

Dina's Dispatch

November 2019



Dina welcoming students and families ● 5th grade student self-portraits using the mood meter ● 1st grade students writing

So much to be *thankful* for...

During this season of giving thanks, we take a moment and pause to think about all the things we are thankful for. We have an amazing school, families, teachers and staff, and of course our kids! This incredible community is thriving, growing, and learning on a daily basis. We pride ourselves in being a professional learning community and wanted to share with you some of the work that's on our minds. We want to partner together in this work. As a professional learning community, read on to see what we're on fire about!

Social and Emotional Learning

At PS 158, we believe that emotions and emotional intelligence plays a significant role in child development. It impacts learning, decision-making, creativity, relationships, and mental health. All which are important aspects for future growth. We have partnered with the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence to help develop a community of emotional scientists using the RULER approach.

Last year, as a staff, we began to develop our own emotional literacy in Recognizing, Understanding, Labeling, Expressing, and Regulating our own emotions in our everyday life. In order to teach these skills we have to become more proficient and aware of these skills in ourselves.

This year, our second year of this work, we are empowering children to become emotionally literate and understand that their emotions matter and impact everything they do in life. Students have begun to use their anchor tools to guide them in becoming emotional scientists, beginning to Recognize, Understand, Label, Express, and Regulate their own emotions.

Equity

New York City is a diverse and inspiring city, but like everywhere, it has inequality. As a school community, we believe in equity and access for all. This year we are striving for culturally responsive education, one that embraces students' identities and provides them with mirrors that reflects the greatness that they are and windows into the world that allow them to connect across cultures. We are devoting professional development time to reading research, attending workshops that offer practical strategies, and having open and honest conversations about our goals and our growth in this area. In particular, we hope to revise libraries, texts we use, and our language in order to be more culturally responsive.

Math

At PS 158, we believe that we are all mathematicians and that we need to create opportunities for children to experience mathematics as a way of making sense of the world. To do this, children are regularly engaged in complex investigations rooted in real-world contexts and are guided by teachers to think about relationships, patterns, and changes as they problem solve.

We have partnered with City College's Mathematics in the City, a center of professional development and think tank for mathematics education. Our teachers attend workshops and work with MITC staff developers throughout the year. This year, teachers are participating in specialty groups to learn more about how kids learn. The specialty groups include studying and implementing the use of learning progressions of different strands of mathematics, Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI), and Five Practices for Orchestrating Productive Mathematics Discussions.

Reading and Writing

At PS 158 we are all readers and we are all writers. We believe we need to empower children to be readers and writers for the rest of their lives. Choice and interest matter; kids need to choose books they love and write about topics they love. Process also matters. Kids set goals for themselves, make big revisions to their work, work with partners, and choose their own tools that support their journey.

We partner with the Teachers College Reading & Writing Project, an organization that sends staff developers to our building to work with our children and our teachers. They bring us cutting edge practices that help us to work towards our beliefs.

This school year we will embark on a study of purpose, thinking about why we do what we do as readers and writers and how we can communicate that to our children so they see the connection between school and life. Our study of purpose will extend as far as classroom environment, student talk, and types of teaching methods.

Check out future issues of Dina's Dispatch to learn about these topics in greater depth, find resources you can use, and how to support this work at home.

Great Reads to Share with Your Family!

