

## **Curriculum Corner from the Curriculum Office**

January 7, 2019

In a continuing effort to offer more choice and opportunity to Intermediate students, Toms River Schools will be piloting two new classes beginning in February, 2019. These classes, while limited to only 20 students/building, are made possible through Title IV Grant funding. They are going to be offered as a trial and as a precursor to more classes like this in future years. The pilot classes are being offered to select (according to pilot teacher availability) groups in all three Intermediate schools. The classes are for enrichment in the areas of Visual Art and Robotics.

Toms River Intermediate South Art teacher, Mrs. Melissa Niemierowski is offering a one marking period Drawing class to select grade 8 cycles. The Title IV Grant will fund the training, curriculum writing and provide needed materials. Students interested in growing their artistic technique through drawing will have the opportunity to improve this skill through focused instruction. In order to be eligible to participate, students must be one of the pilot cycles chosen and must have scored proficient or advanced proficient on PARCC in 2018 as they'll be pulled from Academic Activity to participate.

Robots are coming to Intermediate East, North and South! Robotics will also be offered through Title IV to select 6, 7 and/or grade 8 students in each of the three schools through this pilot. As with the Arts and the Spanish class offered during Academic Activity, students must show proficiency on PARCC and be one of the available cycles to be eligible to participate. The Robotics class is a 2-marking period class. It's titled, "First in Class Robotics."

First in Class Robotics Programming was proposed by students in conjunction with a classroom educator at the intermediate level to better meet the needs of students during their Academic Activity period. There has been a call for coding and robotics clubs at all three intermediate schools with students coming out in droves to participate (often more than 100 students per session offered). Offering the students this pilot course will allow them to not only receive personalized instruction with independent pathways but also provide opportunities to turnkey with fellow students at these clubs and in their classes.

The class will begin with safety and an introduction to robotics followed by design challenges initially in 2d on paper and in CAD programs, 3d building and programming, and finally reflecting and reinventing. Outreach and community building through the maker mindset will be integrated throughout. Students from all three schools will participate in a culminating sharing and scrimmage event at the end of the school year.

While these two pilots are being offered in small groups as limited by grant funding, the district is working diligently to expand offerings for all grade 6-8 students to challenge, excite and motivate students as they master the New Jersey Student Learning Standards. (NJSLs.) Keep reading "Curriculum Corner" as announcements will be coming soon!