



TELLER AVENUE EDUCATIONAL CAMPUS

1000 Teller Avenue, Bronx, NY 10456



Collaboration in Action at the Teller Avenue Educational Campus Community Schools Paul Neenos – Community Schools Director

Now five months into the school year, many Renewal/Community Schools have been making great strides in creating and enhancing welcoming and nurturing academic communities across the five boroughs. These strides are the product of strong collaboration between school communities and their community based organizations. One example of such collaboration in action is the Teller Avenue Educational Campus, home to J.H.S. 145 Academy for Creative Education and the Arts, M.S. 325 Urban Science Academy, and M.S. 328 New Millennium Business Academy with their community based organization, Center for Supportive Schools (CSS).

During the summer of 2015, the leadership teams of the Teller Avenue Educational Campus, in partnership with CSS, began the important work of shifting their focus from operating as three independent schools within the same building to working as a campus of three collaborative Community Schools. Through this collaborative framework, the leadership teams began the hard work of creating a unified safe, supportive, engaging, and inspiring campus culture and climate. The early stages of this work included coordinating afterschool programs across all three schools to strategically share resources in order to provide all students with targeted academic and enrichment opportunities. Since the summer, a number of successful campus wide events have been implemented, including but not limited to: Sixth Grade Orientation; Middle School Open House; Parent Teacher Conferences that included an informational fair to help parents and students connect with community based organizations and afterschool programs; breast cancer awareness workshop and screening; and campus wide professional development led by CSS.

However, events alone are not all that have been accomplished at Teller Avenue. A dedicated focus on authentic parent engagement and family services has been implemented through parent and family continuing education programs, including ESL and citizenship classes (complete with childcare offered), arts & crafts and sewing workshops, and soon to be launched high school equivalency classes for community members interested in advancing their academic achievement. Families in need also have many new resources available. The Teller Avenue Education Campus offers free clothing and winter wear donations from partnerships forged with NY Cares, St. Barnabas Hospital, and Families on the Move. Families in need also receive free family advocacy services for assistance with securing permanent housing, healthcare, immigration, emergency food services, and other social services through a partnership with Astor Services for Family & Children. A campus-based CSS Community Outreach and Engagement Coordinator and AmeriCorps Family Engagement Member also provide access to school and community services for families.

Every school...safe, supportive, engaging, and inspiring.

Collaboration has also been infused to benefit the day-to-day operations of the campus community. Daily “morning muster” meetings are held to bring together all principals (including our co-located charter school, and alternative learning center (ALC)), and the Community Schools Director, Paul Neenos, to touch base at the beginning of every school day. The three Community School Principals also meet together weekly with the Community Schools Director to discuss new projects, on-going initiatives, and general successes and challenges. Previous structures, such as weekly attendance meetings, have now transitioned into Student Success meetings. At these meetings, the New Visions Student Sorter and Attendance Heat Map is used to examine attendance as a primary indicator for identifying and supporting students with academic, social, and emotional needs. Identified students are connected with supports and interventions available to the campus. Students are also being rewarded monthly for great attendance with the CSS driven Monthly Attendance Incentive Program. Parent Coordinators have also joined forces and are working together on many campus wide programs and initiatives, coordinated through their weekly campus meetings with the CSS Community Outreach and Engagement Coordinator.

Students have seen some of the greatest changes on campus. Social emotional needs are now addressed using a three tiered approach to mental health services. Through a partnership with Astor Services for Children & Families, students can now receive clinical services through a NYS licensed Article 31 Mental Health Clinic. Those students who require “lighter touch” mentoring have programs such as P2L: Pathways to Leadership, AmeriCorps Success Mentoring utilizing the CSS *Achievement Mentoring* program, and school based social workers, guidance counselors, and social work interns to help students overcome challenges faced daily. To support the transition to middle school, all campus schools are implementing the CSS program *Peer Group Connection-Middle School (PGC-MS)*, a research-based program that supports and eases students’ successful transition into middle school by tapping into the power of eighth graders to create a nurturing environment for incoming 6th graders. Selected 8th graders (peer leaders) are trained in a daily leadership course. As a part of their course, two to three times per month, pairs of these 8th grade peer leaders meet with groups of 8-10 incoming middle school students in sessions designed to strengthen relationships among students across grades and build social, emotional, and academic skills. Student academics have also been amplified with a partnership with SAGA Innovations, a 1:2 daily math tutoring program targeting overage students in need of additional math support. Finally, teachers from all three schools have also stepped up to offer small group tutoring during ELT, afterschool, and Saturday programming.

As we enter the second half of the school year, many new initiatives are on the horizon, including a partnership with DreamYard and Viking Global Hedge Fund to bring together professionals who wish to partner on multiple volunteer campus beautification projects. CSS has also brought new professional development opportunities to the faculty and staff of the Teller Avenue Educational Campus that includes Easy Español, a Spanish language program for school professionals who wish to increase their language skills. These early successes and continuing plans for new programs and initiatives are the direct result of strong collaboration among stakeholders across the campus.

For more information about the work at the Teller Avenue Educational Campus, or about CSS programs (including Peer Group Connection and Achievement Mentoring), please contact Erin O’Leary, Senior Director at CSS, eoleary@supportiveschools.org, 845-405-1038 or contact Paul Neenos, CSS Community Schools Director – Teller Avenue Educational Campus, pneenos@supportiveschools.org, 716-491-4844.