

Ham Radio at the Rocco Laurie School

The Rocco Laurie School
Staten Island NY

Dear Colleague,

Throughout my years as a supervisor and now as a principal of this large and complex middle school (1700+ pupils and over 100 staff), I have welcomed and encouraged the right blend of curriculum innovation to augment the talents of all our staff and to meet the needs of our children. That elusive combination -- learning material challenging enough for our gifted children and useful in reinforcing basic concepts for our more reluctant learners -- is found in a great program involving Amateur Radio.

Teacher Carole Perry has proved day in and day out for over 9 years, that this fascinating subject produces interested, excited, happy learners from every segment of our student body. I've seen youngsters who have been "written off" by other subject teachers, blossom and become "stars" in Carole Perry's ham radio class. The beauty of this course is in its common sense simplicity.

1. It allows each pupil to be part of an "in" club - The Ham Radio Club (very important for adolescents seeking a peer group relationship).
2. Pupils learn at their own pace and optionally, master "codes" unknown to many friends and family.
3. It instills a sense of discipline with respect to the proper use of equipment and the public airwaves.
4. It creates real confidence in youngsters who heretofore, have had difficulty in "communicating" skills.
5. It allows successful, hard working pupils the chance to secure the coveted FCC Amateur Radio license.

Over the years, Ham Radio has allowed me as a school administrator, to point to the accomplishments of this group to staff, colleagues, parent groups and community representatives on a regular and continuing basis. Every subject area is an integral part of this program. For example:

1. Geography and History (Social Studies) -- Because youngsters correspond with people the world over, their teacher uses maps and social studies materials to help children understand the world around them.
2. Science -- Students learn concepts and terminology related to electricity and physics.
3. Math -- Determining time zones, calculating distances between ham operators, using algebraic equations in electrical formulas, are some of the ways math is easily integrated into the program.
4. Language Arts -- In this program students utilize many communications skills by learning to speak clearly and succinctly on the air, optionally learning Morse Code through auditory and memory techniques, and by writing follow-up cards and letters to their radio contacts all over the world.

In our attempt to support interdisciplinary approaches to learning, our teachers have attended workshops in our school to learn how to integrate high motivational ham radio lessons into their respective curriculum. I am able, therefore, based on what I have actually observed and experienced, to endorse Amateur Radio without reservation, as a wonderful learning tool that will bring immediate success, positive recognition and great satisfaction to all members of your school's community - pupils in particular.

Sincerely,

Barbara Glassman
Principal, The Rocco Laurie School