



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS FOR PARENTS

Project Launch Newton, a 21st Century Community Learning Center, is part of a federal initiative to provide academic enrichment opportunities during non-school hours for children and families. Beginning in 4th grade, the program helps students meet state and local student standards in core academic subjects, such as reading and math; offers students a broad array of enrichment activities that can complement their regular academic programs; and offers literacy and other educational services to the families of participating children. Through a partnership between Newton Public Schools and Project Self-Sufficiency, services will take place at both the Merriam Avenue School and the Halsted Middle School.

Who is running Project Launch Newton?

Project Launch Newton is a joint project led by an administrative team from both Project Self-Sufficiency and Newton Public Schools. The Project Launch Newton Coordinator, Shannon Gill Williams, will have an office located at Project Self-Sufficiency and can be reached by calling (973) 940-3500.

What grades are eligible to participate in Project Launch Newton?

At the Merriam Avenue School, the program is open to all students in grades 4 and 5. At Halsted Middle School, it is open to grades 6, 7 and 8.

Does my child have to participate in Project Launch Newton every day?

No. Beginning October 1st, Project Launch Newton activities will be offered every day after school, as well as many Saturdays. Registered students are encouraged to attend daily, or several days per week at a minimum.

What time do Project Launch Newton activities take place?

Starting October 1, 2013, Project Launch Newton will begin at the end of the school day and run until 5:45 p.m., Monday through Friday for children in grades 4 & 5 at Merriam Avenue School and children in grades 6, 7, & 8 at Halsted Middle School. Children will report to the designated Project Launch Newton area in their school following dismissal.

Will any Project Launch Newton activities take place during the weekend?

Yes. Activities will be run on several Saturdays throughout the school year. Look for the Project Launch calendar in the coming weeks for details on special Saturday programs.

Will any Project Launch Newton activities during the summer?

Yes. Project Launch Newton will run for four weeks during the summer, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at both the Merriam Avenue and Halsted Middle Schools.

Will there be any Project Launch field trips?

Yes! There will be several exciting field trips throughout the year, including planned weekend trips to The Intrepid Museum in NYC and Liberty Science Center. Field trips will be announced in advance and permission slips will be sent home to parents. Bus transportation will be provided for all field trips, with Project Launch staff serving as chaperones.

What is the cost for my child to participate in Project Launch Newton?

There is NO COST for any child to participate. Project Launch Newton is completely free of charge. Project Launch Newton is open to all students in the Newton Public School District, grades 4 through 8, regardless of family income.

Is there transportation available to get my child home?

YES. Free bus transportation will be available from both Merriam Avenue and Halsted Middle Schools to transport children to designated bus stops near their homes at the conclusion of Project Launch activities.

What if I need to pick my child up earlier than 5:45 p.m.?

Parents who must pick their children up prior to 5:45 may do so by reporting to the Project Launch Newton Site Supervisor, who will then dismiss their child.

Will snacks be provided?

YES. Snacks will be provided on a daily basis. Health and nutrition is one of the focal points of the program, and students will be engaged in learning about nutrition and helping to plan their own snacks.

Can parents get involved in Project Launch Newton?

YES! One Friday evening each month, Project Launch Newton will host a Family Fun Night. At these special events, dinner will be provided for the whole family, and students will have the opportunity to showcase everything they've been working on that month in the program. In addition, parent volunteers are always welcome. If you are interested in volunteering, please see the Project Launch Newton Site Coordinator at your child's school.

How will Project Launch Newton communicate with my family?

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What services can Project Launch Newton offer my families?

Information will be provided on the Project Launch Newton web site – www.projectlaunchnewton.org – and through weekly and monthly newsletters. One-on-one communication is also welcome by calling the Project Launch Newton Coordinator, Shannon Gill Williams, at (973) 940-3500.

What is a STEM City MicroSociety?

STEM refers to the subjects that are considered key to successful employment in the emerging economy – science, technology, engineering and math. These subjects will be woven throughout the Project Launch curriculum and will feature prominently in the MicroSociety – a “virtual” community students design on their own. Students elect their own officials, establish laws, and govern their MicroSociety.

What is TREPS?

“Trops” is slang for teen entrepreneurs. This national program takes students through the process of designing, implementing and running their own business selling a product of their choosing. There will be an opportunity for students to sell their products to parents, friends, and community members at a TREPS Marketplace event.

What will a typical Project Launch Newton daily schedule look like?

Each afterschool session includes 45 minutes of academic enrichment, a snack and nutrition information session, a sport or physical activity of the day and amazing presentations from creative speakers. Time will also be devoted to the STEM City Microsociety curriculum and the themed project of the quarter (i.e. TREPS).

What types of sports/activities will be offered through Project Launch?

We will offer a variety of activities to show students there are many ways to stay active and healthy – and have fun in the process. Sports such as softball, basketball, and soccer will take place in the context of friendly competition. Other possible activities include classic playground games, yoga, karate, hip hop dance, hiking and more. Experts from the community will be brought in to lead special activities like hip hop dance and karate.

Does Project Launch stay the same all year?

No. Project Launch will be broken up into four semesters, each with its own themed group project. Themes include a 21st Century Science Project, a TREPS Project, exploring performance arts including music and drama, and getting out into nature to learn about life sciences.

Do you have additional questions about Project Launch Newton?
Please call Shannon Gill Williams, Coordinator, at (973) 940-3500.

