



New Jersey Department of Education, Office of Charter Schools

Elysian Charter School of Hoboken

Collection of Best Practices

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Name of Charter School: Elysian Charter School

About the Charter School (Mission / Key Design Elements):

The Elysian Charter School approach to learning, teaching and community is based on many of the philosophies taught in the tradition of hands-on and cooperative learning. The school’s philosophy leads to teaching in a manner that is child-centered, holistic, progressive and academically rigorous. A community of no more than 288 students with two classes in each grade from kindergarten to eighth grade (16 students per class), permits the school to live the adage, “It takes a community to raise a child.” They are all involved at every level.

Best Practice Topic(s) / Performance Area within Organizational Framework:

Education Program and Capacity

Summary:

Elysian is a school where students become self-motivated and develop the desire to become lifelong learners. Incorporating the Standards into the curriculum, while maintaining the school’s unique and special atmosphere is important. As part of the development of a five year strategic plan, Elysian has adopted nine core values that help drive the educational program and community. They are: Community Engagement, Diversity & Inclusion, Experiential Learning, Child Centricity, Learning as a Process, Social, Emotional & Physical Development, Social Awareness & Responsibility, Authentic & Interconnected Curriculum, and Teacher Leadership in Learning. Teachers develop strong relationships with their students and are able to truly get to know them as learners due to the small class sizes. The goal is to educate children to become curious, lifelong learners with an appreciation of the arts, the diversity of all people in the world, and the self-confidence to fulfill his or her life’s dreams.

Professional development has always been a priority for the Elysian staff. There is participation in a variety of professional development opportunities both within and out of the school. The sharing of resources and materials is common at Elysian. Teachers meet formally on a weekly basis with colleagues. In addition, teachers meeting informally daily. Teachers are involved in decision making regarding the school’s professional development focus each year.

Elysian middle school students thrive in an integrated, small community setting. Focus is on strong, consistent teacher relationships and positive peer relationships, and interesting, motivating curriculum. Elysian believes in offering various arts opportunities to the students. They have participated in an African Dance Residency with The 7th Principle Dance Company for the past 17 years, are in a partnership with the New Victory Theater and have a “musician in residence” who provides songwriting and movie making classes to all grades. Sixth, seventh and eighth grade students are invited to participate in the school’s rock band. They have an audition chorus and a schoolwide play. Students in grades 4-8 are encouraged to participate in overnight trips. These trips have several goals including: team building, developing independence, and building meaningful relationships. All students are invited to these trips and a confidential scholarship fund is available for students in need. No student is denied participation in a trip due to the inability to pay.

Partner(s): Elysian has worked with various consultant groups from Teacher's College and Rutgers because they support our philosophy.

Dates: 1997-Present

School Contact:

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Resources: A mix of published and teacher created curriculum in the school's teaching. Teachers create binders at the end of each school year documenting the year's work.