

WHAT'S GOING ON IN SCHOOL?
MS 447 8th Grade Curriculum Updates Fall 2020

Subject	Curriculum Overview for MP1 (12/14/20)												
PBL (Project Based Learning)	<p>Imagine NYC is a project-based learning experience that every student engaged with as we began our academic year. Our goals were to create a community among classmates and teachers that works for everyone, and to learn and practice skills to help us succeed in our very different learning environment. The core of the unit centered around issues that have affected each of us and our fellow New Yorkers over the past six months. Our driving question asked, how can we make NYC a better place for New Yorkers to live? Students explored topics of interest that relate to the pandemic and racial justice, identifying problems and possible solutions, and presenting findings at a virtual event.</p>												
English Language Arts	<p>This course will combine theory and critical thinking skills to explore our identity, inner worlds, relationships with various texts, and the power of self-expression through writing. 8th grade students will dive deeply into standards aligned skills through reading culturally sustaining literature, analyzing contemporary media, participating in writing workshops and reflective small-group conversations, and applying our content to life in the real-world.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Year-long Investigation Overarching Question:</u> <i>How does identity shape our perceptions of the world?</i></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="529 1184 1417 1688"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="529 1184 784 1243">Unit</th><th data-bbox="784 1184 1417 1243">Essential Question</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="529 1243 784 1327">Personal Narrative</td><td data-bbox="784 1243 1417 1327">How do components of my own identity frame how I interpret the world around me?</td></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="529 1327 784 1411">Visionary Fiction</td><td data-bbox="784 1327 1417 1411">What drives an individual to conform or rebel against societal norms?</td></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="529 1411 784 1495">Literary Essay</td><td data-bbox="784 1411 1417 1495">How do we use differing attitudes and experiences in order to critically analyze literature?</td></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="529 1495 784 1621">Humanities Project</td><td data-bbox="784 1495 1417 1621">How do I investigate social/political events through the context of both fiction and non-fiction to construct commentary on society that best represents my ideology? How and why do people resist dominant ideologies?</td></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="529 1621 784 1688">Poetry</td><td data-bbox="784 1621 1417 1688">How is poetry a vehicle for self-expression and confrontation towards the world we live in?</td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p>We're excited to join our 8th graders in their journey to become independent, confident students of English Language Arts ready to take on High School-level work. We encourage self-advocacy, using peer supports, being curious, and taking agency of one's learning.</p>	Unit	Essential Question	Personal Narrative	How do components of my own identity frame how I interpret the world around me?	Visionary Fiction	What drives an individual to conform or rebel against societal norms?	Literary Essay	How do we use differing attitudes and experiences in order to critically analyze literature?	Humanities Project	How do I investigate social/political events through the context of both fiction and non-fiction to construct commentary on society that best represents my ideology? How and why do people resist dominant ideologies?	Poetry	How is poetry a vehicle for self-expression and confrontation towards the world we live in?
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Math	<p>Our philosophy as a math team is that, “we are all math people.” There tends to be a misconception that some people are naturally good at math, and some people are not. This has been proven through research to be untrue, and we ask that you support us in messaging this mindset to your student at home. All students are capable of being successful and having fun in math class.</p> <p>Our number one goal as the 8th grade math teachers is to ensure that each math class is interesting, meaningful, and fun, and that students feel supported and valued each time they enter our classroom.</p> <p>This year, we will focus on exploratory and hands-on methods of learning. Students will learn from one another and build on each other’s ideas to make meaning and sense of abstract mathematics concepts. They will develop confidence in their abilities and know that “mistakes matter” and that our goal is not to get the right answer, but to grow our brains by thinking deeply about new and rigorous concepts. Please encourage and support your child in accepting the idea that making mistakes is okay and a natural part of learning.</p> <p>For this first unit, we will focus on patterns and sequences, and how they relate to functions. Students will begin to explore how functions relate to the real world. Math class will consist of interactive online activities, hands-on projects, videos, practice/exercises, and meaningful discussions, regardless of whether your student is remote or in-person.</p> <p>Students are expected to be present for all math classes. During remote learning, this means that students will have their cameras on when necessary and participate via microphone or Zoom chat. It is highly recommended that students have a notebook and pencil to take notes on while they are learning - both online and in-person.</p> <p>We are committed to working in partnership with parents, and we will continue to keep you updated in the upcoming school year. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or concerns.</p>
Science	<p>This year, your child will have the opportunity to explore life science topics including cells, human body systems and evolution. Our aim is to enhance your child’s understanding of the natural world through hands-on labs and inquiry based learning activities while also preparing them for the next great adventure: <i>high school!</i></p> <p>For the first trimester, we will be going through Units 1 and 2: Unit 1 is designed to build on the scientific investigation skills students practiced in 7th grade. Throughout the unit, they will create testable questions, design an experiment to germinate seeds (see Picture 1, for reference), analyze their data and peer review with</p>

	<p>their groups. They will then create a peer-reviewed journal that our 6th graders will use in Expo! This unit will conclude by 10/30.</p> <p>Unit 2 is an exploration into how cells regulate their internal environments. Students will create a model or slideshow comparing a cell to another complex system. Students will complete a series of short experiments in order to demonstrate how cells function in a dynamic environment. This unit will conclude in late December with presentations of their cell analogy project.</p>
Social Studies	<p>Each class has social studies for two 78 minute blocks per week. We will be splitting each block into two separate, but related parts: one for historical content and the other to work on our unit project. Either or both parts of the class may be synchronous (on Zoom, together) or asynchronous (off Zoom, independent) depending on the day and lesson.</p> <p><u>In the first part of every class (25-35 minutes)</u>, we will be exploring the history of being Black in America, from 1865-now. We will focus on the story of black resistance, and of how communities survived and thrived in the face of violence and discrimination. In this first part of class, we will focus on a class “text”- it could be an article, short story, poem, song, podcast, video clip, or just about anything that could teach us information. We will explore it together, and you will answer a reflection question in a running journal on Google Classroom.</p> <p><u>In the second part of every class (40-50 minutes)</u>, you will be working on a group project. It will involve each group writing a 10 or more paragraph feature article and making a 6-8 minute Google Slides presentation. You will be working in groups of 5-6 people, and everyone will be responsible for writing a section of the feature article and also speaking during at least 1 minute of the presentation.</p> <p>Each group will be choosing one aspect of systemic racism to focus on, and researching what the problem is, the history of that problem, how people have tried to fight for change and the results, a goal for how to improve the situation, and a strategy for doing so.</p>
Exploration	<p>Each class has a 78 minute block of Exploration once per week. Exploration is an interdisciplinary, project-based curriculum. Learning is collaborative, inquiry-driven, and draws upon diverse resources both inside and outside the classroom, to develop authentic skills (meaning-real life problem solving is involved), and knowledge. Our program offers interdisciplinary enrichment opportunities in the areas of science, technology, mathematics, humanities. the arts and social consciousness.</p> <p>Our first unit is entitled “Inventions for A Better World” The essential question which will drive this unit is how do inventors use the design</p>

	<p>process to solve problems? We will also look at how inventors build toward a sustainable future.</p> <p>We look forward to supporting students in creating projects where they will think of developing their own inventions.</p>
Spanish	<p>This Spanish course is a Comprehensible Input Spanish course, and we will use methods and strategies that are based on TPRS (Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling) method of language instruction. At times we will teach specific grammar structures to strengthen your students' acquisition of the language. The content and skills we will focus on include the acquisition of high frequency structures (the most frequently used words in a language). We will use these structures in class discussions, stories, and cultural explorations, and our students will be expected to recognize them when reading or hearing them and, in time, be able to produce them in speech and writing. We will assess our students through formative and summative assessments. Our formative assessments include the daily work that is completed, as well as interactions had in-person and via zoom. Our summative assessments include reading comprehension assessments and writing assessments that will occur approximately two times per unit.</p> <p>General expectations and structures for our class: Remote: Currently students activities and lessons are presented via Google Slides at 9am everyday. Daily check-in (consisting of creating sentences for the date, weather and personal feelings) is completed at the beginning of every lesson. Students are asked to add vocabulary to their vocab tracker and complete a short activity prior to the lesson/share. A time to report onto zoom for a mini lesson or activity appears as both an announcement on Google Classroom and as part of the instructions of every assignment. Music is used at the beginning of Zoom activities to help give teachers time to take attendance. On occasion, if activities are asynchronous, students are given an optional Zoom time to meet with teachers in order to answer questions about skills, activities or general questions. Regularly, students are presented with extension activities if they complete the tasks early. During Lab periods, students use websites like EdPuzzle to complete a task that assesses a students writing, listening and comprehension skills.</p> <p>In-Person: Class begins with a song for students to listen to while completing their daily check in. Teachers use this time to take attendance and set up tech for the period. Students receive a mini lesson and an activity throughout the period. During Lab periods students get the opportunity to participate in a story talk or movie talk. These skills are reinforced through activities such as EdPuzzle that assesses their writing, listening and comprehension skills.</p>
Art	<p>During the first cycle of art students will be introduced to Graphic</p>

	Novel Illustration, Optical Art, Surrealism, DaDa art and the art of Yayoi Kusama. We meet live on Zoom each class after a brief independent drawing warm up. After our meet students will work asynchronously on their independent work.
Music	Music meets live on Zoom for every class. We begin each class with a listening activity followed by a physical and vocal warmup. We sing a variety of music, study how to play musical instruments, and learn how to read music notation and symbols.
Dance	We meet live on Zoom each class. We warm up as a group, learn choreography, and then use the choreography to make group dances to share at the end of each unit. This year we are studying choreographers and our first choreographer is Ronald K. Brown and the next one is Pearl Primus.
Theater	We meet live on zoom for most classes. We begin with 3 minutes of relaxation, followed by Theater activities. We have been working on ensemble building theater games and improvisation exercises, and just started working on a Monologue study unit which will last for the duration of this marking period. It will culminate with a zoom performance :)
Physical Education	We meet live on zoom for every class! Class structure: Stretching, Stretch of Day, Exercise of Day, Essential Question, Topic of Day, Workout and Reflection. During the first cycle our main focus is Fitness. Topics include: 5 components of fitness, 6 related components of fitness, HITT (High, Intensity, Interval, Training), Tabata and many others.
Technology	<p>We meet live on Zoom for almost every class. In our first unit, students are learning how to use spreadsheets to organize and analyze data. Students have learned basic spreadsheeting layout and vocabulary, how to freeze and add rows and columns, and how to use formulas to do calculations within a spreadsheet. As a project, we're planning fictitious trips and creating spreadsheet budgets for them.</p> <p>Future units include computer science (game design), digital citizenship, sound editing, and computer aided design.</p> <p>Since we only meet once per week, our class time is limited and work may need to be completed outside of our scheduled period.</p>
Advisory	The advisory program helps support social and emotional learning throughout all grades with a focus on the five interrelated sets of cognitive and behavioral competencies; <i>self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making.</i>