

Re-Imagining Middle Grades, 2019-2020

Apollo Middle School

RMG Implementation Model: CFB School



What exactly does Re-Imagining Middle Grades (RMG) mean?

Broward County Public Schools is committed to changing the middle school experience for its students and implementing incremental steps that will ultimately lead to a systemic change in our District. As a result, we have begun to “re-imagine” our middle schools, beginning in the 2018-2019 school year. We ultimately will strive to include all students in a project-based or problem-based experience via an interdisciplinary approach. Social-emotional learning will support students in a warm environment where their unique educational needs are met. This will lead to enhanced student engagement and motivation and facilitate connections across content domain. The plan also calls for increased electives and extracurricular activities at the middle school level. The ultimate goal is for students to be engaged and to have the social and emotional competencies, problem-solving skills, and academic achievement to help them successfully transition from middle to high school and beyond. We have been fortunate to have partnered with Community Foundation of Broward (CFB). They have generously entered into a three-year grant agreement that will fund three million dollars over three years that includes an equal match on behalf of the District for a total investment of six million dollars. In part, these funds will cover the cost of the professional development for teachers and includes the hiring of a Community Liaison along with funding of personalization periods for select students at the ten designated CFB schools.

What is our school’s focus for Re-Imagining Middle Grades?

Apollo Middle School focuses on Project-Based Learning and Social Emotional Learning as part of the Re-Imagining Middle Grades initiative. PBL is infused into core content curricula. Apollo focuses on the social emotional well-being through PASL elective classes that provides daily support to improve academic achievement and practice life skills necessary to succeed in today’s world.

As we infuse new instructional models in classrooms, how do we support our teacher’s growth through professional learning?

- Teachers have attended summer institutes for the past two years provided by the PBL Works regarding project-based learning and organizations that focus on Conscious Discipline and Social Emotional Learning. Teachers are continuing to receive additional training and coaching in project-based learning and social emotional learning throughout the school year.
- Professional Learning Communities meet twice monthly to share best practices in the areas of project-based learning and social emotional learning.
- Assistant Principal and Principal have received project-based learning and social emotional learning training to be able to coach the classroom teachers.
- Teachers attended a summer institute for Personalization of Academic and Social Emotional Learning (PASL) and the use of Second Step as cornerstones of SEL.

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What additional elements have we implemented to support Re-Imagining Middle Grades?

- Personalized Academic & Social Emotional Learning (PASL) classes are a part of the master schedule to address the need of students in need of assistance. The Second Step Program is being utilized in PASL classes.
- School block schedule implemented designed to allow for more choices in student electives.
- School's community liaison supports PASL teachers, mentors, students and parents to increase student achievement, parent engagement, decrease absenteeism, and build relationships to improve school culture.
- Additional mentoring programs have been instituted at Apollo to meet the needs of our diverse population.
- The MTSS/RTI team uses appropriate data to make decisions for all our students. The team brings in the appropriate parties to make sure the academic needs and interventions are being implemented accordingly.
- Partnering a core subject area with a similar elective to reinforce foundational skills that needs further development. For example, a Math class offering may be paired with an Introduction to Finance elective class to strengthen the necessary Math skills but also folds in the authentic and relevant application of the subject matter.

At Apollo Middle, what we learn today will launch tomorrow!