



# SCHOOLS TO WATCH - NEW YORK MODEL SCHOOL - VISITOR'S GUIDE

## Memorial Junior High School



### Designated in 2017

District: Valley Stream CHSD County: Nassau State: New York Principal: Mr. Bret Strauss

School Address: 320 Fletcher Avenue, Valley Stream, NY 11580

Phone: 516-872-7710

Email: [straussb@vschsd.org](mailto:straussb@vschsd.org)

Website: <http://www.vschsd.org>

## School Statistics

(Source: e-School Data)

Community: Suburban/Residential

Enrollment: 842

Grade Levels: 7, 8, & 9

School Schedule: 9 Period Team Model

### Student Demographics

53% Male

47% Female

27% Hispanic/Latino

30% White

41% African American

2% Asian/Pacific Islander

15% Students with Disabilities

38% Free/Red. Lunch/Econ. Disadvantaged

1% English Learners

## School Characteristics and Replicable Practices

### Academic Excellence

- Honor Roll, High Honor Roll, Principal's List
- National Junior High School Society
- Parent communication (emails, Edmodo, SIPs, Saturday Parent Coffee Talk meetings)
- Distribution of progress reports prior to the end of the mid-marking period and conclusion of the marking period
- Grade-level assemblies begin each school year to discuss expectations
- Students can attend extra help in lieu of detention
- 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade team philosophy
- Academic ineligibility list & re-evaluation contracts
- Open enrollment for AP courses offered to 9th graders- AP Human Geography
- Counselors meet and discuss every student on multi-failure/comment 68 list and plan/discuss intervention strategies twice every quarter.
- Counselors visit 7<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms to discuss organizational strategies, grading policies and expectations for JHS
- School counselors meet with 7<sup>th</sup> grade teams every other week throughout the school year to discuss at-risk students

- 8<sup>th</sup> grade conferences - Counselors meet individually with 8<sup>th</sup> grade parents and students to discuss high school challenges and expectations
- Orientation held in May and August for incoming 6<sup>th</sup> graders and their parents to discuss expectations of JHS
- College Day and College Day 102 presentation for 9<sup>th</sup> graders to understand the significance of 9<sup>th</sup> grade on their high school transcript and college process
- Instructional objectives are outlined for students for each instructional unit with specific tasks
- Creation of Scope and Sequence & CC aligned curriculum maps (vertically and horizontally aligned)
- Use of spiraling of topics, concepts, vocabulary, grammar, skill
- Common planning time for teachers (full days for math teachers)
- ISD teacher is the same teacher in the co-teaching classes
- Connections across the disciplines (art, geography, history, literature, sports)
- Use of Achieve 3000, IXL, NewsELA, scholastic for interactive differentiated instruction in all content areas
- Use of active learning strategies (gallery walk, stations, progressive flashcards, jigsaw, think-pair-share, skits, interviews, presentations, dialogues, small group instruction)
- Use of education-related websites (Edmodo, Castle Learning, Broadworks, online textbooks)
- Teachers meet with students during free periods, before school or after school for academic support
- Use of the master schedule to create of Algebra 1 CC lab period to provide 7.5 periods Algebra/week
- Use of the master schedule to create a literacy lab period for all 7R/8R students to provide 7.5 periods ELA/week
- Additional hour long after school Academy Classes to help students prepare for the NYS Assessments
- After school PALS program (Peer Assisted Learning) & evening Eagle Connection program (peer assisted tutoring program) to assist struggling learners
- After school HW club in a computer lab
- Child Support Team (CST) meetings & Pre-referral Special Education Committee meetings

## **Developmental Responsiveness**

- Advisory Program for all 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students
- Students provided opportunities to self-select counseling groups such as girl empowerment groups, study skills groups, organizational skills groups and male bonding groups
- Array of Special Education services ( Resource Room, co-teaching classes, self-contained)
- BRAVE anti-bullying/character ed committee
- Mentoring program (peer:peer and staff:peer)
- Events that celebrate students, families and culture including: Hero Day, Exploration Day, Heritage Night, and World Language Week, Black History month lessons and events, Woman's History month and celebrations
- Articulation with feeder elementary schools staff
- Articulation with high school guidance counselors
- Participation in Music in the Parks
- Participation in Olympics of Visual Arts Competition (OVA)
- Annual Fall Drama and Spring musical
- School wide charity initiatives
- Holiday gift baskets to school families in need
- BRAVE anti-bullying/character education lessons and monthly activities
- Social Worker serves liaison for the counsel on Drug and alcohol abuse – writes grants for the District to provide education and prevention of abuse
- Staff Professional Development sessions on instructional strategies and middle school mind

## **Social Equity**

- Co-teaching in all ELA & Math, support in other subjects, full inclusion in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, ISD/resource room
- Varied instructional strategies (ie: discussion appts., gallery walks; supported through teacher PD)
- New Social Studies Framework instructional shifts- inquiry, collaboration, conceptual understanding, integration of content and skills
- Continuous revisions to classroom and departmental assessments based on instructional and curriculum changes
- Individual teacher reflection meetings and follow-up activities and PD
- Departmental planning and reflection on assessments
- Incorporation of CC modules in ELA and Math
- Data analysis after all unit and benchmark exams to determine learning gaps and close the gaps
- Various CAP projects (Curriculum development to produce a scope and sequence)
- Shift to more document and inquiry-based instruction in Social Studies, research opportunities
- Multicultural literature
- Project Wisdom daily morning announcements
- Good deeds awards program
- BRAVE anti-bullying/character education activities (ie: Care Week, Day of Sunshine, daily announcements, No Name calling Week, “word-up” posters)
- Anti-bullying projects and lesson by dep’t (ie: Social Studies: typically integrated into slavery in 7th grade, rights of Japanese during WWII in grade 8, and Atlantic slave trade in 9th)
- Caring and nurturing PPS staff
- Parents, teacher, student and guidance counselor meetings
- Articulations with elementary school staff
- Articulations with high school staff
- Student Council and Thanksgiving & Holiday gift baskets
- Staff available for language translation
- Saturday Parent Coffee Talks
- Parent, staff and student volleyball tournament
- Spring dunk tank and soccer tournament (organized with Eagle Parent Booster club)
- Breakfast program

## **Organizational Support**

- Building goals and vision
- Departmental goals
- Teacher goals and reflection meetings
- Professional Development
- Cabinet meeting and shared instructional decision-making
- Faculty meetings
- Department meetings have instructional focus
- Academic team meetings (common planning time and counselor push in)
- Teacher portfolios
- Data analysis to identify learning gaps and inform instruction
- Scope and sequences used to keep staff aligned with curriculum
- Weekly Principal cabinet meetings
- Department chairs to support academic areas
- Department Chair – teacher Reflection meetings
- Observations- full period formal and informal as well as walk-throughs

- Shared leadership with Central HS
- Faculty meetings
- Saturday Parent Coffee Talk meetings with the Principal
- 5 two-hour department/faculty or district meetings per school year
- 1-3 year teacher professional development sessions
- Building and department professional development sessions
- Sharing of professional resources such as articles for individual reflection and discussion at meetings
- Outside conferences through BOCES and other organizations
- Teacher Center programs and courses
- Department Chair model
- Free tutoring and various academic interventions
- Queens college literacy collaboration
- Formation of 7.5 period per week ELA for grades 7 and 8 (every other day block)
- Formation of 7.5 period per week Algebra 1 CC (every other day block)