

Description of the Hammonton School District and the Choice Program

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Town of Hammonton, New Jersey

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hammonton,_New_Jersey; downloaded May 3, 2012

Hammonton is a town in Atlantic County, New Jersey, United States. As of the 2010 United States Census, the town population was 14,791.[6] It is located directly between Philadelphia and the resort town of Atlantic City, along a former route of the Pennsylvania Railroad currently used by New Jersey Transit's Atlantic City Line.

Hammonton was settled in 1812. It was incorporated as a town by an Act of the New Jersey Legislature on March 5, 1866, from portions of Hamilton Township and Mullica Township.[11]

According to the United States Census Bureau, the town has a total area of 41.47 square miles (107.4 km²), of which, 41.26 square miles (106.9 km²) of it is land and 0.21 square miles (0.54 km²) of it (0.51%) is water.[4]

Hammonton borders the Borough of Folsom, to the southwest, and both Hamilton and Mullica townships to the southeast. It also borders Camden County to the northwest, and Burlington County to the north east. It is located in the Atlantic Coastal Plain, so is largely flat, though the highest point in Atlantic County is located along the Pennsylvania Railroad within the borders of Hammonton. Due to its proximity to the Pine Barrens, the soil is largely sandy, making it ideal for growing blueberries. Low, marshy areas, often within the Pine Barrens are also used for cranberry cultivation.

Hammonton has a humid continental climate bordering on a humid subtropical climate, characterized by brisk winters, hot summers, and plentiful precipitation spread evenly throughout the year.

The Hammonton School District

The Hammonton School District offers a high quality educational program to students in grades Pre-K to 12, with a major focus on the 21st Century skills that better prepare students to enter Post Secondary Education. With over 3600 students enrolled in our economically and ethnically diverse school system, we have been able to successfully develop an effective and efficient comprehensive, high quality instructional program for all learners.

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Secondary Education. With over 3600 students enrolled in our economically and ethnically diverse school system, we have been able to successfully develop an effective, efficient and comprehensive - high quality instructional program for all learners.

Hammonton High School has developed courses that include all the standard courses on regular, college prep, honors, and advanced placement levels. Our program of studies includes a "Technology Pathways to Success," NJ DOE Choice Program that provides a series of courses for students that are interested in the technology aspect of a variety of fields.

Early Childhood Education Center

Students in pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, and grade one attend our Early Childhood Education Center (ECEC). The focus at ECEC is developing well-rounded students with a love of learning, while nourishing imagination and creativity. Our curriculum follows New Jersey's guidelines and also the national common core standards for literacy and mathematics.

Our pre-kindergarten students participate in a different interdisciplinary unit of study each month. Drawing from Creative Curriculum and best early childhood education practices, students learn through exploration and memorable events tied to their study. Music, movement, dramatic play, visual arts, and literacy and numeracy activities are all part of the pre-kindergartener's day. Our full-day kindergarten and grade one programs build on skills developed in pre-kindergarten. Our workshop model of teaching includes a mini-lesson, guided learning, and independent learning activities. Read aloud, guided reading, shared reading, and independent reading activities are all components of the balanced literacy program. Our students in kindergarten and grade one also learn about a different author each month. Through hands-on learning and reading, they develop an appreciation for each author's craft and contribution to the world. Our program also stresses critical foundational skills in both reading and mathematics.

Realizing that children learn through a variety of means in our ever-changing world, Brightlinks projection systems are prominent in all classrooms and allow teachers to present information visually and interactively. Other recent technology enhancements include a powerful network, individual work stations, and I-Pads.

At ECEC, we recognize that the social curriculum is just as important as the academic curriculum. In this vein, our highly qualified staff blends social and academic learning. Our well-structured program combines literacy and mathematics with creative character building activities. Children attain acknowledgment and special recognition for their efforts in ways such as Be a Top Apple, letters to parents, and school-wide programs. In addition, our multicultural student population validates our emphasis on the importance of multicultural education.

Our staff is continually seeking to enhance their teaching skills and pedagogical knowledge. The district has extensive ongoing staff development with a focus on differentiating instruction and problem based learning. Equal access to a rigorous academic curriculum is ensured by Understanding by Design (UbD), our top-rated curricular design model. At ECEC, we have been employing the “continuous improvement” approach by using formative assessment and data driven instruction led by our newly-created data team.

We are confident that the ECEC can fulfill the premise and philosophy of NJ DOE Choice – mainly to use the Choice funds to develop innovative instructional options that provide public school opportunities for students. The NJ Department of Education approved ECEC as a Choice school in August 2012 and we will have our first Choice students for the 2013-2014 school year.

Warren E. Sooy, Jr. Elementary School

The Choice students (grades 2-5) at our Warren E. Sooy, Jr. Elementary School (WES) benefit from our progressive elementary school program. Our excellent teaching and support staff display their accomplishments in many ways. They are experienced, creative, and continually seek to enhance their teaching skills and knowledge base. The district has extensive ongoing staff development with a focus upon differentiation of instruction, balanced literacy and project based learning.

WES enjoys an outstanding reputation for the quality of our instructional programs, the professionalism, and dedication of our faculty, the academic achievement of our students, and the involvement of our parents. WES fosters an environment that allows students to feel safe, secure, and comfortable taking risks, while meeting our rigorous academic standards. Our excellent relationship with the community and specifically with parent groups, is critical to our success.

WES is technologically advanced, infusing a variety of tools to enhance instruction. All students acquire the necessary skills for presentations, desktop publishing and distance learning, including virtual fieldtrips, and advanced research. All classrooms are equipped with Brightlink projectors which encourage a multi-sensory approach to learning. We have a new MacIntosh Lab as well as computer work stations in each classroom. All children perform and participate in art, world language, physical education and music activities during the year. The band and chorus perform in two concerts annually. Our Student Council and Safety Patrol provide leadership experiences for students in grades two through five, while promoting school spirit.

WES is where “Students Come First.” The school environment is warm, inviting and conducive to learning. Our focus is to provide children with the tools to help them achieve their maximum potential at all times. Formative assessments are conducted frequently to track student progress and drive teacher instruction. Basic skills are taught with an eclectic, interdisciplinary approach designed to motivate a desire to learn, stimulate higher-level thinking, and assist in the

application of skills and knowledge. We have a Response to Intervention program that is one of the best in the state. It emphasizes short, intensive instruction of the Common Core standards. We provide an enrichment program that encourages advanced learners to express thoughts and ideas through multiple intelligences. Independent research and project presentations extend student thinking and achievement.

The faculty of WES has implemented Writer's Workshop, which is a research-based instructional program predicated upon the work of Lucy Calkins and Ralph Fletcher. Student writing is nurtured and developed on a daily basis. Students learn to translate their thoughts, experiences, and observations from "seed" ideas to published pieces in a structured but non-threatening classroom environment. As a complement to Writer's Workshop, we have implemented an exciting approach to grammar that enhances our students' ability to develop their writing mechanics without losing focus on craft and style. "Editing Exploration" is a district-wide initiative using the works of Jeff Anderson to promote writing and understanding of language arts. Our teachers invite students to notice and imitate successful use of grammar in well-written, mentor sentences. By exposing students to the impact that effective use of grammar can have on high-quality writing, we guide them towards a positive and proactive approach to continuously improving their own writing.

Children attain acknowledgment and special recognition for their efforts in ways such as letters to parents, placement on honor roll and high honor roll rosters, being recipients of Presidential Academic, Physical Fitness Awards, and our school wide Renaissance program. Students may also be invited to attend Board of Education Meetings which are dedicated to recognizing student achievement. Our multicultural student population validates our emphasis upon the importance of multicultural education. As we work together, our parents provide us with numerous educational opportunities and provide appreciation of cultures.

Hammonton Middle School

The Choice students will be in the regular HMS program which will have a strong Digital Art and Applied Technology program. The impact of digital technology has transformed activities such as painting, drawing and sculpture, while new forms, such as internet art, graphic art, and 2d/3d digital art, have become recognized artistic practice of the 21st century . The "New Media Art" Pathway is a general term for a range of artistic works and practices that use digital technology as an essential part of the creative, print, digital, and/or presentation process. Since the 1970s, various names have been used to describe the process including computer art and multimedia art, and digital art is itself placed under the larger umbrella term new media art.

The Hammonton Middle School (HMS) provides students in grades 6 to 8, with a comprehensive education in a safe and nurturing environment adhering to the goals of the Common Core State Standards. The academic program is the first priority with planning and implementation designed for an extensive sequence of studies to accommodate the abilities of middle school students. HMS continues the Understanding by Design approach to curriculum that we have at WES.

Our instructional program is always improving. At HMS, we have new Ipad carts, a vastly improved wireless network, and instructional aps for all subjects. Enrichment activities and clubs continue to abound in the following extracurricular areas: band, drama productions, performing arts, school store, student council, yearbook committee, field hockey, boys/girls soccer, boys/girls basketball, and wrestling.

The faculty and administration also recognize the importance of character development that promotes student responsibility and inspires proper decorum. Teachers and administrators strive to infuse in students the standards of behavior that create an atmosphere where success is commonplace.

The Middle School addresses multicultural understanding through a series of assemblies, programs, students, and teams of teachers who work to prevent any disharmony caused by behavioral bias. The Student Ambassadors provide a welcoming committee, which greets all new students and assists them as they acclimate to their setting. This interactive effort fosters understanding, tolerance and acceptance within the student body, and successfully helps the school maintain cooperation and unity.

The HMS faculty adheres to academic excellence and the cultivation of individual strengths and talents. HMS boasts a supportive environment where individual differences and respect for the rights of others guide school and community behavior. Based upon the philosophy that all children can learn, the school's curricula offerings emphasize diversity, equity, cooperative learning, and heterogeneous grouping. Special Education and English as a Second Language Programs call for a high degree of mainstreaming in regular education programs. Academic enrichment/exploratory programs are offered to all students. A strong emphasis is placed upon the promotion of student self-esteem and character growth through Renaissance. An active Student Council provides a wide variety of community volunteer programs that afford continuous improvement opportunities for the HMS community such as The Hammonton Family Success Center, St. Vincent DePaul Society and the Women's Civic Club.

The middle school structure is based on a child-centered philosophy. The staff is clustered on academic teams, with each team representing the content areas of math, science, language arts, and social studies. Staff members are highly trained in the instructional methods most suitable for middle school students. A strong emphasis is placed upon the individual student's academic, personal and social growth. At each grade level, teachers are scheduled in teams to discuss and plan skills, concepts, activities, and challenges for their students. Initiatives include differentiated

teaching and learning activities, team building activities, integrated learning, IDE Project based Learning technology-linking curriculum, and the application of student-centered activities that include interactive SMART Board lessons.

HMS has an excellent language arts literacy program that is infused in all courses. The faculty extends the skills the students learned in Writer's Workshop at WES. Students learn more advanced ways to translate their thoughts, experiences, and observations in a structured but non-threatening classroom environment. As a complement to Writer's Workshop, we have implemented an exciting approach to grammar that enhances our students' ability to develop their writing mechanics without losing focus on craft and style. "Editing Exploration" is a district-wide initiative using the works of Jeff Anderson to promote writing and understanding of language arts. Our teachers invite students to notice and imitate successful use of grammar in well-written, mentor sentences. By exposing students to the impact that effective use of grammar can have on high-quality writing, we guide them towards a positive and proactive approach to continuously improving their own writing.

A similarly thorough and purposeful curriculum is in place to guarantee that all students are able to read and comprehend a variety of texts. We have recently gone to block scheduling where students receive 92 minutes of uninterrupted Language Arts instruction each day. Teachers also use a variety of informational texts to make sure that students reading comprehension skills are well-rounded. Because of the Professional Learning Community structures embraced by HMS, the writing and reading comprehension skills students learn in Language Arts classes are consistently reinforced in all other content areas.

The HMS math department incorporates hands-on learning with content instruction for all students. Enrichment students are afforded the opportunity to enroll in a very rigorous algebra 1 course. In addition, members of the staff participate in intensive training with Rowan University as part of our math/science partnership with the University to ensure a deeper understanding of the Common Core Standards in Mathematics.

Applied Technology is a pathway that acquaints students with all areas of technology education offered at the middle school level. Units of study include: creation, innovation, production and information systems. The Pathway utilizes hands on design learning experiences. Students graduate prepared for the high school technology pathway that expands into Invention, Entrepreneurship, Production Systems, Robotics, Transportation Systems, Situational Systems as well as Information Systems.

Upon graduation, students attend the highly esteemed Hammonton High School.

Hammonton High School

The program that will be offered to the Choice Students is Technology Pathways to Success. This is a very powerful, exciting program that enables students enrolled in our traditional high schools to take courses that contain 21st Century themes. These courses will better prepare students for post secondary experiences in further education, careers, and life. For example, a student who is passionate about art and business can select from over 17 art courses in addition to the courses that will prepare him/her for a college major in accounting. The technology/art courses offered by our school utilize graphics programs that are used beyond the realm of the traditional art classroom. The software used in our technology/art courses is currently being used in the fields of marketing, criminal justice, medicine, engineering, and aviation. The art courses include:

- ✿ CP VHS Web Design & Internet Research
- ✿ CP 3D Animation
- ✿ Digital Media Productions
- ✿ CP Advanced TV Media Productions
- ✿ Graphic Design
- ✿ CP Advanced Graphic Design
- ✿ Introduction to Art
- ✿ CP Intermediate Art
- ✿ CP Advanced Art
- ✿ VHS AP Art History

Please look at our Course Descriptions for more specific information.

In-District and Choice students are eligible for enrollment in the Technology Pathways to Success Program based on their interest and ability to succeed. Should any student, resident or Choice, decide they are not interested in or are not successful in the program he/she can remain in Hammonton High School and participate in the regular program. Regular, college prep, honors, and AP students are all invited to apply to the program. The guidance counselors will work with the students so that they select a sequence that matches their interests and goals.

Hammonton High School will evaluate any prospective students on his/her interest in the Technology Pathways to Success program. Our admission policies and practices do not discriminate on the basis of athletic ability, intellectual aptitude, English language proficiency, status as a handicapped person, or any basis prohibited by State or Federal law.

Selection into the Technology Pathways to Success Program for in-district and Choice students will be based on the School Choice regulations. Students will not be accepted if we cannot implement their individualized educational programs, or if the enrollment of the student would require us to fundamentally alter the classes in the Program, or if a student would create an undue financial or administrative burden for the school district.

In selecting students for the Technology Pathways to Success Program, the guidance department recommends the following: Proficiency on the NJASK 8 and/or HSPA, overall minimum of a “B” average, minimum 95% attendance rate (or medical documentation), and a strong interest in technology careers as demonstrated in a brief essay.

C. Dan Blachford, Ed.D.

Superintendent