

Teacher Panel on Study Skills & Achieving Success at MS54

MS54 General PTA Meeting 10/16/18

Ms. Misthal (6th Grade Humanities), Ms. McNulty (8th Grade Math), Ms. E. Cohen (6th Grade Humanities) and Ms. McEvoy (6th Grade science) answered parent questions and had a roundtable discussion about study skills and being successful at Booker T.

Below please find the topics that were discussed along with summaries of the information and advice that was given to parents.

It all starts in the classroom

Students need to focus in class, ask questions when they don't understand or need clarification and/or attend Early Academy to get additional help.

The classroom is the place where students practice the skills they need to be successful - focusing, listening, communicating... Just like playing the piano or playing soccer, students need to practice learning.

Organization

Students need to learn to use their planners and keep their papers organized. Students can ask to meet with their teacher to help them organize their backpacks (lunchtime, Early Academy). Teachers remind students to write in their planners and mark work to be done on all the days leading up to project.

At Booker T., students will be challenged to practice independence, motivation and time management. They will need to look at what they have to do and decide when and how they should get their work done. (i.e., Should start with the hardest item first or vice versa?)

Middle school is the time when students will learn the cause and effect of being organized.

Perfection is not necessary.

The effort is what is important. Students need to try things and discover themselves.

Getting Help

If your child comes home and doesn't understand what to do for homework, they should reach out to other students in the class or email the teacher or come to Early Academy. All students should exchange contact information with other students in their class.

After School Help paid for by the PTA

Homework Help is offered Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday after school and is open to all students. There is no charge but students must register via the after-school program registration form with Parent Coordinator, Anne Pejovich

There is also a pilot program being offered to selected students in 6th-grade classes (603, 607 and 610). Students are recommended by their teacher for this program that is focused on helping students that may be struggling. This program is being run by volunteer tutors trained by MS54 teachers, Ms. E. Cohen and Ms. Pinsen. This program would love to expand but needs more volunteers - parents, grandparents, high school students and/ or college students. Interested volunteers can contact Allison Gardy at algardy@gmail.com

Studying for tests

Many teachers provide study/review sheets for students with practice questions/problems.

A common mistake that students make is believing that studying can be done just by reading over their notes 10 times. Instead, students should try to write down questions and answers that they think might be on the test. The act of trying to remember information/concepts and struggling is a sign of learning.

Early Academy (EA)

Early Academy takes place on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8 - 8:40 AM. Generally, Tuesdays are for foreign language, art and humanities and Thursdays are for math and science. (Some teachers are available on both days.) Some teachers specifically ask students to come into EA to work with them. Students can also get support/help from their peers during EA. EA should be thought of as drop-in office hours for the teachers. EA is not one-on-one tutoring. If many students are struggling with the same concept, a teacher may do a review during Early Academy.

Students should also know that the library is also open all mornings starting at 8 am.

Teachers at Booker T.

Dr. Elster hires teachers who love what they do. Teachers at Booker T. have different teaching styles which make learning more interesting for the students. All the teachers in a department cover the same units and use the same primary sources but the teachers are not necessarily doing the same work at the same time and assignments are not consistent between different classes. This freedom for the teachers allows the classrooms to come alive.

Progress reports

Progress reports are open for a week in the middle of the marking period. Print these reports if you want to refer back to them. There are 4 marking periods during the year, each one is approximately 10 weeks long. If you have questions about the progress report, ask your child's teacher.

Parents are not given access to grades/progress reports full time because middle school is the time for students to take responsibility for their work and learn what happens when they are unprepared.