



P.S. 682 - The Academy of Talented Scholars

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TAOTS Curriculum

September 22, 2016

TAOTS is fully committed to successfully implementing the Department of Education's Citywide Instructional Expectations for the 2016-2017 school year, which includes preparing all our students for college and careers. Together with our parents and a highly qualified and dedicated staff we will engage all of our students in rigorous learning activities and tasks aligned with the Common Core Learning Standards. Our academic and enrichment curriculum is designed with well-crafted instructional units and appropriate supports that are also fully aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards.

READING

- Students participate in the workshop model for reading following a balanced literacy approach. It is an authentic literature-based approach designed to explicitly teach students strategies to comprehend text at their own levels. Reading units of study are designed by the ***Teacher's College Reading and Writing Project*** and then customized by the teachers at TAOTS to focus on the strengths and needs of each individual student through whole class lessons, small group work and 1:1 conferring. Student engagement and the interaction between the reader and the text is extremely important and is practiced through close reading of small group and whole class novels. A variety of assessments will be used to help students target individual reading goals, as well as identify students in need of review or enrichment.

WRITING

- The Writing Workshop model will be used daily in our classrooms incorporating ***Teacher's College Units of Study*** aligned with the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). Our students will work on mastering the writing process to write in a variety of genres. All grades will focus on the three genres outlined in the CCLS- narrative, informational and opinion. Additional units of study may include fairy tales, authors as mentors, fiction, literary essays, journalism and poetry depending on the grade level. Exposing the students to different genres of writing will help them to become more confident in their writing abilities. Writing conferences, pre and post unit assessments and teacher observations provide daily data for teachers to customize instruction for each of our students.

Word Work

- ***Words in Action – (Grades K-5)*** The *Words in Action* program is a vocabulary curriculum for our students in grades K–5 that incorporates the latest research in vocabulary instruction to give our teachers the tools they need to increase students' word power. The words taught come from read-aloud books that are age-appropriate, highly engaging, and rich in language that students encounter in their independent reading every day. Each lesson combines direct instruction in word meanings with challenging and fun activities



that instill in students a love of words and an appreciation for learning new words. The program is also a unique blend of academic instruction and support for students' social and ethical development. It weaves cooperative learning, social skills instruction, and discussion of values throughout the lessons, fostering the students' growth as caring, collaborative, and principled people.

- ***Wilson Foundations – (Grades K-2)*** is a phonological/phonemic awareness, phonics and spelling program for the general education classroom. Foundations is based upon the Wilson Reading System® principles and serves as a prevention program to help reduce reading and spelling deficiencies. Foundations lessons focus on carefully sequenced skills that include print knowledge, alphabet awareness, phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, decoding, vocabulary, fluency, and spelling. Critical thinking, speaking and listening skills are practiced during Storytime activities. Furthermore, targeted small group intervention is available for students in the lowest 30th percentile.
- ***Orton-Gillingham – (Grades K-2)*** a multi-sensory approach to teaching reading to children. The same concept is presented in a number of ways through the auditory, kinesthetic and visual pathways. The technique involves repetition as well as instant teacher feedback. This approach provides flexibility in responding to the needs of the individual student.
- ***Spelling Connections – (Grades 3-5)*** provides explicit spelling instruction. With Zaner-Bloser's spelling curriculum, *Spelling Connections*, your students will retain, internalize, and transfer valuable spelling knowledge for improved results in all areas of literacy-in the classroom and beyond.
- ***Language Arts – (Grades K – 5)*** - The McGraw-Hill *Language Arts* for our students in grades K-5 is dedicated to creating effective communicators. Through a careful balance of grammar and writing, students obtain the skills instrumental to personal expression. Students are taught language arts through a balanced approach to grammar and writing. Combining language skills with immediate application to writing, students learn through an integrated process. Writing skills and process are developed using a variety of modes and formats, preparing students for future writing evaluation as well as writing for the real world.

MATHEMATICS

- This year we will continue to focus on problem solving strategies. It is essential that the students are familiar with giving a written explanation for their thinking and to support their answers or solutions. We utilize ***Math in Focus: The Singapore Approach*** program during math instruction. *Math in Focus: The Singapore Approach* promotes the idea of practicing concepts until mastery is exhibited. Lessons are content specific, and concepts are taught using concrete skills, eventually leading to abstract thinking. Students are assessed prior to units and then placed into groups based on needs to review, learn, and/or enrich material. In addition, we will be utilizing ***Context for Learning***. *Context for Learning* is a carefully crafted mathematical program that uses realistic situations to foster a deep conceptual understanding of essential mathematical ideas, strategies, and models through an investigative approach.

SOCIAL STUDIES/SCIENCE

- The Social Studies and Science curriculum is taught by following the New York City Scope and Sequence and Common Core Learning Standards. Essential Questions are explored using an inquiry and project based approach to support and facilitate each of the grade specific topics. The new ***New York City Department of Education Units of Study in Social studies*** along with trade books will be used to teach and reinforce grade appropriate concepts, research & geography skills. In addition, students are encouraged to read informational text and other literature independently to deepen their understanding of Social Studies and Science concepts. We encourage families to visit your local library with your child to support the work we are doing in school. During Science Lab class, students will be instructed an additional period once or twice a week in the science lab by our science teacher, Ms. Garcia. She will work closely with each grade to seamlessly provide our students with a guided inquiry approach using hands on experiences following scientific methodology. The science lab teacher will incorporate a program called ***FOSS*** to implement the New Generation Standards.

ENRICHMENT CLUSTERS

- PS 682 continues to follow the *Schoolwide Enrichment Model*. We will build on the resources of our school and the talents of our staff and community to create dynamic enrichment clusters. Once again, we will give our students the opportunity to self select an enrichment cluster based on individual interest and work in small groups that share a common interest. Teachers are encouraged to select an area that they are passionate and knowledgeable in, based on student interest survey. Enrichment Clusters will take place Friday afternoons from 1:35 – 2:20 p.m. This year we have planned three cycles of Enrichment Clusters. The goal of Enrichment Clusters is to focus on individual strengths and to nurture areas of interest and talents of each of our students.

HOMEWORK

- The students will receive homework each evening. It is our policy that homework be given in **moderation**. All homework is expected to be signed by a parent/guardian and is to be brought back the next day neatly completed in pencil unless other directions have been given. Homework is posted on the class website and goes home in a hard copy once a week for the entire week for Grades K-4. In preparing for middle school, Grade 5 students will be writing their homework in planners. Additional activities are posted as needed on the class website.

GRADING POLICY

- As part of the ongoing effort to standardize rigor and to be more transparent in District 20 elementary schools report card grades, the 4 core subjects (ELA, Math, Social Studies and Science) in grades 3-5 will have percentages instead of levels. The percentages provide you with a more accurate indication of how your child is performing within the level designation in these subject areas.

As part of the standardization process, percentage ranges are as follows:

Level 4:	92% - 100%
Level 3:	80% - 91%
Level 2:	65% - 79%
Level 1:	Below 65%

Details of the makeup of subject grades are as follows:

Classroom Exams	45%
Classroom Participation	30%
Homework and projects	25%

RECESS

- The children will have recess daily weather permitting. It is strongly recommended that the children dress appropriately. This includes closed shoes or sneakers. During inclement weather students will be kept inside for a variety of indoor activities.
- Movement Breaks are given throughout the day as needed in each classroom.

SPECIALTY CLASSES

- TAOTS offers rich and varied courses that exposes students to hands on engaging experiences. Everyday your child will participate in one of the following specialty classes: *Science lab, Music, Gym, Movement and Health, Art, Art History and Technology*. All teachers will send home their weekly specialty periods as well as having it posted on each speciality page on the school's website.

SUPPORT SERVICES

- Our support service staff includes:
 - Speech Therapy
 - SETSS
 - Occupational Therapy
 - Physical Therapy
 - Adaptive Physical Education
 - Guidance Counseling.
 - ESL

TRIBES Learning Communities, Agreements and School Rules

- Our school follows a community building program called ***Tribes***. The ***Tribes*** philosophy is a positive one. It is designed to support schools in creating a secure and risk free learning environment that focuses on the “whole child” and his/her individual academic, social, and emotional needs. Tribe’s Agreements along with our school rules are posted and reviewed daily along with weekly activities that promote community building. Students and families are asked to adhere to the following ***Tribes*** Agreements:
 - Attentive Listening – Follow directions the first time they are told
 - Appreciations/No put downs- In school use your indoor voice
 - Mutual Respect- Take care of all classroom books and materials
 - Personal Best- Finish all of your classwork on time
 - Safety with Body and Heart- Keep hands, feet and objects to yourself

OUTSIDE PARTNERSHIPS

- This year TAOTS will continue it’s partnership with ***Columbia University Teacher’s College Reading and Writing Project***. Highly skilled staff developers will lead demonstration teaching within classrooms in order to convey state-of-the-art methods of teaching, coaching teachers engaged in reading and writing instruction, providing feedback and next-step goals and helping teachers use and learn from systems of assessment (including performance assessments). Staff developers will also support our teachers in providing information related to upcoming units of study in reading and/or writing as well as assisting teachers in supporting students’ individual needs.
- For the second year, TAOTS will team up with ***METAMORPHOSIS***. ***Metamorphosis*** focuses on improving teaching practice in mathematics school-wide. They will work side-by-side with our coaches, teachers, principals and administrators to ensure that the home team develops the capacity to build sustainable professional learning communities that actually improve student performance. A seasoned master staff developer translates professional development experiences into effective classroom practice and provides rigorous and effective professional learning.
- **Town Hall- (Grades K-3)** TAOTS will partner with Town Hall to complete a residency for grades K through 3. Town Hall provides high-quality arts-in-education programs for New York City public schools that support the social and academic development of students. Town Hall customizes each program to suit a school’s curriculum needs. Town Hall educators, creative teaching artists collaborate with classroom teachers to plan and coordinate residencies to strengthen the curriculum connections to the Common Core State Standards. These activities introduce new skills that foster creative expression, self-awareness, and personal discipline. Culminating performances showcase students’ skills to their families. The Town Hall Educational Programs help schools build their arts education programs and advance student learning in the arts through curriculum-based, collaboratively planned arts residencies. This rich curriculum encourages teachers to incorporate the arts into their instructional practice. Students in K-2 will participate in Creative Movement and our 3rd graders will enrich their Social Studies curriculum through the study of African Dance. <http://thetownhall.org>
- **Dancing Classrooms- (Grades 4 & 5)** Starting in the fall our 4th graders will collaborate with Dancing Classrooms to build social awareness, confidence, and self-esteem in children through the practice of social dance. Through a standards-based, in-school residency, Dancing Classrooms uses vocabulary of ballroom

dance to cultivate the positive feelings that are inherent in every child. The maturity necessary to dance together fosters respect, teamwork, confidence and a sense of joy and accomplishment, which we hope to bring to every child. Ballroom dance is the medium they use to nurture these qualities.

<http://dancingclassrooms.com>

- **TADA – Theater Arts and Dance Academy – (Grades K-5)** In the 2nd half of the school year, our K-5 students will participate in a musical theater residency partnership. Students will engage in weekly singing and movement classes by utilizing a thematic approach. Teachers and residency partners will work closely to develop appropriate lesson plans for each of our students. TADA’s mission is two-fold: to provide high quality musical theater productions performed by talented kids for family audiences and to provide a safe, creative and nurturing place where kids can harness their inherent energy, build their self-assurance and realize their true potential through the unique collaborative art form that is musical theater. Through TADA’s high quality work, young people gain confidence and learn commitment, responsibility, communication and teamwork...skills that are critical to their success both in school and in life.
<http://www.tadatheater.com>
- **Trips- (Grades K-5)**- All classes will be enriching their curriculum through scheduled trips that enhance students’ experience with the curriculum being studied. Stay tuned as the year progresses to receive news of the exciting places that your child will be visiting, with your permission. Please be reminded that *The Department of Education* protocol will be followed for **all** trips. This protocol requires that a written consent (TAOTS and DOE permission slip) must be on file prior the trip.

PARENT COMMUNICATION

- **TAOTS Website-** A wealth of information and communication can be found on our TAOTS website- www.taots.org as well as our Parent Handbook. Here you will find both general information and grade/classroom specific information as it relates to your child. You can also follow our school blog updated by our Parent Coordinator by entering your email address to receive notifications of new posts along with our school’s weekly announcements. Please stay connected with our Parent Coordinator by visiting our website. Under the tab Parent Resources you will find Helpful Links, Parent Association information, Afterschool Options, our TAOTS calendar and other recent posts. Be sure to check the website often to not miss out on any of the great and exciting things going on at TAOTS and in your child’s classroom. See your child and the children of TAOTS in all of the exciting photos and videos posted here as well!
- **Weekly Newsletters- (Grades K-5)** are prepared by each grade on a weekly basis sharing the upcoming week’s work in various subject areas as well as important reminders and information. Be sure to check your child’s class page each week for this important communication.
- **Monthly Calendars- (Grades K-5)** are sent home and prepared each month by the Administration and Parent Coordinator to highlight important events, meetings, class trips and reminders for the month.

OFFICIAL SCHOOL HOURS

- **Due to the UFT contract, our official school hours have been changed to 8:00-2:20. Although students will be receiving the required mandated hours of instruction, there will no longer be the 37.5 minute extension of the school day. Please make proper arrangements for a prompt 2:20 pick-up.**
- **TAOTS Schedule of Periods**
 - Period 1: 8:00 – 8:45
 - Period 2: 8:45 – 9:30
 - Period 3: 9:30 – 10:15
 - Period 4: 10:15 – 11:05 Grades K-2 Lunch/Recess
 - Period 5: 11:05 – 11:55 Grades 3-5 Lunch/Recess
 - Period 6: 11:55 – 12:40
 - Period 7: 12:40 – 1:25
 - Period 8: 1:25 – 2:20