our practice is based on what we understand about children:

- All children are curious about the world and want to learn! Children learn by having experiences with each other, with materials and with the environment.
- When school is integrated with the rest of a child's life, it makes sense and becomes meaningful.
- Children are capable of contributing to the group, learning cooperatively and being peaceful and productive members of both a democratic classroom and the larger school community.
- Children engage in learning and demonstrate what they learn in many ways.

With the deep belief in the remarkable capabilities of each child we build on their strengths whether they are academic, artistic, physical or social.

- We provide a safe and motivating environment for them to try new experiences to build on their strengths and to go further in the areas where they need improvement.
- We provide a place where their natural capacity for discovery is stimulated and their innate and natural curiosities are focused into a context for learning about themselves and their world.
- We encourage them to make connections, explore their interests, make good choices and be self-confident about their abilities throughout the curriculum.

Children are provided the opportunity to integrate a wide range of skills and subject matter through a core curriculum. In this way, children study the history, natural and physical environment, geography, culture and people of a particular location and time to learn and think critically about themselves and others.

A typical first/second grade curriculum might focus on services in the neighborhood (fire station, police department, post office, etc.) or the buildings of New York City. Within the study there are field trips, rich literature, writing experiences, math activities, and extensions and enrichment in the arts. Our entire curriculum has a strong emphasis on developing research skills, critical thinking, problem solving, communication and socialization. As children grow and move on to the upper grades they go from studies of their immediate environments to the larger city and its history as well as other geographic areas and their histories.

We look at the children and measure their growth and development on an individual continuum. Regular curricular letters, Director’s letters, individualized progress reports, portfolios and family conferences provide avenues of communication between school and families. Teachers use techniques of assessment such as anecdotal notes, running records and writing and math samples to analyze individual student’s progress and make decisions about classroom instruction.

As facilitators, we help children come up with solutions and solve problems. Conflict resolution provides techniques for teaching children how to be peaceful members of a multicultural, non-sexist learning community.

School-wide policies and practices are formed collaboratively and dynamically to provide a cohesive, unified thoughtful environment for children. We are self-reflective and reevaluate our policies periodically in an effort to meet the needs of our children and ever-evolving community.
The Neighborhood School doors were opened in 1991. A group of teachers, supported by parents and CSD 1, had a strong and exciting vision of how school could be. There were originally four classes from pre-k to 1st grade. Now we have grown to 13 classes, pre-k to 5th grade.

The name, Neighborhood School, is significant. Studies of the family, neighborhood, and city form a core around which our curriculum is built. Children’s learning is about exploring the world and finding their place in it. We provide the opportunities for children to explore the social world, asking and finding their answers to questions about how people live, why people live together in communities, what services neighborhoods provide, how New York City came to be the way it is, and how they can work with others and contribute to a better world and community.

We look at education as more than transmitting basic skills. Helping children build good “habits of mind” such as self-motivation, love of learning, imagination, responsibility, self-expression, satisfaction in work well done, and creativity goes hand in hand with acquiring skills. Helping children develop social skills goes hand in hand with developing academic skills to build children who can truly “do their best” and “be their best.”

We are truly a “Neighborhood School” in other ways as well. We were able to begin the school because of strong parent and educator interest in supporting the community. We wanted our children of District 1 to learn and live together with other children from a wide variety of families and backgrounds. We were interested in having choice within the district, enlarging the range of educational options available here, in our neighborhood.

Sometimes people think this kind of education is “experimental” or “brand new”. However, as early as the late 1800’s, educators and families in New York City public and private schools were working on schools that would give children the experiences and opportunities to become good citizens of a democratic society, allow them to build understanding and learning that connects their experience to the outside world and enable them to keep and enjoy a love of learning and working. Many of these schools are still functioning and highly successful today.

What Caroline Pratt said so well in 1948 is still our underlying belief today:

“I had dreamed of a child world in which railroads and city streets, farms and factories, the stuff of which the real world is made could be brought down to children’s scale so that they might grasp it. I had envisioned a community of children who could in their own way, through the child activity, which we misguided call play, reproduce this world and its functioning. Such a community of little individuals, equals in size and strength and understanding as adults are equals in their own adult communities would learn not only physical truths about the world, but social truths as well, the all-important truths of people with many individual differences who must live and work with each other.”
WE INTEGRATE A MULTICULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

TO ENHANCE CONCEPT OF SELF AND CULTURAL IDENTITY

TO DEVELOP SOCIAL SKILLS AND RESPONSIBILITY

TO BROADEN THE CULTURAL BASE OF THE CURRICULUM

TO STUDY PARTICULAR GROUPS AND APPRECIATE HOW OUR LIVES HAVE BEEN ENRICHED BY OTHERS

PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING

Presentation by Jillian G. Katz, PH. D.
Early Childhood Education Conference

I. GOALS OF PROGRAMS: WHAT SHOULD YOUNG PEOPLE BE LEARNING?

a. Programs should reflect the values and principles of the community they serve.
b. What children learn should be culturally relevant.
c. The younger the children are whom you teach, the more important it is that what you teach them has horizontal relevance (intended to help on the same day) rather than vertical relevance (for the next grade).
d. The curriculum must address all four categories of learning goals: (Knowledge, Skills, Dispositions, Feelings).
e. "Damage disposition hypothesis": If we introduce children to knowledge and skills too early, too intensely, too abstractly, they will acquire them but at the expense of the disposition to use them.

II. DEVELOPMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS: WHEN SHOULD THESE THINGS BE LEARNED?

a. Just because children can do something does not mean they should.
b. Whenever we cause children to behave as though they understand when they really don’t, the cumulative effect is to separate children from their own minds.
c. One of the first principles of teaching, at every level, is to teach the learner how to tell you where he is related to understanding the learning concept skills.
**Organize for Effort**
- Students know what to expect
- Fair and credible evaluations
- Recognition of accomplishments
- Curriculum geared to standards
- Expert instruction
- Student responsibility for work
- Results fixed; time varies

**Clear Expectations**
- Standards available and discussed
- Models of student work
- Students judge their own work and the work of others
- Intermediate expectations specified
- Families and community informed

**Recognition of Accomplishment**
- Frequent recognition of student work
- Clearly demarcated progress points
- Celebration with family and community
- Employers and colleges recognize accomplishment

**Fair and Credible Evaluations**
- Assessments referenced to standards
- Direct preparation for assessments (grading on absolute standards, not on a curve)
- Reports to parents and students on progress toward expected standards
- Curriculum and assessments are aligned
- "Public accountability" and "instructional" assessment aligned

**Academic Rigor in a Thinking Curriculum**
- Commitment to a Knowledge Core
  - An articulate curriculum that
  - Avoids needless repetition
  - Progressively deepens concept
  - Curriculum and instruction are organized around major concepts
  - Teaching and instruction focus on mastery of core concepts
- High-Thinking Demand
  - Students expected to raise questions, solve problems, reason
  - Challenging assignments in every subject
  - Extended projects
  - Explanation and justification are expected
  - Reflection on learning strategies
- Active Use of Knowledge
  - Synthesize several sources of information
  - Test understanding by applying and discussing concepts
  - Prior knowledge is used
  - Interpret texts and construct solutions

**Accountable Talk**
- Talk is essential to learning
- Talk must be accountable to
  - The learning community
  - Knowledge
  - Standards of evidence
  - Standards of reasoning
- Indicators of Accountable Talk
  - Press for clarification and explanation
  - Require justification of proposals and challenges
  - Recognize and challenge misconceptions
  - Demand evidence for claims and arguments
  - Interpret and use each other’s statements
1. All pre-kindergarten & kindergarten applications go into the Manhattan Integrated Service Center lottery. Admission is not based on a first come first serve basis.

2. We collect applications up until the citywide deadline in the spring. You may also bring applications directly to the region. If you do, please give us a copy for our records.

3. If you are applying for pre-k or kindergarten you will receive notification of your child’s acceptance from the Manhattan Integrated Service Center. We fill vacancies grade 1st to 5th during the spring and continue as openings become available thru June. If you are transferring from another public school, you must fill out a Placement Exception Request. Request notices go out in August.

4. You must participate in a tour at the school to receive an application.

5. If you are applying for pre-k, your child must be 4 years of age before December 31st for September entrance of that year.

6. We accept a total of 18 children for pre-k and 18 children for kindergarten. We accept children from Grades 1 to 5 based on availability.

7. Although we value diversity the pre-k and kindergarten are blind lotteries.

8. Siblings of children who already attend the school are automatically accepted if they apply before the application deadline.

9. Children who reside in District 1 have priority for admission.

10. If your child is place on our waiting list, your application will automatically go to your second and third choice schools. If you accept a place at your second or third choice school, you will be removed from our waiting list.

11. We do not keep and use applications from the previous year.

12. Each year we collect new applications for the following school year.

**Proof of Address:**

- If you are accepted, you must bring two forms of identification that verify your address during registration.
- We can not accept utility bills, leases or driving licences.
- We can however, accept the following: bank statements, recent passport, letter from a doctor, a letter from social security, public assistance documents, etc. If there is any question about your residence, District One will schedule a home visit by an attendance teacher for verification.