

TOWNSHIP OF UNION PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2369 Morris Avenue
Union, New Jersey 07083

UNION TOWNSHIP ACADEMY FOR POLICY, PUBLISHING AND DEBATE PILOT

The Pilot will begin on January 11th, 2017 at Burnet Middle School and Kawameeh Middle School.

The Union Township Academy for Policy, Publishing and Debate will take place at Burnet Middle School and will be open to grades 6th - 8th at both Middle Schools. Union High School students in grades 9-12 will be afforded the opportunity to serve as peer mentors. The Mission of this program is to supplement scientific writing, language arts, and to improve conflict resolution skills utilizing public debate. The program will be aligned with the Next Generation of Science Standards and the rubric for PARCC in Language Arts. The goal of this program is to give students in the District of Union Township the competitive edge in reading, communicating and writing from evidence. Obtaining, evaluating, and communicating information from sources is the perfect synergy of NGSS and writing to the standard for Language Arts.

Academy students will meet Wednesdays and Fridays from 2:40 p.m. to 3:40 p.m. The Fall Middle School Academy will take place over the course of 40 school days from January 2nd through May 15th.

The Academy students will view the current events of the day (through discussion of newspaper articles) and then learn to present their ideas through developing a group narrative following the aspects of debate. The blending of practice, content and crosscutting concepts in NGSS performance expectations will be reflected while instructing the students in the program. The students will be able to research additional sources while working with a team to find text based evidence. Members from Stockton university staff as well as staff members from community organizations and representatives from private industry will periodically visit the Academy to engage the students in thoughtful discussions from both positions of debate - affirmative and the negative.

Emphasis will be placed on training students to construct an argument based upon both traditional and electronic research fundamentals along with aspects of publishing.

Several information sessions will take place during the month of December. These meetings will be designed to engage interest and release criteria for acceptance into the program. Interviews will be scheduled and variety of topics will be given for candidates to produce a one page narrative to be defended during scheduled interview. All narratives and rubrics will be tiered to be age appropriate from grades 6th - 12th.

Academy students will be asked to abide by a special dress code at every monthly Final Debate: No jeans or sneakers . . . shirt/blouse tucked in . . . and the young men will wear a necktie or Bow Tie.

Academy students will be held to very high standards of behavior, punctuality, and academic effort. Students not maintaining these standards will be given a corrective action to maintain their position in the program.

Academy students will enjoy privileges: Culminating trip at the end of each session. In addition, students will be allowed to have working lunches with students in their age group. Academy students will be allowed to interface with representatives from government and universities (networking).

INTEGRATE THE DISCIPLINES

In the professional world, our work must integrate disciplines – small business owners, nonprofit leaders, and scientists must combine skills in organization, finance, writing, and so much more. Schools should reflect the fact that skills are deployed in combination. Union Township is fully committed to developing competitive skills for our students to prepare them for the 21st Century.

Parents/Guardians will be asked to pay for the culminating trip which will be determined before the start of the program.

In addition, Mr. Harrell will be readily available via telephone and e-mail to answer any questions parents may have. Feel free to call him at 908-851-4693 or send an e-mail to: tharrell@twpunionschools.org

Signature Parent: _____

Student Name (Print): _____

Debatable Topics

Social Issues

- Legalization of marijuana for recreational uses
- Lowering the drinking age to 18 → BEER (Because Eighteen Equals Rights)
- Lowering the driving age to 16 (other states have students driving at 16)

Government Issues

- The US housing war refugees
- Immigration
- Privacy Laws and government intervention
- Mass Incarceration Problem in the US and what happens to prisoners after they're released
- America's involvement in foreign affairs

Science Issues

- Use of Genetically modified foods
- Genetic Engineering → Where do we draw the line?
- With the Human Genome Project complete and the entire DNA sequenced → Should we sequence our genome? Will this cause problems with insurance companies and future employers
- Use of nuclear energy
- Carbon Tax → try to push more companies to use renewable resources and avoid fossil fuels

School Related Issues

- Use of cell phones in school → access to internet and educational games/apps
- Delaying the start time of school
- Keeping the arts in schools.
- The importance of electives in the middle schools

Requirements

- A mandatory narrative that is a paragraph and a half with two references to support your position of affirmative (why you agree) or negative (why you disagree)
- Student can choose any debate topic listed above and be prepared to discuss their position at their interview
- It must be typed and submitted electronically to tharrell@twpunionschools.org
- The facilitators at both KMS and BMS will give you the appropriate date
- Student will be scheduled for a short interview at their perspective schools
- The facilitators will alert all students who were approved for the Pilot program based on narrative and short interview