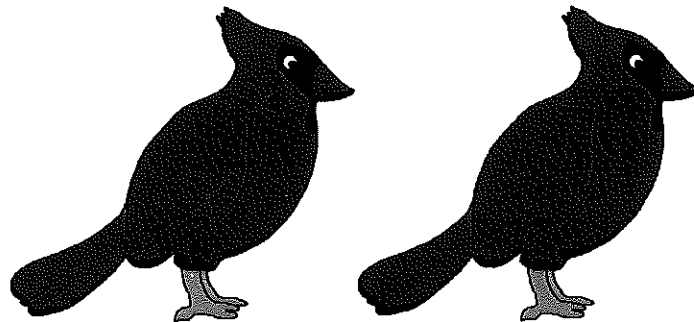


**POMPTON LAKES SCHOOL DISTRICT
A CURRICULUM REPORT TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
THE ELEMENTARY PROGRAM
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INTRODUCTION

The overall goal of the elementary-level instructional program is to engage students in learning that is aligned to the appropriate grade level standards. Aside from delivering high quality instruction, teachers are trained to focus on formatively assessing student progress, identifying areas for growth and then addressing the needs of every child. Our classroom teachers collaboratively plan instruction and present informative and interesting lessons that introduce, reinforce, extend, assess and remediate student mastery of grade level curriculum. Most recently, the integration of technology as a tool for learning has taken a prominent role in most classrooms.

One of the foundations of our ongoing success can be attributed to the support of the Superintendent, Board of Education, administrative team, teachers and support staff. In addition, both schools are proud of the collaborative and close relationships formed between parents and teachers who work as partners to support the elementary level mission.

A FOCUS ON LITERACY

The preeminence of literacy – the ability to read and write – is the single most important component in an elementary student’s academic development. Since the fall of 2010, the school district has worked as partners with Teacher’s College at Columbia University. The university has provided extensive training, both at the campus and onsite in Lenox and Lincoln. Training has focused on the implementation of both the Reader’s and Writer’s Workshop Model for the instruction of literacy. The implementation of this approach can be directly tied to the consistently high performance of students in the area of literacy.

In addition to the workshop model, elementary classrooms now contain an extensive library of reading materials for every reading level. In the past two years, the schools have made a concerted effort to increase the amount of non-fiction, including informational text, to the classroom libraries. Every classroom also contains high-interest materials on topics connected to the social studies and science curriculum.

The Writer’s Workshop model has also resulted in significant student gains in the area of writing. The approach incorporates modeled and example writing, shared writing and independent writing. Students and teachers enjoy writing celebrations which allow students the opportunity to publicly share their work and display their

final pieces of writing. These celebrations take place both on grade level and also across grade levels.

Perhaps, the most positive outcome of this overall approach to literacy has been the ability to provide students with choices about what they read and the topics that serve as the focus of their writing. This high level of motivation significantly increases the likelihood of developing a lifelong love of reading and writing.

A FOCUS ON MATHEMATICS

The adoption of the Common Core Standards for mathematics in 2011 resulted in substantive changes to mathematics instruction in schools across New Jersey. In general, the standards seek to develop a deeper conceptual understanding of key math principles while also developing mathematical fluency and competency. The implementation of the standards resulted in the school district's adoption of a new mathematical series in 2015-16. *Eureka Math* provides an aligned approach to the grade level standards and integrates the essential skills of both mathematical fluency and application for problem solving. Lessons typically include both a focus on building basic math fluency and also an in-depth understanding of a particular mathematical concept. As with the adoption of any new program, the district has invested heavily in extensive and ongoing professional development.

To further develop each child's mathematical skills, the elementary schools also use *TenMarks*, a standards-based digital math program that offers real time differentiation to meet every individual's needs. This program is the perfect example of the effective use of technology as a tool for learning. Every student in grades two through five have an individual account and enjoy solving problems to earn certificates and points as they move towards mastery of a skill. The program is motivating, engaging and helps to build perseverance as students work through more challenging concepts. The program is able to assess individual need and assign problems specific to the need of the individual learner. Teachers are able to access data-rich reports to better inform their own instruction and to help them more effectively meet the needs of their students.

TECHNOLOGY AS A TOOL FOR LEARNING

The implementation of new technology tools in the elementary grades has been a great success. This year, every classroom in grades 3-5 has its own cart of Chromebooks for exclusive student use. In effect, this provides a personal device for every student in grades 3-5. The accessibility and regular use of these devices has been a success in part because of the hands-on training and support that teachers have received. Aside from the district's technology training day, extensive training has been provided within the schools. This has included after school workshops, in class support and even personalized, one-on-one technology question and answer sessions. With the help of each school's specialists (ELA, Math, Technology, Media), teachers have received the individualized attention that has guaranteed the effective use of technology in the classroom. In particular, the district continues to move toward the full integration of GoogleApps for Educators and Google Classroom as a standard platform for all.

Technology continues to be leveraged to help students in a multitude of ways. In grades K-2, students learn to navigate a computer and the proper vocabulary associated with computer use. Included in all grades is the use of digital tools and learning sites such as Raz-Kids, Stora, Studies Weekly, PebbleGo, Zearn, and TrueFlix. In addition the use of technology helps to develop essential 21st Century Skills. For example, elementary students create their own digital portfolios, and collaborate through GoogleDocs with either their teacher or fellow classmates. All of these experiences help to develop essential collaborative, problem solving and communication skills.

LOOKING AHEAD

Recently, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) announced the adoption of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). All New Jersey school districts are required to implement these new standards on the elementary level in September of 2017. The elementary level staff is in the process of becoming familiar with the standards and revising curriculum to align with the new standards. Recently, a cohort of elementary staff members attended a Next Generation Science Standards overview hosted by the NJDOE. All elementary teachers will receive in-district training during the next two months on how to effectively implement the new standards.

Generally, the NGSS explore connections across four domains of science, Physical Science, Life Science, Earth and Space Science, and Engineering Design. These standards focus on inquiry-based learning as an essential strategy. The new standards also emphasize investigation, problem solving, data analysis and hypothesis testing. These essential skills are expected to be integrated where feasible across multiple content areas. Aside from aligning curriculum and developing staff familiarity with the new standards, the district is also searching for additional resources that will assist teacher instruction and, in turn, student mastery of the new standards.

CONCLUSION

The overall instructional program at Lenox and Lincoln continues to focus on the development of key literacy and mathematical skills. The focus also includes developing each child's ability to communicate effectively through writing and speech. Further, students learn to problem solve, think critically, and analyze and evaluate information across many different content areas. Finally, the use of technology continues to enhance the overall learning experience for every student and assists teachers in making informed instructional decisions.

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