

Commack Middle School Inclusion and Diversity

Commack Middle School is dedicated to promoting a culture of inclusion facilitated by collaboration, mutual respect, support and problem-solving involving the whole school community. The IB Middle Years Programme acknowledges that students have a range of academic, social-emotional and physical needs. Commack Middle School offers a range of programs and related services to meet the needs of all learners including those with special educational needs, linguistically/culturally diverse students, and gifted/talented students.

Special Education

Through Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), Commack Middle School is able to meet the needs and goals of students through a variety of instructional approaches. Student needs *may* include, but are not limited to:

- students on the autism spectrum
- students with ADHD
- students with language and communication disorders
- students with emotional disabilities (e.g. anxiety, depression)
- students with physical disabilities
- students with learning disabilities
- students with various medical conditions (allergies, asthma)

At Commack Middle School, the framework of the Middle Years Programme allows our teachers to construct and differentiate units and lessons to maximize student potential and provide the means necessary for them to make broader connections across the curriculum. Special education teachers modify curriculum and assessments to meet the individual needs of each child. Students, teachers and parents meet every year to review the student's progress as per their current IEP and to develop a new IEP for the following school year.

Among the continuum of service options for students with disabilities, Commack Middle School employs several programs for classified students. Across the continuum, students with disabilities receive explicit instruction in Approaches to Learning Skills and IB Learner Profile traits. For instance, in Resource Room, students participate in a small group setting (5:1) daily with a special education teacher to reinforce and teach self-management skills, study skills, test taking strategies, and self-advocacy skills to facilitate students achieving their annual IEP goals. Resource room students spend the vast majority of their school day in general education classes and receive this supplemental instruction for approximately one period per school day.

Commack Middle School also employs an Integrated Co-Teaching program, delivering instruction to special education students alongside their non-classified peers. Content area teachers and special education teachers plan and implement lessons accordingly to meet the needs of a diverse student body. Such co-teaching strategies may include, but are not limited to, parallel teaching, alternative teaching, station teaching, etc. ICT classes emphasize Approaches to Learning Skills in a manner that enables students with disabilities to access information through traditional and differentiated instructional opportunities.

Commack Middle School adheres to the IB philosophy of inclusivity. As such, our students who participate in our special class settings (15:1, 12:1, 8:1 + 2) also receive differentiated instruction that aligns with the IB Learner Profile traits and utilizes Approaches to Learning skills. The IB Learner Profile closely parallels the New York State Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) Learning Standards, which focuses on teaching universal foundational skills (21st century skills).

Linguistically/Culturally Diverse

As stated in our language procedures, we recognize that multilingualism is key to empowering our students to become successful in an increasingly global society. We engage English Language Learners (ELL) in all four strands of communication (reading, writing, listening and speaking) to help them meet educational objectives while supporting them in their development as independent, global-minded citizens.

ELL students are exposed to the following program:

- ELL learners are supported through either stand-alone or integrated instruction in a content area depending on the student's level of proficiency, for 200-400 minutes per week –as per our state guidelines.
- ELL students may use native language resources (e.g. bilingual dictionaries) to supplement their English instruction.
- ELL teachers meet with general education teachers to provide information related to student needs/abilities and 'best practices,' for working with ELL students.
- ELL teachers support students as they transition into Commack Middle School or to Commack High School.

Gifted/Talented

We strive to provide a variety of educational opportunities designed to challenge exceptional learners. Such opportunities include, but are not limited to, high school level coursework while enrolled in year 3, enrichment opportunities and voluntary participation in co-curricular engagements.

To afford students with access and opportunity to rigorous courses of study, year 3 students may choose to enroll in high school level New York State Regents courses; Algebra I, Earth Science or Living Environment. Further, students enroll in enrichment courses based on their individual interests. While Regents level courses culminate with a state assessment, enrichment courses conclude with the Community Project. For nearly all year 3 students, enrollment in Regents level courses occurs concurrently with enrollment in enrichment courses.

Enrichment courses are designed within the Middle Years Programme (MYP) framework, providing our students with real-world experiences within career fields. These courses are project-based and include curricula that meet the needs of all learners. Enrichment course offerings include, but are not limited to, Building and Beyond, Digital Media, Gaming and Coding, Leaders of Tomorrow, Math and Science Research, Project Inventions, Forensics, Robotics, Writers Studio, Theater, STEM, World Activists, and Science History through Popular Cinema. Year 3 students enrolled in enrichment courses complete the Community Project as part of their culminating MYP experiences at Commack Middle School.

Finally, to extend learning beyond the classroom, students are encouraged to participate in a robust co-curricular program. Students may choose to join clubs including, but not limited to, Geography club, History and Research club, Research and Robotics team, Math Counts club, Math Olympiad, Math team and Science Olympiad.

Co-curricular activities afford students with an opportunity to extend upon their academic instruction, applying their learning to different contexts.

Updated: 6/7/2022