

Programs to Engage Parents and Other Family Members

SNAPSHOT

Program:

Before- and Afterschool Support Programs

School:

Elmont Memorial Junior-Senior High School

District:

Sewanhaka Central High School District

Location: Elmont, N.Y.

Grades: 7-12

Enrollment: 1962

Free/reduced-price lunch: 35%

Providing personalized student and parent support

Before- and Afterschool Support Programs

Elmont Memorial Junior-Senior High School

Elmont, New York

Elmont Memorial Junior-Senior High School's before- and afterschool support programs take a personalized approach to student and parent support. Initially, the school's afterschool programs were created to provide additional support for class work and for the New York State assessments and New York State Regents Examinations. Over the past six years, the programs have expanded to address the diverse needs of Elmont students, particularly at the junior high school level. Before- and afterschool programs in grades seven and eight are organized around the junior high school's Interdisciplinary Team Centers and staffed by Team Center teachers. Students can use the time to complete homework, get extra help from a teacher, or make up missed assignments. Some seventh- and eighth-grade students are also selected for Achievement Academy classes, which provide small group instruction.

Communication with parents is an integral part of the support programs for seventh and eighth graders. "Everything stems from personalized student attention, and you can't do that without the parents," says John Capozzi, Elmont's principal. Teachers meet with parents before and after school hours to discuss student progress and also meet with parents during their planning time. Parents are included in the process of developing individualized academic intervention plans for students who show academic difficulty.

The support programs also provide much-needed adult supervision beyond school hours, an especially important resource for the school's many single-parent households. Elmont Junior-Senior High School has a large immigrant population, including a high percentage of families from the Caribbean. Although more than 90 percent of students in the Sewanhaka district are white, Elmont's student population is about 77 percent African American, 13 percent Hispanic, 8 percent Asian, and 1 percent white. Sewanhaka Central High School District is geographically large. It serves students from multiple elementary school districts in the western portion of Nassau County. Elmont students have access to specialized courses at other high schools in the district.



Programs to Engage Parents and Other Family Members

How the programs work

All the school's before- and afterschool support programs are staffed by Elmont teachers, including the seventh- and eighth-grade Team Center teachers who run the programs for those grades. More than 70 Elmont teachers currently work in the various programs, which are open to all students. When speaking with parents at team meetings, teachers can offer before- and afterschool sessions to students as a way to make up missed work, study for a test, or receive extra skill practice.

The programs involve regular communication with family members of the 600 or so seventh- and eighth-grade students at Elmont. Close contact between school and home continues in the high school years. Operation Success, for students in grades nine through twelve, offers course-specific instruction beyond regular school hours, as well as Regents Exam and state assessment review classes.

In addition to home-school communication, the programs rely on strong cooperation between teachers and the administration. Teachers are given autonomy over the content of before- and afterschool review sessions and can assign sessions to students as an academic intervention. Teachers create their own review materials for class sessions and tailor the instruction to students' needs.

The budget for these programs in 2010-2011 was \$138,000; funds come primarily from Title I but also include state and district sources.

Evidence of effectiveness

▶ Elmont has a more diverse student body than other high schools in the Sewanhaka district, and its student academic success is impressive. In 2010, Elmont had a graduation rate of 97 percent, compared to a rate of only 76 percent for New York state. Some 91 percent of Elmont graduates

entered college. In addition, 49 percent of Elmont students received advanced Regents diplomas in 2010, compared to only 31 percent in 2006. (Data for 2011 will be available in January 2012.)

▶ The school consistently makes Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), but because of changes in N.Y. state standards, current student performance data is not comparable with past data.

Exemplary practices

Emphasizing communication with families: Frequent interaction between teachers and families of seventh and eighth graders continues beyond grades seven and eight with a program for at-risk ninth graders. The high school's eight guidance counselors meet frequently with families to provide support ranging from academic intervention to college counseling.

When meeting with parents or speaking with them on the phone, teachers can offer academic support programs for students as a way to make up missed work, study for a test, or receive extra skill practice.

Developing individualized intervention plans: Teachers develop individualized intervention plans for students who show academic difficulty, and parents are included in the process of developing these plans.

Coordinating classroom performance with afterschool programs: Teachers can prescribe afterschool classes to address a student's academic needs. The afterschool programs are taught by Elmont classroom teachers, who are free to tailor the instruction to students' needs.

Outlook

Each year, the school evaluates the programs' effectiveness based on student achievement, attendance records, and teacher feedback. Even if

Programs to Engage Parents and Other Family Members

there were cuts in Title I or other funding, the school would give precedence to its before- and afterschool support programs. “We make it the top priority,” says Assistant Principal Alicia Calabrese. “We think it’s our charge to provide these support systems for our students.”

Similar programs would be feasible in other school districts that have access to funding and give it sufficient priority.

Association perspective

Local union president Rosanne Mamo was involved in planning and organizing the Before- and Afterschool Support Programs from the outset. She sums up her perspective: “The Sewanhaka Federation of Teachers is very proud of this work... Teachers at the school understand the diversity of the students and work diligently to meet the educational needs of all. The union and the district continue to work together to ensure our students receive the best education possible.”

Local contacts

John Capozzi, principal,
Elmont Memorial Junior-Senior High School
516-488-9210; jcapozzi@sewanhaka.k12.ny.us

Rosanne Mamo, president,
Sewanhaka Federation of Teachers
516-394-5070; rmamo@sewanhaka.k12.ny.us

Related information

Sewanhaka Central High School District report card:
<https://reportcards.nysed.gov/files/2009-10/AOR-2010-280252070000.pdf>

State report card, Elmont Memorial Senior High School: <https://reportcards.nysed.gov/files/2009-10/AOR-2010-280252070002.pdf>

ELMONT, NEW YORK



Great Public Schools for Every Student

NEA Contact: Roberta E. Hantgan
Manager, NEA Public Engagement Project
(202) 822-7721; rhantgan@nea.org

1201 16 ST., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036-3290 www.nea.org

NEA PRIORITY SCHOOLS CAMPAIGN