

U.S. Department of Education
2017 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [] Title I [] Charter [] Magnet [] Choice

Name of Principal Mr. Christopher Robert Gamble

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Hannah G. Solomon Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 6206 N. Hamlin Avenue

(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Chicago State IL Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 60659-1096

County Cook

Telephone (773) 534-5226 Fax (773) 534-5167

Web site/URL http://www.solomon.cps.edu E-mail crgamble@cps.edu

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Mr. Forrest Claypool E-mail feclaypool@cps.edu
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name City of Chicago School District 299 Tel. (773) 553-1000

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mr. Frank Clark
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

Part I – Eligibility Certification

The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. All nominated public schools must meet the state's performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group and all subgroups, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2017 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2011 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, or 2016.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
9. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
10. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
11. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
12. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2016-2017) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

- Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
 - 480 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 0 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 172 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools

652 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

- Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
 - Urban or large central city
 - Suburban with characteristics typical of an urban area
 - Suburban
 - Small city or town in a rural area
 - Rural
- Number of students as of October 1, 2016 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	28	24	52
K	13	20	33
1	14	22	36
2	22	12	34
3	18	13	31
4	20	14	34
5	17	11	28
6	17	17	34
7	17	15	32
8	22	23	45
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	188	171	359

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 37 % Asian
 - 3 % Black or African American
 - 14 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 44 % White
 - 2 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2015 – 2016 school year: 9%

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	17
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	15
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	32
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	359
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.089
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	9

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 32 %
113 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Amharic, Arabic, Assyrian, Bengali, Bosnian, Burmese, Cambodian (Khmer), Cantonese (Chinese), Chaldean, Chaochow (Chinese), Croatian, Greek, Gujarati, Hindi, Italian, Korean, Malayalam, Mandarin (Chinese), Mongolian, Other, Oulof, Panjabi, Pilipino, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Sindhi, Somali, Spanish, Tamil, Telugu, Thai, Tigrinya, Turkish, Urdu, Vietnamese, Yoruba

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 60 %
Total number students who qualify: 215
8. Students receiving special education services: 30 %
83 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- 20 Autism
- 0 Deafness
- 0 Deaf-Blindness
- 2 Emotional Disturbance
- 0 Hearing Impairment
- 26 Mental Retardation
- 0 Multiple Disabilities
- 0 Orthopedic Impairment
- 2 Other Health Impaired
- 14 Specific Learning Disability
- 5 Speech or Language Impairment
- 0 Traumatic Brain Injury
- 1 Visual Impairment Including Blindness
- 13 Developmentally Delayed

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 2
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects	14
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	9
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	12
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	12

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 26:1
12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

Required Information	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012
Daily student attendance	95%	95%	96%	95%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**
Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2016.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.
Yes No X

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school's mission or vision statement.

Solomon Elementary is committed to ensuring the academic and social-emotional growth of all students to enable each student to meet his or her true potential.

16. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

Solomon is a neighborhood school in Chicago Public Schools, meaning that the school offers open enrollment to all students within the attendance boundaries. The school will open up additional discretionary slots to fill spaces at each grade level through a district-administered lottery, available to all students in the city, when needed. Students in the special education cluster program for students with low-incidence disabilities are placed at the school through the Office of Diverse Learners in the district's central office.

PART III – SUMMARY

Hannah G. Solomon Elementary School is a public community school located in the neighborhood of Peterson Park in Chicago. Solomon serves 359 students in grades Pre-Kindergarten to 8. In addition to open enrollment for all students that live within the attendance boundary, Solomon has an Early Childhood Program for students with a Significantly Modified Curriculum with Intensive Supports and a grades K to 8 Cluster Program for Students with a Significantly Modified Curriculum with Intensive Supports; these two special education cluster programs make up 16% of our overall student population. In addition to the diversity of abilities with Solomon, this current school year features a student population with 39 different languages spoken at home. As a result of the range of needs across the school, Solomon offers a differentiated educational experience to a diverse, multicultural population, placing high expectations on social-emotional and academic competencies.

Solomon was built in 1957 to serve families within the neighborhood as well as provide accessibility for students with diverse learning needs that require a single-level school setting. 59 years later, the school still strives to serve those communities.

The school fosters active family and community support. Solomon celebrated its 50th Anniversary in 2007 with an open house tour of the school and displays of awards as well as photographs throughout the years. Through ongoing school tours, alumni events, and school-wide celebrations, alumni and former staff continue to return to the school and volunteer support. Peterson Park has traditionally been an inter-generational community, and as a result, it is not uncommon to have grandparents, parents, and grandchildren attending events as alums and current students.

A yearly celebration that features the diversity of the Solomon community and brings in generations of current and former students is International Night. This cultural celebration features a multi-generational, student-led fashion show and potluck featuring hundreds of dishes from around the world, made or donated by Solomon families. Additional events, such as the yearly Solomon Soiree fundraiser facilitated by the Parent-Teacher Organization, raise awareness to all community members about our school-wide priorities.

All stakeholders work together to uphold old and create new traditions that honor the climate and culture of Solomon. Examples include a variety of events that celebrate student achievements and growth, such as quarterly student Honor Roll festivities, 25 Books or More Reading Club luncheons, student-led assemblies promoting core character traits embedded in the school's school-wide social and emotional learning curriculum, and the Walk, Jog, Roll-a-thon that promotes health and wellness for all students.

Solomon creates an encouraging, supportive, and challenging environment for all students to develop their full potential. Multiple key strategies are implemented throughout different areas to support all students and to maintain student growth.

Academically, students are introduced to high expectations through a rich curriculum in the Ready to Learn Pre-Kindergarten program, which was awarded the Gold Circle of Quality from ExceleRate Illinois. Starting in Pre-Kindergarten, teachers use formative and summative assessments to form groups, scaffold, and differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all learners. High expectations continue throughout, with approximately half of 8th graders receiving credit for high school Algebra coursework. Upper grade students participate and win awards in district and state History and Science fairs, speech and math competitions, Chinese language speech and proficiency competitions, Battle of the Books, and annual writing competitions sponsored by the local Veterans of Foreign Wars and Resurrection College Prep High School.

Socially and emotionally, Solomon has created programs that promote positive development and social adjustment for all students. Lunch Bunch with the school counselor created space for ongoing social supports for new students enrolled at our school. Positive behavior support is given to students through a school-wide Cougar Character program by giving badges to students caught in the act of going above and beyond expectations for traits identified by student leaders, including empathy and kindness. Additionally, the Social Emotional Learning team has implemented a range of supports, including Check In Check Out

and S.S. Grin, through data-informed targeted supports for students requiring additional support. Other strategies include morning meetings, modeling positive and expected social behaviors, and maintaining an open two-way relationship between parents and staff members to support children's social and emotional well-being. Extracurricular activities with a social and emotional component, such as Girls on the Run, Lego engineering, and martial arts, promote health, engagement, and problem solving.

Physically, students receive physical education two times a week for a total of 120 minutes. All students participate in an 8 to 14 week, inclusive dance program taught by Dancing with Class. Field Day in the Spring includes a number of physical challenges for multi-grade teams, coached and facilitated by upper grade students and parent volunteers. Solomon has a Tumbling team coordinated by the Physical Education teacher that consists of students in general education and special needs from grades 2 to 8. The school partners with the Chicago Park District to provide intramural athletics for students in grades 1-4, and students in grade 5-8 participate in district-wide athletic leagues, including basketball and soccer.

Culturally, Solomon prioritizes arts enrichment for all students in its scheduling and fundraising. In addition to a full-time music teacher and the dance program, the school partners with Go Get Your Smock to provide 10 weeks of visual arts enrichment, with a focus on cross-curricular connections, to all students. Additionally, Solomon's culturally-diverse teachers and staff provide instruction that includes the study of cultures around the world. Mandarin Chinese is taught in grades K-8, where students learn about the history, culture, and traditions of China, with an emphasis on developing bi-literacy skills that can transfer to study in local high schools. Students visit cultural and historical museums such as the National Museum of Mexican Art, the Hellenic Museum, and the DuSable Museum of African American History. These visits are tied to the cultural studies within the classroom and school-wide celebrations.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Solomon Elementary School implements high-quality, teacher-created units aligned with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and district frameworks. Teachers use the CCSS to develop curricula that challenge students to meet their true potential. Units are differentiated to support students needing extra intervention, provide enrichment for students who are above level, and build in meaningful inclusion opportunities for all students. While most intervention and enrichment opportunities happen within the classroom, accelerated programming is offered in math course for students in grades 5-8, and a part-time interventionist works with students in small groups as identified by the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) Team.

The English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum includes all aspects of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Teachers in the primary grades use a diverse reading and English language arts curriculum that focuses on word knowledge, connecting text with prior knowledge, and focusing on close reading. Teachers in Pre-Kindergarten through grade 5 include the implementation of author studies, Guided Reading, Daily 5, Scholastic Storyworks, and authentic texts for whole and small group instruction in teacher-created, CCSS-aligned units. Students in grades 2 to 8 engage in novel studies as well as participate in literature circles. Teachers in grades 6 to 8 prepare students for high school by including ThinkCERCA to their literacy curriculum. ThinkCERCA is a web-based platform used by teachers as an additional tool to teach critical thinking through argumentative writing using close reading and direct instruction incorporating differentiated levels in ELA, science, social studies, and math. The writing curriculum also includes Lucy Calkins Units of Study and the Writer's Workshop model of instruction. The goal of writing instruction is for students to see themselves as authors and to provide structured opportunities to develop their craft.

Eureka Math (also known as EngageNY) is the core math curriculum for grades K to 8th. The CCSS-aligned curriculum uses real world applications so students are able to make meaningful connections to solving problems. The curriculum builds upward in a progression, enabling students to successfully apply strategies learned from the previous years to the current lesson. Teachers also incorporate tactile learning through the inclusion of games, activities, math talks, and stations to reinforce skills and strategies. Teachers in grades 5 to 8 implement MARS Tasks for additional curricular differentiation. Yearly, more than half of Solomon's 8th graders are enrolled in Advanced Algebra and successfully pass the Algebra exit exam at the end of the school year, which allows students to enroll in the next advanced math course.

The Science curriculum incorporates FOSS modules, Science Weekly, National Geographic Explorer, and as well as teacher-developed materials to engage students in meaningful science learning experiences and science-rich texts that begins with investigations of the life cycle, insects, bones and the body in Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten. Tactile learning continues in 2nd grade as students learn more about the life cycle of chicks through the incubation unit. These early experiences lead to student success as they hypothesize, experiment, and collect data to successfully compete in the upper grade science fair. Partnerships with Commonwealth Edison's Smart Grid program and the State of Illinois Environmental Fishing program bring student experiential learning into the community as well.

With Solomon named after Progressive Era reformer and suffragette Hannah Solomon, the school strives to embed civic-mindedness into the core Social Studies curriculum. Through alignment to the district framework for Social Studies that provides a path for thematically-based Social Studies content as a platform to access Common Core, teachers provide academic building blocks in the primary and intermediate grades so that upper grade students can take learning into the community. The primary grades emphasize fundamental concepts of community and culture, and the intermediate grades dive deeper into local, state, and national studies with sources that reflect the school's diverse perspectives. As students transition to the upper grades, they partner with organizations like the Illinois Council for Handgun Violence and the Constitutional Rights Foundation of Chicago to develop and implement year-long community- and school-improvement projects. Projects include arguments for local playground and park enhancements, environmental practices in the school lunchroom, and anti-bully practices. Through these projects, students work with a variety of stakeholders, including the principal, Local School Council, and elected officials, to

implement changes. These practices intersect with a community-based instruction approach for students in our special education cluster program. By learning to navigate the community with the support of staff and peer buddies, these students can see themselves as active participants in their communities as well. Like Progressive reformers from 100 years ago, students know that thorough research, debate, organization, and leadership can help drive social change.

Solomon offers a Pre-Kindergarten program for 60 students (40 in the general education program, 20 in the special education cluster program). Both classrooms have 2 half-day courses of 2 hours 40 minutes each. The core curriculum of the general education classroom is the Creative Curriculum, which is research-based and aligned to both the Teaching Strategies Gold Assessment System and the Illinois Early Learning Standards that integrate math, science, technology, literacy, art, and active play. The core curriculum for the cluster classroom is the Unique Learning System, a CCSS-based set of interactive tools specifically designed for students with special needs to access the general curriculum. School readiness and success in the primary grades is addressed in multiple ways. In the cluster program, the Unique Learning System is the core curriculum for grades Pre-Kindergarten through 8, and all cluster teachers collaboratively plan their units for the year. The Teaching Strategies Gold Assessment system sets specific school readiness goals for students and identifies activities for parents and child to complete at home that relate to school readiness goals. Both Pre-Kindergarten teachers participate as team members in the grade band team for Pre-Kindergarten to grade 2. In these team meetings, data protocols are used to analyze student progress and identify next steps. All members of the primary team collaborate to identify needs and to collectively brainstorm ways to support students. Students receive need-based supplemental academic and social-emotional interventions with the support of an MTSS Team starting at Pre-Kindergarten.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

At Solomon, additional curriculum areas, including arts, physical education, foreign language, and technology, not only serve to widen and deepen the experiences of the students in the Peterson Park neighborhood, but they also serve as opportunities to provide meaningful inclusion opportunities for diverse learner students in all grade levels.

Students in grades K-8 receive 120 minutes of music instruction weekly from a certified music instructor who also serves as an arts liaison and teacher mentor for other music teachers in the district. Students learn to read notes, perform multiple instruments, and study composers starting in the primary grades. Enrichment for student musicians is provided through monthly coffeehouse performances, as well as an ensemble that meets twice a week before school to practice and perform at community events. As arts liaison, the music teacher has fostered external partnerships with organizations that provide dance and visual arts instruction integrated into the academic day over the course of the year (10 weeks of visual arts instruction and 8-15 weeks of dance instruction, depending on the grade level) for all students in grades Pre-Kindergarten through 8, via inclusive, grade-level groupings. These external partnerships work with teacher-leader planning committees, and both parent fundraising and teacher grant writing activities help to sustain these programs. Both programs feature culminating events where students perform and display their work for the community, helping to demonstrate Solomon's commitment to the arts and celebrate student achievements.

Solomon students in grades K-8 receive 120 minutes of physical education, as well as 10 weeks of comprehensive health instruction. Content units include innovative games that emphasize collaboration and team, as well as skill development in a wide array of sports, including tumbling. After the completion of the tumbling unit, the physical education teacher assembles a tumbling team that performs a show for peers and the community. In addition to physical education coursework, both the GoNoodle program and the school's Mandarin Chinese coursework integrate frequent movement breaks into academic coursework, promoting a healthy school environment. Physical education classes is a particular focus for the school's plan to promote inclusive classroom practices for all students; for example, a reverse inclusion class was developed and scheduled to have older students partner with students from the K-2 special education cluster classroom to prepare for a spring "Buddy Baseball" league with city and suburban schools. A Health and Wellness Team, supported by the Alliance for a Healthier Generation, meets monthly to plan events that align to the school's health and wellness goals, including garden maintenance and parent fitness. The team is led by the physical education teacher and includes parents, staff, and community representation.

Grade K-8 students receive 120 minute of Mandarin language instruction weekly, with the exception being students in the cluster program receiving 30 minutes weekly. Mandarin has expanded over the past three years from a K-5 program to one where students can now test into high school Mandarin programming at local schools. Students primarily develop their conversational skills in Mandarin, with a secondary emphasis of developing understanding of Chinese culture. Solomon partners with the Chinese Consulate in Chicago and the Confucius Institute for activities where students experience Chinese culture on location in the city. Students this year in grades 5 and 8 will begin sitting for an exam that will designate bi-literacy proficiency, as designated by the state of Illinois.

Technology coursework is integrated into a Library course, which all students in grades K-8 receive for 60 minutes per week. The primary focus of the primary grades is to build a love for reading, with secondary emphasis on understanding how to use libraries as a resource and care for materials. By the intermediate grades, students additionally receive direct instruction on research skills that align to classroom projects and explicit instruction on internet safety. As students transition to the upper grades, library and technology skills overlap with the development of proficiency in the vetting of high-quality sources. Across all grades, students vote on award-winning books, and as a result, promote high-interest, culturally-relevant texts for parents and the community.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

To meet the diverse linguistic, cultural, academic, social-emotional, and ability needs of our student body, all Solomon teaching staff collectively analyzes a variety of formative and summative assessments administered on an ongoing basis. Weekly grade band meeting time, as well as other regularly-scheduled special education teams (cluster program teachers, paraprofessionals, consultation meetings with related service providers) and leadership teams (Instructional Leadership Team, MTSS Team, Social and Emotional Learning Team, Local School Council), are devoted to a systematic approach towards examining achievement and social-emotional data and towards building the team's capacity of understanding data more effectively. These approaches have helped Solomon receive the highest rating possible (Level 1+) in Chicago Public Schools.

The district-wide NWEA assessment for grades 2-8 in literacy and K-8 in math is administered 2-3 times per year, depending on the grade level, and with each round of assessment, teams analyze student proficiency and growth data using common-agreed upon protocols. From these assessments, teams identify students in need of supplemental support during class time as dictated by their growth from one assessment to the next, develop math enrichment rosters in grades 5-8, form instructional groupings, select students to present to the MTSS Team for case study, plan with individual students to meet established goals, and identify potential gaps in curricula that correspond to student achievement. Solomon staff collectively emphasizes student growth, with 70% of students meeting their annual NWEA growth targets in grades 3-8 during the 2015-2016 school year; this attention to growth supplements existing high attainment school-wide (95th percentile in Reading and 93rd percentile in Math school-wide using NWEA national attainment percentiles for the 2015-2016 school year).

Complementing NWEA for the primary grades is the TRC/Dibels assessment for reading fluency and comprehension, which is formally administered three times a year and is the basis of progress monitoring in the interim periods. This assessment data, which determines reading levels, guides instructional groupings and intervention strategies implemented by a part-time interventionist teacher, teacher aides, and parent volunteers.

To support academic interventions, Solomon has a dedicated part-time interventionist that uses research-based strategies and materials to teach students either in small groups or individually upwards of 5 days a week, as dictated by need. These students are vetted by the MTSS Team based on recommendations by classroom teachers and assessment data. The team then studies each student via an agreed-upon protocol to identify specific needs and instructional next steps. As a result, the interventionist focuses on pre-reading and fluency skills with our primary students, with increasing focus on comprehension skills for intermediate and upper grade students, based on the recommendations of the MTSS Team. A math lead teacher similarly

provides intervention supports to students in grades K-8 multiple times a week in small groups or as individuals, based on needs identified by district-wide and/or teacher-created, CCSS-aligned assessments. In addition to staffed interventionists, 2 hours of intervention time is built into the schedule each week for the homeroom teacher to provide technology-based interventions to students.

Teachers also create and use CCSS-aligned assessments that mirror the tasks and texts students experience with the PARCC assessment. Through the consistent implementation of these assessments, Solomon students performed as a top 3 community school in the district for both PARCC English Language Arts and Math attainment in the district during the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 school years.

Solomon has expanded its use of social-emotional data over the past two years in order to identify school-wide priorities and the effectiveness of interventions. Analysis of attendance data by an Attendance Team of teachers has led to the implementation of school-wide strategies to increase student attendance, as well as identify families in need of greater support from the counselor and related service providers. Analysis of Check In Check Out data allows the counselor to examine the efficacy of this intervention program for students needing greater behavioral supports.

The cluster program uses Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment to examine the progress of students with low-incidence disabilities such as Down's Syndrome, autism, and other health impairments. Teachers and aides in the cluster program routinely collect data as it informs student progress towards goals in Individualized Education Plans, and professional development time is devoted to collaboration between those staff members to improve data collection procedures and identify strategies that align to student needs. Additionally, the cluster team uses both collaboratively-made teacher-created assessments and those embedded in the Unique Learning System ELA, Math, Social Studies, and Science units to make instructional groupings and identify areas of professional learning for the team.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Solomon School is a small community school dedicated to the students, families, and members of the Peterson Park neighborhood. Solomon teachers and staff are committed to providing all students a positive, supportive, and safe school climate by supporting and empowering children to believe in themselves as they work to achieve academic success. Students are also supported socially and emotionally as they actively participate in the learning process. They feel safe to seek social and academic support from their peers, teachers, and the principal. Students in all grades are invited to join Student Council where they are encouraged, respected, and valued as they contribute student voice to choices that affects the student body.

Solomon students are recognized for demonstrating good citizenship and improved behavior via quarterly celebrations. Other strengths, accomplishments, and achievements are recognized throughout the school year with events such as a student and family Honor Roll Breakfast, 25 Books Reading Club celebration, and student attendance celebrations. Their participation in academic contests, science and history fairs, team sports, civic learning and engagements are shared with the community in the weekly Principal News Bulletin and school-sanctioned social media. Engaging classroom lessons and activities are also shared with families in the bulletin as well as through teacher created newsletters, websites, and blogs. Excitement and engagement between the students and staff are created through events such as Red Ribbon Week, Ernst & Young Day, and Field Day.

The Social Emotional Learning Team and a group of upper grade students identified a set of school-wide traits that make up a Solomon student and have called it "Cougar Core": teamwork, empathy, responsibility, and respect. Demonstrating these qualities is an expectation for all students, and school communications and assemblies are used to highlight when students and staff go above and beyond expectations for these traits. Events like Red Ribbon Week and Ernst & Young Day are used to explicitly model and practice these skills as well.

Within the Continuous Improvement Work Plan (CIWP) Team, increasing student voice by building more opportunities for students to share their personal voice and engage with all peers in meaningful ways has been identified as a priority. This is being accomplished by increasing the amount of extracurricular and intramural opportunities for students, having a representative student group assist in surveying peers and drafting a new dress code policy for the school, creating a student-staff school store, and training student docents to assist in leading school tours for prospective parents.

Solomon teachers and staff model respect, kindness, and collaborative environment through co-teaching, classroom partnerships, and everyday discussions with each other. Teachers volunteer for leadership committees, lead teacher roles, and other school improvement teams. The principal has an open door policy inviting all staff members to share their thoughts, concerns, and ideas for school improvement. The principal respects and values the staff of Solomon for their knowledge, their experiences, and their commitment to the students, the school, and the community. Teachers are recognized by the principal in weekly newsletters to the staff and to families, at staff meetings, and during morning announcements. There is a culture of respect and support among the teachers and staff as they work together and socialize in, as well as out, of the school setting.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Solomon believes in the importance of connecting with families and the community to create a positive and supportive environment for our students. Families are informed of students' academic achievements through quarterly teacher newsletters, teacher websites, and an online grade portal. Structured opportunities are built into the calendar on a regular basis to have the teachers and staff engage with parents face-to-face, such as a beginning of the year picnic and supply drop off, a Curriculum Night, twice-a-year parent-teacher conferences where parent attendance exceeds 98% regularly, monthly school tours hosted by the principal and assisted by student docents for current and prospective families, and monthly "Coffee with the

Principal" events to highlight the work being done in each grade level and offer opportunities for feedback and questions.

There are also opportunities for informal conversations with parents at dismissal time, and teachers are available to meet with families during the school day. Teachers with academic concerns will contact parents to discuss the concerns and offer strategies for parents to support so students have a school-to-home connection. The counselor also provides families with information on local community services for tutoring, language resources, and social-emotional support. The principal communicates with families through a weekly newsletter and posts on Twitter. Monthly calendars are sent home highlighting events, and the school website is the central site for all school information and pictures that capture the Solomon experience.

The backbone of volunteerism at Solomon is the Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO). Parent volunteers organize and run Solomon events such as our Welcome Back school picnic, Holiday Shoppe, Scholastic Book Fairs, Staff Appreciation Luncheon, Walk-Jog-Roll-a-thon, and International Night. The PTO actively solicits community members and businesses to donate goods as well as services to school events. Local produce markets donate bottles of water, fruits, and vegetables for our students and volunteers to enjoy after our Walk, Jog, Roll-a-thon fundraiser. The annual Soiree fundraiser, coordinated by the PTO, features dozens of local and Solomon family businesses that donate their services and goods to help raise funds for the school. Students demonstrate a sense of pride when they see their families volunteer and local businesses donating to school events.

Through PTO fundraising efforts, such as the Soiree, the Walk, Jog, Roll-a-thon, and the annual shoe drive, school-wide priorities are funded. Funded projects include a new school playground, new environmentally-friendly drinking fountains, and visual arts and dance enrichment programs programmed for all Solomon students during the course of the academic day.

3. Professional Development:

Professional growth and leadership development for teachers at Solomon are prioritized by the principal and essential for student success. Teachers actively seek and attend workshops, conferences, and other training programs relevant to improving their instructional practice. They are empowered with leadership roles, sharing strategies learned from internal and external professional development with the whole staff to improve and increase teachers' knowledge.

The focus of ongoing professional development encompasses the use of student data, instructional goals, and school improvement outcomes. Topics and areas of focus are jointly planned between the principal and the school's Instructional Leadership Team (ILT). The ILT uses school priorities and various data points to plan and implement cycles of inquiry during grade band meetings; cycles of inquiry include integrating peer feedback into all courses and improving the quality of student-facilitated questioning. Additionally, the Professional Personnel Leadership Committee (PPLC) studies and recommends curriculum and school culture needs, with feedback from all teachers. The diversity of our school requires professional development to be relevant to all learners and at times this will include the planning of multiple professional development topics during district Staff Improvement Days.

Teachers meet weekly in grade band teams (PreK to 2nd, 3rd to 5th, 6th to 8th). The goal of these meetings is to analyze student outcomes and to engage in professional learning aligned to the school's Continuous Improvement Work Plan (CIWP). Being a small school, when CIWP priorities require support outside of the school, teams of teachers partner with neighboring schools to further understanding of different instructional practices, such as balanced literacy structures and strategies. District-led literacy and math professional development sessions serve as a connection with other neighboring schools and provide opportunities for teachers to share new and innovative strategies that work in their classrooms each academic quarter. Additionally, teachers who seek out supplemental professional development outside of district trainings are financially supported by the school.

Similar to the teachers and staff, the principal engages in ongoing professional development with peers in

the district. In alignment with school-wide goals, the principal is participating in a PLC with peers this year around deepening balanced literacy practices, supported by classroom visits at sites around the city with teacher leaders and district leadership. The principal and staff have jointly presented work from Solomon at local professional development sessions to peers in the district, sharing strategies for building external partnerships with arts organizations and the alignment of assessment practices in the special education cluster program's Unique Learning Systems curriculum.

4. School Leadership:

The principal of the sole school is the sole administrator in the building, and as a result, distributed leadership is a practice valued and implemented. Teams are organized to support academic outcomes (ILT, PPLC, and MTSS Team), behavioral outcomes (Social and Emotional Learning Team, Attendance Team), community engagement (Parent-Teacher Organization), and school governance (Local School Council). Each team is transparent in sharing its learning and next steps, and each team is accountable to providing outcomes that are aligned to school needs identified in the CIWP, the district's school improvement plan. Quarterly, each teams shares with all stakeholders via the Local School Council how it is progressing towards the school's CIWP goals.

The principal posits that everyone in the building is a learner, adults included. Data analysis is a chance to be a student of Solomon students. Professional readings and book studies are integrated into staff development. Identifying experts in the building to lead professional learning is a priority, though the principal partners with the district to bring in experts from the field when necessary. Priorities for professional learning come about through group consensus and are identified in the school's CIWP. To be a learner, the principal believes that adults must be comfortable with levels of discomfort; as a result, building a school culture of trust, respect, and transparency between adults is a prerequisite to being ready to learn.

A data point that is used to measure the effectiveness of leadership at the school is the My Voice, My School survey created by the University of Chicago and administered across the district to all parents, staff, and students in grades 6-8. The 2016 results categorized Solomon as a "Well-Organized" school, the highest level of distinction for the survey. At the beginning of each year, teams review the survey results that are relevant to the priorities of that team, and next steps are planned to align the needs identified in the survey to the overall school goals. For example, in response to teacher responses about peer-to-peer classroom visits, the Instructional Leadership Team embedded peer observations in a continuous learning cycle to support both the goal of the cycle but also to facilitate more opportunities for research-based best practices. In this one example, peer observations supported the practice of helping teachers to facilitate higher quality student-led feedback sessions, thus increasing student voice in the school, a priority identified both in the school's CIWP and in the Danielson Framework for Teaching as distinguished practice.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The most significant factor in Solomon's sustained success as a community school is a strength-based approach to the entire educational process, from school-wide initiatives to daily staff-student interactions. Having a student community where 39 different languages are spoken at home and a special education cluster program that includes 59 students with a range of low-incidence disabilities can present challenges in terms of meeting the needs of such diversity. Yet, this diversity also provides immense opportunities for the staff and students to experience the wider world within the confines of a small, community elementary school.

Events celebrating our diversity are coordinated on an ongoing basis, led by staff, parents, students, and community members. The highlight event of the year is International Night, features a multi-generational, student-led fashion show and potluck featuring hundreds of dishes from around the world, made or donated by Solomon families. Befitting a community school, hundreds of people from the community attend and connect their neighbors. When studying Egyptian culture in a 6th grade Social Studies class, there are parents who bring in food from the Middle Eastern restaurants that they own to connect cuisine to the learning. It filters all the way down to the librarian and classroom teachers who stock their libraries with culturally diverse texts for both student enjoyment and literacy instruction for all students.

The broader community is also brought into Solomon through an array of partnerships that align to the school's school improvement goals. On Ernst & Young Day, teams of volunteers partner with cross-grade level student groups to demonstrate teamwork skills. Through the Constitutional Rights Foundation of Chicago, students learn how to contribute their voices to issues that matter at school and the broader community. With Commonwealth Edison, students use a hands-on approach to learn how energy consumption impacts the community.

In terms of the diversity of abilities across the school, hosting a PK-8th grade special education cluster program for students with low-incidence disabilities is an opportunity to model inclusive practices daily. The past two years has seen an expansion of structured inclusive practices, including a peer buddies program for upper grade students in the cluster and neighborhood programs. These peer buddies lead and learn from students with low-incidence disabilities through off-site Buddy Baseball and Special Olympics programs, as well as on-site volunteer activities facilitated by external partners from Ernst & Young. The peer buddies program was built into the master schedule this year with one hour of reverse inclusion weekly, where student leaders from the neighborhood program participate in Physical Education with a cluster classroom.

The proof that this approach is successful can be found not only in the high academic performance of Solomon students, but also in their responses to the yearly, district-administered My Voice, My School survey. In it, students in grades 6-8 rate student-teacher trust, feelings of safety both in and around school, and academic personalism as strengths of Solomon school.