**School Eight Report Card Narrative 2016-2017**

School Eight prides itself on fostering an environment where all students learn and develop the confidence needed to be successful members of our society. Our students are recognized as unique individuals with talents and abilities that are shared with the school community. School Eight’s staff members engage students in active learning that stimulates the natural curiosity of children while addressing the Common Core Standards. Through a strong partnership with parents, a rich and challenging curricular program, and a warm, positive learning atmosphere the School Eight faculty and staff work to ensure all students achieve their maximum potential.

Our balanced literacy approach to the Language Arts curriculum provides a wide selection of differentiated learning opportunities that support the reading and writing skill development of each individual child. Our district has recently adopted the *Journey’s* reading program in first through fifth grades. With leading edge digital tools and data driven instruction, teachers are able to deliver rigorous units and lessons integrated with the Common Core. Our goal is to assist students in becoming readers and writers who enjoy and value literacy. Our Language Arts Instructional Coach assists teachers in utilizing best practices, analyzing data, as well as support in implementing the program, curriculum, and standards.

The Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten classes continue to implement the *Tools of the Mind* program. The central focus of this program is aimed at helping students develop cognitive and social-emotional self-regulation. In the “Tools” classrooms, self-regulated learning is embedded in all lessons. Teachers use strategies to promote dramatic make-believe play and instructional activities designed to teach self-regulation and reflective thinking.

The *Go Math* program affords students the opportunities to solve problems where mathematical concepts are linked to situations and contexts relevant to students’ everyday lives. Our teachers have participated in professional development where they have learned skills to differentiate instruction for students. We also have a Math Instructional Coach who assists in the implementation of the mathematics curriculum and assists our teachers in meeting classroom, school and district goals. The curriculum encourages students to explain and discuss their mathematical thinking and develop computational skills through the use of manipulatives. Students not only learn how to solve problems, but utilize their writing skills to detail how they arrived at a solution. We encourage our parents to attend family bingo nights and math game nights to reinforce number concepts and mathematical skills.

Science instruction is constructive and hands-on. Teachers and students engage in science together when they open each unit’s FOSS kit; tackling real experiences that command critical thinking and lead to a deeper understanding of the natural world. To further enhance our curriculum, students take field trips to places such as Sandy Hook, Hawks Landing, and Trailside Museum.

The Social Studies program includes New Jersey, United States and World History. The program also develops social study skills, teaches Civics, Economic Literacy, and Geography. All grade materials are linked to the Common Core Standards and have technology components for classroom use. The Social Studies curriculum provides a great deal of integration with Language Arts, Mathematics and Science as students learn to read and write in the content area, complete timelines, graphs and charts.

Our World Language program provides students in grades one through five with quality language instruction in Chinese. Students participate in a variety of cultural events throughout the year which includes a Chinese New Year celebration. Our ESL (English as a Second Language) program services approximately fifty students and our school promotes diversity by hosting family multicultural nights, through school wide and grade level projects as well as incorporating many assembly programs. Students’ learning is additionally enriched through vocal and instrumental music by participation in the chorus, band, or orchestra, Music and Art instruction, as well as Physical Education and Library classes.

Students requiring extra support in grades 2-5 receive targeted instruction by a Title I Teacher. This support teacher works closely with the classroom teacher to make sure that each child receives the scaffolding necessary to achieve mastery of skills and concepts. Lunch time tutoring is also offered to qualifying students. Identified first graders receive support from a Reading Remediation Teacher in a small group setting in addition to the balanced literacy block in the homeroom. Additionally, speech, resource room, self-contained settings, and other special education services are available to students during the school day according to need.

School Eight utilizes the Positive Behavior Support in Schools (PBSIS) program as a school-wide means of sustaining a positive school climate. The purpose of this program is to help schools create positive learning environments that lead to decreases in discipline and increased student achievement. Our team of teachers has analyzed school data to create building based behavioral expectations and created a school wide reward and recognition system. We have an annual kick-off event where students are taught the behavioral expectations at the beginning of the school year. Reinforcement activities and events are incorporated weekly, monthly and quarterly.

During the school year, “Star Students” are recognized monthly for good citizenship and character. Parents of the students are invited to come in and share lunch with their child and watch them as they receive their Star Student Certificate. Our K-Kids Program (sponsored by the local Kiwanis Service Organization) gives students first hand experiences of giving back to the community. Throughout the year the K-Kids raise money for the “Pennies for Patients Program” and Children’s Specialized Hospital, collect items for the local food bank, pack shoeboxes with items for US soldiers and visit the Gregorio Center to perform songs and activities.

Technology continues to evolve at School Eight. All students in grades three through five have received a MacBook Air as part of our district’s one to one technology initiative, and a center of these is available in each second grade classroom. All teachers in our school have also received a MacBook Air to assist them in enhancing their instructional practices. Technology continues to be integrated in the delivery of instruction, and students actively utilize the internet to complete in-class assignments and conduct research based projects. All Kindergarten through fifth grade classrooms are outfitted with an interactive white board, which assists in the delivery of engaging lessons.

Supporting and nurturing our students and their families extends past the classroom. School No.8 also has an in-house after care program as part of the district. School No. 8 faculty and staff provide additional support to students after hours in the form of homework assistance, physical activity, and crafts. Family involvement is encouraged at School Eight and critical to meeting our school-wide goals and continuing a positive home-school-community collaboration. The staff works hand in hand with our parents through family science nights, project fairs, and family literacy workshops. The School Eight Parent Teacher Association readily supports student programs and activities, such as: field trips, book fairs, author visits, family nights and student recognition ceremonies.

Nurturing confident, motivated learners is paramount at School Eight. Our intent is to provide developmentally appropriate programs and experiences with high expectations that challenge and enrich on all levels. This is accomplished through collaboration of teachers, support staff, parents and community. School Eight is a place to achieve and succeed.

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