

U.S. Department of Education
2023 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 Mrs. Patricia Bullard
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name PS 221 North Hills Elementary School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 57-40 Marathon Parkway
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Little Neck State NY Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 11362-2036

County Queens County

Telephone (718) 225-7029 Fax (718) 225-7030

Web site/URL https://www.ps221q.org E-mail pbullard@schools.nyc.gov

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.

(Principal's Signature) Date _____

Name of Superintendent* Mrs. Danielle Giunta E-mail dgiunta4@schools.nyc.gov
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name New York City Geographic District #26 Tel. (718) 631-6943

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.

(Superintendent's Signature) Date _____

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Ms Pearl Cheng
(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.

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

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, leave blank.*

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. 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, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2023 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.
3. The school configuration must include one or more of grades K-12. Schools located on the same campus (physical location and mailing address) must apply as an entire school (i.e. K-8; 6-12; K-12 school). Two (or more) schools located on separate campuses, must apply individually even if they have the same principal. A single school located on multiple campuses with one principal must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2018 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for at least the three years prior to September 2022.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 or 2022.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. The nominated school has, or is subject to, a nondiscrimination policy (provide either a link to the policy or submit a text of the policy), is committed to equal opportunity for all students and all staff consistent with applicable law and does not have any outstanding findings of unlawful discrimination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's nomination and/or rescind a school's award if unlawful discrimination is later discovered.

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.

The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's nomination and/or rescind a school's award if one of these eligibility requirements is later discovered to have not been met or otherwise been violated.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the current school year (2022-2023) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools. For charter schools: If a charter school is part of the public school system, information should be provided for the public school district. If a charter school is considered its own district or part of a charter district, the information provided should reflect that.)

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 24 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
3 Middle/Junior high schools
0 High schools
0 K-12 schools
- 27 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools. **Only include demographic data for the nominated school, not for the district.**)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located. If unsure, refer to NCES database for correct category: <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/> (Find your school and check “Locale”)

☒ Urban (city or town)
☐ Suburban
☐ Rural

3. Number of students in the school as of October 1, 2022 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school. Include all students enrolled, in-person, participating in a hybrid model, or online only. If online schooling or other COVID-19 school issues make this difficult to obtain, provide the most accurate and up-to-date information available:

Grade	# of Students
PreK	18
K	71
1	97
2	78
3	83
4	73
5	109
6	0
7	0
8	0
9	0
10	0
11	0
12 or higher	0
Total Students	529

*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 67 % Asian
 - 3 % Black or African American
 - 14 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 16 % White
 - 0 % 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 2021 - 2022 school year: 9%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain:

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, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	20
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	34
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	54
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021	579
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.09
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	9

6. Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):

Chinese, Korean, Spanish, Hindi, Bengali, Russian, Dari, Turkish

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 13 %
71 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 12 %

Total number students who qualify: 63

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP: 15 %
Total number of students served 78

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. All students receiving special education services with an IEP should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

<u>12</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>0</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Developmental Delay	<u>20</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>37</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>8</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Intellectual Disability	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness

9. Students receiving special education services with a 504: 0 %
Total number of students served: 2

10. Number of years the principal has been in the position at this school: 12

11. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	32
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	6
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	13
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	9

12. 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 17:1

13. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

Required Information	2021-2022	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018
Daily student attendance	94%	97%	96%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

14. **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 2022.

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%

15. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes X No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award. 2013

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

To provide a nurturing learning environment in which students are challenged to reach their academic potential through a rigorous standards-based curriculum. The members of our community are dedicated to developing and supporting each child's unique talents. Our focus is on the development of the whole child. The North Hills School is committed to instilling in each student a desire to learn, problem solve, think critically, and persevere through challenges. Social-emotional learning is integrated into all areas of school life and fosters collaboration, respect, inclusiveness and relationship-building.

17. Provide a URL link to the school's nondiscrimination policy.

<https://www.schools.nyc.gov/about-us/policies/non-discrimination-policy>

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

PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Within the metropolis of New York City, P.S. 221, a public elementary school, is nestled in the northeast corner of the borough of Queens. Our community is filled with involved, hard working families with diverse ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds. Generations of long-standing Little Neck residents have attended our school; newer families choose to live in our neighborhood because of our school. Our families highly value education. Within a caring and supportive environment, we provide wide-ranging opportunities for their children to attain knowledge, develop the skills needed to solve real-life problems, build on individual creative and unique abilities, and grow respect and responsibility .

Our school equally values academic progress and social-emotional growth and champions joy in learning. P.S. 221's academic programs provide students with rich, hands-on learning experiences which are differentiated to support and challenge students at multiple entry points. We believe in empowering our students to have a voice in their learning through active participation and decision-making. To ensure all students are encouraged and supported, we provide targeted Academic Intervention Services (AIS) which are monitored and revised based on student need. Our focus is on the whole child; along with academics we prioritize our children's physical and emotional well-being. Our staff is fully trained in Move-to-Improve, a program that enhances academic lessons with activities that get students moving, and Sanford Harmony, a program designed to strengthen communication and interpersonal skills. In addition to Sanford Harmony, we utilize the Culturally Responsive-Sustaining framework to ensure that we foster awareness and inclusivity, celebrate diversity, and affirm the multi-cultural background of our community.

Our school-wide focus on social-emotional growth over the past several years included leader and staff training through the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence. This training led to our school's use of the Mood Meter and RULER strategies to support our students' abilities in recognizing emotions and utilizing varied techniques to manage, express, and regulate them. To enhance learning across multiple areas, our classrooms and school provide programs in STEAM, chess, robotics, and visual and performing arts. We are strong believers that students thrive through exposure to many diverse, enriching experiences. Our school provides opportunities for students to participate in varied clubs and activities including the Tech Team, Green Team, Basketball Team, Student Council, Theater Guild, North Hills Voices, and Artify It.

Our school was a 2013 recipient of the National Blue Ribbon School Award. We have leveraged this recognition to uphold our commitment to excellence in education, acknowledging our role as a leader/model for other schools in providing highly effective pedagogy in a warm, nurturing environment.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

1a. Reading/English language arts curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

Our English language arts program focuses on providing our students with opportunities to read high interest, rigorous texts to develop a love of reading and writing. We incorporate a multi-modal and equitable approach to learning. We utilize Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMH) Into Reading, an evidence-based curriculum which includes all essential elements of literacy. This program has been valuable in meeting our needs through the ever-changing landscape of the past 3 years. Staff have received training and deliver instruction both in-person and virtually, which has made this engaging literacy program accessible to students in varied modes.

Robust data provides our teaching staff with the knowledge needed to differentiate and monitor student progress. Teachers gather information that drives instruction from formal and informal assessments in phonemic awareness, grammar and sentence structure, fluency, reading comprehension, vocabulary, and writing. Using this data, teachers offer guided instruction, small-group review, and classroom projects to monitor student understanding. Writing projects are assessed with rubrics that center on a consistent set of subskills, including organization, ideas and support, and conventions. In addition, our school utilizes beginning-of-the-year, middle-of-the-year, and end-of-the-year benchmarks to determine which standards and lessons require additional focus. Data is also used to group students appropriately and ensure that children can be challenged and enriched at multiple entry points.

Teachers consistently use a variety of materials and resources to deliver quality instruction. Students are introduced to high interest texts in standard and digital formats, spanning a variety of genres. The topics and stories explored are culturally relevant and inclusive of a diverse world. The writing component encourages students to embrace writing as a lifelong process, developing craftsmanship in the construction of informational, narrative, and claim-based texts. Embedded in all aspects of ELA instruction, students are engaged in rich discussion, and play a part in monitoring and assessing their own progress. Our teachers act as facilitators, encouraging and guiding their students to share unique perspectives and collaborate to build understanding. The program allows for repetition and review of pertinent skills to maintain and build on prior knowledge and accelerate growth in a logical progression. All elements of balanced literacy are linked in a sustainable and cohesive way.

1b. Mathematics curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

Our mathematics curriculum is designed to develop our students into fearless problem solvers, and introduce numerical, geometric, measurement, and algebraic concepts in an approachable, engaging, and equitable way. To sustain consistency and a science-based approach to learning, our school uses HMH Into Math. Over the last 3 years, teachers have accessed traditional and digital assessment and learning tools to pinpoint areas of proficiency, need, and challenge. This approach enables our students to grow as mathematicians.

Formative assessments are embedded into the HMH program with recommendations and strategies to support students. Benchmark assessments are offered at the beginning, middle, and end of the year. In addition, pre- and post- assessments are given within each module, which helps to drive and inform instruction. Informally, spiral reviews are offered throughout the program to ensure that children have maintained an understanding of previous concepts. With this data, teachers can utilize the many components provided, including enrichment, reteach, and tier-based support.

Curriculum is presented in a logical scope-and-sequence, which supports students in their development of a conceptual and procedural understanding of mathematical skills. A large focus of the curriculum includes problem solving, which ensures that students are able to take what they have learned and apply it to real-world situations. Through relatable learning activities, students become motivated to see themselves as “math doers” and problem solvers, stressing the process beyond just the product. Lessons are built around

mathematical discourse, risk-taking, routines, and productive perseverance where students can monitor their own growth.

Our teachers have been proactive in monitoring any learning loss due to our changing environment in the last few years. This program offers articles, webinars, and resources to support them and the needs of their students. Additionally, our staff is encouraged to network within and across grades and share useful tools and resources to support our children. We are able to pinpoint proficiency and areas of focus to offer targeted differentiation strategies to meet the needs of the whole child.

1c. Science curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

Since 2018, our school has utilized Amplify Science, a program that challenges students to move beyond rote memorization of concepts and to investigate science through hands-on, relevant, active engagement. This approach teaches our students to think like scientists and engineers to explore Earth systems, life sciences, physical sciences, engineering technology, and scientific applications.

Amplify Science is a multifaceted program incorporating many elements to teach science in a rigorous, engaging way through asking questions, defining problems, developing and using models, planning and carrying out investigations, and analyzing and interpreting data. It also utilizes mathematics and computational thinking, engaging in argument from evidence, and obtaining, evaluating, and communicating information. Content-rich discussions, review of relevant terminology, hands-on exploration, digital tools, and the use of captivating, informative literature within science lessons support the attainment of skills and knowledge. Our teachers supplement the program with exciting educational opportunities, including field trips to the Queens County Farm and in-school assemblies such as Earth Dome.

Teachers monitor students throughout the units of study. Pre- and post- unit assessments are designed to provide individualized information about student understanding. Students are assessed on their ability to take what they have learned to create, test, and evaluate hypotheses, and reflect on the outcome of their experiments. Amplify enables students to grow and learn through engagement in real-world problems, collaboration, and investigation of scientific phenomena.

1d. Social studies/history/civic learning curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

Our social studies program is designed for students to make sense of the world in which they live through explorations of relevant historical concepts. These goals are achieved through the use of Passport to Social Studies and the Civics for All initiative. In combination, these programs provide students with the opportunity to make meaningful connections.

In Passport to Social Studies, students explore primary resources and ideas through discussion and group work, and they analyze historical events through various points of view. Classes are engaged in understanding important content and challenged to think like historians, gather evidence, review perspectives, examine decision-making, and research and analyze history. Instead of traditional tests, students are routinely assessed on their ability to think critically about social studies concepts, including geography, history, government, civics, and relevant issues in their local and global communities. Moving beyond fact memorization, students are asked to explore, form ideas, and complete projects based on important concepts. Materials and activities are scaffolded to ensure multiple entry points for all learners and incorporate various viewpoints on current and historical topics.

Our Civics for All initiative gives students the tools and opportunities to grow into informed, active global citizens. A goal is for students to become engaged community members who can elevate their voices to make the world better. This program empowers students through making connections between history, current events, and democratic structures. Students in our school have participated in varied voting opportunities including selecting our student council members, choosing school-wide spirit days, and determining how funds allocated to the school should be spent. Unique to this year, our students participated in a participatory budgeting opportunity by voting for new playground equipment. This approach to learning is hands-on and minds-on, encouraging even our youngest students to become critical thinkers.

Both Passport to Social Studies and Civics for All are supplemented with enriching experiences. Teachers engage students in appealing, enjoyable read-alouds to reinforce the concepts taught, and students attend events to support their learning including field trips to historical sites and assemblies, such as trips to The Bowne House and the in-school Eastern Woodlands Native American Program. Through these enriching extensions, students can see that history and civics is embedded in many aspects of learning and life.

1e. For schools that serve grades 7-12:

1f. For schools that offer preschool for three- and/or four-year old students:

At P.S. 221, we take pride in providing a top-quality early childhood program designed with our students at its center. Our school invests time and resources to ensure that our environment and instructional supports meet the highest standards. Our staff is continually trained in research-based initiatives that promote the development of cognitive and social-emotional skills and the creation of a strong foundation for learning and future success.

Within the context of early childhood education and through the framework of the New York City Department of Education units of study, our children are encouraged and supported in exploring the basic concepts of mathematics, science, civics, literacy, art, and social-emotional learning. Through hands-on interactive experiences in resource-filled learning centers, children take an active role in choosing their level of rigor in various choice time activities. Our teacher-para team collaborate to provide multiple entry points and scaffolds to support student engagement.

In school year 2021-2022 we were chosen to implement a 3K program, as an addition to our well-established Pre-K early childhood program. Both classes are guided by the principles that all children are capable of learning and develop at different rates. Our programs provide an age-appropriate, inviting introduction to school life, classroom routines, and cultivating friendships, along with launching learning in content areas which lays the groundwork for achievement through the grades. At the core of 3K and Pre-K is our commitment to encouraging and supporting curiosity, wonder, and exploration.

One of the cornerstones of early childhood education is fostering a nurturing and caring environment for all students. Within our colorful, center-filled classrooms, children are playing, creating, talking, sharing, singing, and moving. We value the uniqueness of each child, responding to individual needs and celebrating every milestone. By providing a safe environment where children are inspired to take risks and try new things, we are developing a sense of agency and readiness. A positive beginning to our children's educational career is essential for developing lifelong learners.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

2a. Arts (visual and/or performing)

P.S. 221 prioritizes teaching the whole child, and this includes visual and performing arts education for all students. Staff work together to infuse the arts into everyday learning in ways that place equity and social emotional learning at the forefront. Arts programs consist of multidisciplinary, culturally centered, and historically enriched lessons, performance opportunities, and artistic and musical experiences which embrace students' various learning styles. Arts lessons spiral and reinforce ideas and concepts, building upon prior years' experiences, and include art history and creative works in the styles of famous artists. Our children have also been involved in programs like Artworks and a residency with the Queens Museum of Art. Each program began in the classroom with a focus on various styles of art and concluded with school trips to The Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Queens Museum. Finally, the visual arts have extended into our community through the art-centered student group Artify It and our enjoyable Family Art Night.

Performing arts add further enrichment to our curriculum. Student performances occur regularly, including a dance festival, recorder concert, holiday concert, and the culminating performance of our partnership with Dancing Classrooms. Our school has also featured a talent show and student-run musical. Our student playwrights have created scripts, which are later performed by our acting team, Theater Guild, and singing troupe, North Hills Voices.

We have also brought our talents into the community by having our students perform at nursing homes and Barnes and Noble Night. Additionally, we engaged in a partnership with the community program Deepdale Cares and collaborated on a variety of projects, including designing and creating artwork and recycling and repurposing everyday objects. Our school climate enables budding artists and performers to flourish, both within the school building and through community outreach.

2b. Physical education/health/nutrition

Our Physical Education (PE) program is led by the dynamic combination of our licensed physical education teacher and our adapted physical education teacher. Our inclusive curriculum is developed around the NYC Scope and Sequence and aligns with national PE standards. Using an interdisciplinary approach helps us to create lessons that incorporate nutrition, health, math, science and technology.

We pride ourselves on making students self-aware, socially aware, and wise decision-makers while developing essential skills. Locomotor skills are developed with a focus on health and skill-related fitness. Students participate yearly in the NYC Fitnessgram, a physical fitness assessment designed to provide students with perspective on their health status. We use the results to set performance goals and create and modify training programs. Students' manipulation skills are honed with the use of a variety of sports and skills equipment. Our students have access to a wide range of resources including a track, basketball and tennis courts, and a turf field to improve physical and overall health. Safety and management are implemented through lessons on respect, boundaries, personal space. Body control and team building is established through the routine practice of good sportsmanship and teamwork. Our PE program is designed to equip students with foundational movement skills and foster a lifelong love of physical activity. Our families are engaged through a monthly newsletter, participation in Family Fitness Night, and by cheering on our basketball team, the North Hill Hurricanes.

2c. Foreign language(s), if offered (if not offered, leave blank)

2d. Technology/library/media

Our students work on a variety of topics using technology, a powerful and necessary learning tool. Students from kindergarten through fifth grade explore different computer science and word processing activities throughout the school year.

All grade levels are given the opportunity to participate in coding using Code.org and Scratch. Our lower grade students use Code.org to create sequences and algorithms, complete mazes, and simplify code using loops. Students in grades three to five build on these skills through work with loops, conditionals, functions, sprites, and events. Additionally, students also put their coding skills in action by creating their own games and animations with Scratch and Scratch Jr. In kindergarten through second grade, students work with Scratch Jr. to create scenes with moving sprite characters, while upper grade students design their own versions of popular games. Furthermore, they also develop interactive dialogues by combining their coding knowledge with their English Language Arts studies. These activities are an engaging way to introduce coding concepts in a manner which links computer science activities to their classroom work. For those students who have a keen interest in technology and computer science, our tech team members dive deeper into robotics. Students build and code a Lego EV3 robot to complete various missions.

Our students also work with Microsoft Office's Word and PowerPoint to produce and publish their writing.

They research various topics in conjunction with the lessons they are studying in class and synthesize their findings into presentations using these programs, such as creating travel brochures, and also design their own websites as part of project work. Through the curriculum and co-curricular activities, critical thinking skills, problem solving, programming concepts, and creativity are developed and fostered. Our computer science program helps our students attain the skills needed for life in the 21st century.

2e. Any other interesting or innovative curriculum programs you would like to share

At our school, learning is not limited to the major academic disciplines. Our school routinely challenges and engages our students through innovative curriculum programs and real-world problem solving.

We have taken great strides in work with STEAM and Civics for All. Through STEAM, our teachers have provided students with opportunities to explore using a hands-on approach which utilizes the Engineering Design Process. Staff members have been trained to present students with STEAM challenges that enhance their skills in problem solving. Students have worked collaboratively to explore rigorous, engaging STEAM challenges, such as the marshmallow tower structure. Additionally, Civics for All, facilitated by our school Civics Team, seeks to form our students into active, responsible citizens in our school and community. The Civics Team has supplied each classroom with engaging literature featuring diverse perspectives and experiences, reflective of significant historical and current events. Beyond the classroom, our Civics Team also strives to give students an opportunity to have their voices be heard. Student representatives have shared their viewpoints during a Soapbox Challenge function at the New York Historical Society, a participatory budgeting student-led assembly, and through collaboration with school clubs including our Green Team and Student Council.

Finally, through instruction and participation in special programming like robotics and chess, students are able to develop and demonstrate their varied strengths through multiple modalities. Such programs remind our students that learning occurs by engaging in many experiences, and collaboration and teamwork with peers plays an important role in learning.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

Through rich data collection and a comprehensive understanding of our children's social-emotional needs and learning styles, P.S. 221 teachers are able to identify and provide support to students performing below grade level.

Before students are given specific interventions, teachers review formal and informal data. At the start of a school year, teachers can examine each student's most current guided reading level, scores on state exams and screeners, and acquire feedback from previous teachers. Benchmark assessments are given at the beginning, middle, and end of the year to assess student growth, including guided reading levels, HMH reading and math tests, and iReady. Informally, teachers gather observational data through one-on-one academic conferences and small group instructional sessions. Teachers get to know students well through conversations and interactions, observations of their work style, and analyzing their performance on formal and informal assessments. With insights and data, they routinely monitor who is not meeting grade level standards.

Once a child has been identified as needing additional support, classroom interventions are offered. These interventions may include small group instruction, peer partners, the use of tactile manipulatives to better understand concepts, adapted tests which are shortened or presented in a concise format, assistive technology, flexible seating, a calming corner, and the use of frequent student breaks. Students who consistently show difficulty in meeting grade level standards are recommended for Academic Intervention Services (AIS) which consists of instruction with a teacher outside the classroom. Through the process, classroom teachers continually communicate with families and the AIS provider to monitor progress.

If there is limited progress after initial interventions and modifications to interventions, families may request

an academic evaluation or it may be recommended by the principal. If students require special education services, they are given an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), which addresses their strengths and needs, and provides a plan of supports and services. A student's present level of performance and measurable goals are included in the IEP.

Through extensive data collection, including progress monitoring, along with creating a network of communication between school and home, our teachers work diligently to ensure that students who are not meeting grade level standards make progress. It is every teacher's goal to meet children where they are to support their achievement and success. High expectations, along with structures and supports, ensure that all students are on a path to college and career readiness.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

We recognize that all children have gifts that merit opportunities beyond the scope of our curriculum. Data collection and student observation enable our teachers to meet the needs of our advanced students who require enrichment.

All teachers use benchmark assessments and the previous year's data to determine which students enter into their classrooms with a deeper understanding of the core curriculum. There are various tools and methods employed by teachers to appropriately engage these students. Primarily, our HMH program offers extensions of the core content for those with preliminary mastery of a skill. Each HMH math lesson contains enrichment extensions to the lessons provided, which ask participants to apply their knowledge of computation to a more multifaceted, problem-solving context. Similar modifications are applied to our reading curriculum, through which teachers may ask students to expand upon topics with supplemental research or higher level texts. Additionally, our iReady program assigns individualized lessons tailored to each student on the basis of a diagnostic exam. Those who test above grade level are given practice sessions that correspond to their advanced understanding. Finally, teachers can tailor instruction that highlights student strengths in many ways, such as student-led lessons and creative learning projects. Classrooms and our wider school community also incorporate original student jobs, like school meteorologists for daily weather announcements.

Further, our school offers many opportunities to students who thrive when being challenged. Our Student Council and Green Team enable students to engage in noteworthy community service projects and school activities, utilizing their skills in reading, writing, public speaking, and social outreach. P.S. 221's strongest writers have been tasked with creating original scripts for their classmates to perform. Our basketball team provides enrichment opportunities for our young athletes, and our ambitious computer experts rise to new heights through their involvement in our Tech Team. P.S. 221 student life gives students the chance to further develop their natural talents in varied areas.

3c. Students with disabilities:

To support students with disabilities, P.S. 221 uses a variety of instructional strategies, interventions, and accommodations to meet individual student needs. In the area of instruction, teachers utilize direct, explicit instruction of skills and strategies, in both the whole group and small group settings. Teachers model skills, guide students, and provide multiple examples to practice skills before students work independently. Multiple entry points are presented into learning activities throughout the day. In addition, instruction is scaffolded to meet student needs. Many supports are utilized across subjects areas to teach vocabulary, math, and literacy concepts, including visuals, realia, gestures, and graphic organizers.

Research based, targeted interventions are also employed to reach individual needs. In order to target decoding skills the following interventions are used: Sound Sensible, SPIRE, Foundations, and AMIRA. To support students with reading fluency, students engage in repeated reading of passages, echo reading, modeling of fluent reading, and timed independent reading passages. To target comprehension, direct explicit instruction of skills and strategies is used. To help build math fluency, the Great Leaps program is utilized.

Students with disabilities complete the following school wide assessments: iReady, running records, Acadience, and the NYS tests. In reading, students are progress monitored either every week or every other week using the Acadience progress monitoring probes. In math, students are assessed to determine if concepts and skills have been mastered. These consistent check-ins ensure students are making progress towards their IEP goals. Testing accommodations are utilized on classroom tests and statewide assessments to support individual student needs, and to ensure access.

3d. English Language Learners:

Our plan for Multilingual Learners (ML)/English Language Learners (ELL) focuses on the development of critical thinking and comprehension skills. Students in kindergarten-grade 5 are grouped in two ways: heterogeneously by grade level, and homogeneously according to their proficiency level by grade. Our ENL teachers meet regularly with classroom teachers to plan and design content-based instruction centered on rich vocabulary, speaking, reading, writing, and listening. They activate prior knowledge, teach language structures, and build background knowledge, among other supports, to promote understanding and learning.

Materials such as Ready-Set-Go New Comers is used with Entering/Emerging ML/ELL as well as varied activities introducing letters-sound correlations, colors, shapes, letters and numbers, and rhyming words. Language Power is a program used for all ML/ELL which provides highly differentiated and rich instruction. Our school also uses National Geographic Panorama K – 5 for ML/ELL. This program offers rich fiction and non-fiction reading through the lens of social studies and science, along with academic vocabulary. Response to Intervention (RTI), provides additional academic support to ML/ELL who continue to struggle with comprehension and fluency at two plus years.

There are numerous assessments given throughout the school year. ML/ELL take a yearly New York State English as a Second Language Test (NYSESLAT). This test determines the students' English language proficiency and drives the type of instruction the students will receive during the school year. The iReady screener is given to grades 3-5 in reading and math three times a year; for kindergarten-grade 2, the Acadience screener is given for reading and the iReady screener for math three times per year. Data from these screeners identifies students struggling in areas in reading and math and provides next steps for instruction. Additionally, running records are used by all grades for reading level assessments.

Our focus is on developing our students' language skills: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Utilizing many strategies in the classroom, teachers use interesting grade-appropriate materials that emphasize content-rich vocabulary and leverage flexible grouping with peers to provide access to academic content. Scaffolding, visual supports, modeling language, digital resources, interactive reading, close reading, and total physical response (TPR) are incorporated into classroom instruction to support content comprehension and language learning.

3e. Other populations, if a special program or intervention is offered:

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

P.S. 221 is a warm, inviting, nurturing community dedicated to student engagement. The staff is deeply committed to fostering each child's academic, social, and emotional growth.

Our curriculum and academic focus is designed to keep students invested at all entry points. In our classrooms, students are exposed to engaging literature, primary sources, practical mathematical word problems, diverse historical perspectives, hands-on experimentation, and ample opportunities to employ technology. Children are taught to research, question, hypothesize, refine their thinking, and reflect on the process of learning just as much as the final product. Group work is routinely built into lessons, allowing students to learn from their peers and justify their thinking. Students who require accommodations are offered multi-sensory tools, including manipulatives, trackers, and assistive technology. Through all of these mediums, teachers consistently keep students engaged in learning.

While it is essential to keep students invested in learning, it is also important to develop each child's social skills. Beyond academic classroom discussion, children also experience socialization and collaboration within our community. We offer enjoyable school social events, like a Halloween Dance, Fall Festival, fifth grade yearbook signing party, school-wide assemblies, basketball games, theater productions, and classroom celebrations. These delightful functions help our students meet with peers inside and outside of an academic setting to form new friendships and connections.

At P.S. 221, rigorous academics and social opportunities are facilitated through our committed focus on social-emotional learning (SEL). All students are familiarized with the SEL tool The Mood Meter, through which they have learned to associate their emotions with color-coded quadrants. This tool enables students to define and communicate their feelings in a child-friendly, attainable way. Our school also employs the Sanford Harmony curriculum, which includes partner work, role play, and frequent discussion. Students learn to reflect on their emotions, empathize with others, resolve conflicts effectively, and consider why we all think, feel, and act the way we do.

As a school community, we also help our students build college and career readiness. Teachers offer expansive opportunities to foster independent thinking and action in the classroom. Our Student Council urges officers and students to take initiative and make their own decisions regarding who is elected, which fund raisers and spirit days to choose, and how to allocate school funds. Additionally, students are encouraged to identify and hone their distinct talents and skills. Many classrooms employ particular monitors and jobs, and our school offers a variety of clubs and activities. These initiatives enable our school to build strong, confident, self-aware citizens who will surely be productive members of society.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

P.S. 221 is dedicated to fostering strong relationships between school and home. Our 221 families have volunteered their time and talents to create a feeling of camaraderie in our school, and work collaboratively with our staff to extend that fellowship with community outreach.

Staff members make multiple efforts to involve families in our school culture. At the classroom level, teacher communication with families is ongoing and readily accessible. Each teacher offers families a Google Classroom with relevant classroom materials and assignments. Additionally, families receive monthly newsletters for each grade and are invited to visit student classrooms for special events and Family Fridays.

Our principal and assistant principal host Town Hall meetings and Coffee and Conversation to provide a forum for the sharing of information and the exchange of ideas. They also attend monthly Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings to update our parents and caregivers on school news and happenings. Our parent coordinator serves as a liaison between school and home by routinely communicating with families,

scheduling school programming, and offering parent workshops.

Parent volunteers are invited to share their time and talents in many ways, including running our school lending library, offering translation, sharing their professions on Career Day, and creating artwork to beautify our building. Our parents greatly contribute to the nurturing and rich climate of our school. We have an active, enthusiastic PTA led by dedicated, caring volunteers. Our PTA proposes and funds programming to enrich our students' experiences, including assemblies, robotics, ballroom dancing, and evening functions like our Fall Festival and author night.

Our parents, students, and families consistently take the initiative to become actively involved in our local community. Noteworthy community outreach is done through the dedicated work of our Student Council (S.C.). Our S.C. has organized a food drive for City Harvest and our February Souper Bowl, a school-wide collection of soup cans to donate to Common Point Food Pantry in Little Neck. The S.C. has also made donations to our Assemblyman's office through a Holiday Toy Drive and Valentines for Vets. Members of our school community have also represented P.S. 221 at local functions, including the Little Neck Memorial Day Parade and Breast Cancer Walks. Finally, our school participated in the Soapbox Challenge, a Civics for All event, at the New York Historical Society featuring students from around the city. Our student representative made a speech about air pollution, and met with our NYC chancellor and students from all five boroughs. Our students participate in local elected officials' art and writing contests, garnering honorable mentions and awards. P.S. 221 is a caring network of warmhearted, creative individuals who work diligently to support our school and community at large.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Our teachers and staff are dedicated, experienced professionals whose expertise and knowledge is highly valued. Many initiatives have been put into place to enable the professional growth of our educators within our nurturing, supportive environment.

The purpose of professional development is to enrich the knowledge and pedagogical practice of our staff through impactful learning experiences. Our teachers attend and participate in professional learning on reading, phonics instruction, math, science, social studies, and behavior strategies. In addition to attending sessions, our teachers have also facilitated professional learning, sharing their knowledge and practices with other educators. Moreover, the varied learning opportunities grant our teachers the time to plan their curriculum, and obtain and use resources that will help them best educate their students. Representatives from our reading and math HMH programs have routinely been invited to meet with teachers, both virtually and in-person. Administration has surveyed teachers on topics of interest and needs, ensuring that all staff members have the knowledge and tools necessary to accelerate learning. To further support our teachers' professional development, training on technology and resources, including classroom Promethean boards and iReady are also provided. These professional development opportunities have allowed our educators to effectively present instruction, and access helpful data and instructional aids. Teachers are also provided with blocks of time to meet within and across grade teams to share promising practices and discuss lessons, strategies, and student performance.

Professional development is not limited to core curriculum programs. We have had numerous opportunities to train our teachers and staff in social-emotional learning (SEL) instruction through Sanford Harmony, the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, and the Hance Family Foundation. These initiatives have ensured that our team has the tools to best meet the needs of our students so they thrive emotionally and academically. Additionally, the well-being of our staff is prioritized through participation in team-building initiatives and social events to promote unity and self-care.

4. School Leadership:

The philosophy of our principal is that all children are capable of learning and success through effective, engaging teaching in a nurturing, child-centered environment. Our school administration, principal and assistant principal, believes in shared leadership thus empowering teachers, students, and our community to be active participants in decision-making. They have an unwavering commitment to student well-being,

growth, and achievement. Demonstrating professionalism, empathy, and consistency, they are strong facilitators of progress and collaboration for our staff, students, and families.

Our principal and assistant principal have aligned goals to create a strong learning community focused on the emotional and academic needs of all students. The school's priorities are articulated and shared through clear, effective communication, leveraging strong community ties. Leaders and teaching staff work collaboratively to analyze and use student data to monitor progress and enhance academic achievement. We also employ the use of SEL data and teacher feedback to track the emotional needs of our students to ensure that they have a healthy foundation on which to grow. These goals are met through a hands-on approach as our administrators unceasingly promote teamwork, develop strategic plans, and support teachers in accelerating learning for all children.

Support from our leaders paves the way for members of our community to be active participants in our school. Teachers are encouraged to receive leadership training in curriculum programming and educational initiatives, and serve as school facilitators to share their areas of expertise. Likewise, students are motivated to use their voices and share their ideas. Family members are invited to become involved in our PTA and school functions. The open-door policy of our administration encourages staff, students, and parents to share ideas and concerns freely. Our school leaders have established a climate that welcomes input and feedback from stakeholders who are comfortable sharing their thoughts and insights.

The administrative team at P.S. 221Q is actively engaged with our school community. Each day, our principal and assistant principal greet students as they enter and exit the building, and through daily morning announcements which are broadcasted to the school. During these announcements, they share announcing with our students by having them showcase what they have learned, inform our community of events, and lead the school in the Pledge of Allegiance. Our leaders know our children well; they are aware of their academic needs, but, more importantly, it is a priority for them to know them well as individuals and enable every child to feel safe, seen, heard, and valued.

Our leadership team is committed to a culture of continuous learning and growth. Our principal and assistant principal consistently use current research and relevant data to analyze performance, identify trends, and implement actions to improve our practices. They seek out resources from within our school building and our local and global communities, routinely pursuing the best ways to empower our teachers, challenge our students, strive for academic excellence, and elevate SEL.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

We recognize that students and families come from rich, diverse backgrounds, and it is of the utmost importance that everyone who walks through our doors feels seen, valued, heard, and respected. Thus, our school has taken several steps to ensure that culturally responsive teaching and learning are fostered.

Classroom and community efforts affirm that our school is culturally responsive to students from diverse ethnic backgrounds, abilities, and gender identities. Our primary focus is to ensure all families are able to communicate comfortably with teachers and staff members. To meet this end, we utilize translators, including staff and family members from within our community, and offer school correspondence in multiple languages. Beyond communication, we seek to celebrate the many backgrounds of our students and their families. Our school hosts Multicultural Day and an International Food Fair, during which children and community members wear clothing, share food, and present facts and information on their cultural heritage. We have also had a parade highlighting the different cultures in our building. These efforts extend through school assemblies and performances showcasing holidays, customs, and artistic styles from around the world. During the pandemic, a virtual holiday review was produced, through which many of our students recorded presentations on the holidays celebrated by their families. With all of these functions, we strive to celebrate the rich diversity of our school community.

Beyond school functions, each classroom is equipped with the tools to support culturally responsive teaching and access to learning. Over the past several years, our classroom libraries have been enriched with books reflecting the ethnic backgrounds and differing abilities of our students. Through our Civics for All

curriculum, teachers have received new literature which celebrates multiculturalism, teaches students about important figures in history, and showcases diverse historical perspectives. Children are encouraged to think critically about their unique backgrounds and contemplate how it impacts their view of current events and the world. Our classrooms embrace the unique qualities students bring into our learning environments and approach differences with open mindedness and sensitivity. We encourage communication of ideas in a respectful manner that allows for discussions revolving around different important topics. We honor, respect, and celebrate children and families from all races, cultures, learning styles, and gender identities.

Through a warm, welcoming, open climate, P.S. 221 enables students to show empathy, respect differences, and think critically about significant social issues from multiple perspectives. Our students are valued, seen, and celebrated in our building. Our goal is to empower children from all families, backgrounds, and walks of life to become lifelong learners in an affirming, challenging, and culturally responsive environment.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE

There have been many paths that have led our school to excellence. While we have focused on rigorous academics and meaningful learning opportunities, our most powerful practice has been to prioritize a safe, supportive environment for our school community, including students, staff, and families. The best way to lay a foundation for success is to ensure that all members of our community feel nurtured, valued, safe and capable.

Significant efforts are made regularly to ensure that our students feel comfortable in our environment. Our school-wide focus on SEL has reinforced the value of their feelings and helped even our youngest children express their emotions. Additionally, students are encouraged to share their thoughts and opinions. Their ideas are embraced, both in classroom projects and school-wide initiatives, such as school spirit days and charity outreach projects.

Additionally, our staff members are able to flourish in a supportive environment. At the onset of each school year, our staff devises a charter stressing the values we seek to reinforce school-wide. The pillars that we have established include feeling safe, respected, valued, inspired, and supported. In collaboratively devising the charter and working to live by it, we establish a school climate that enables us to thrive and productively work as a team.

Further, our principal, assistant principal, and staff strives to make our school families feel welcome and valued. Regular communication between staff and school families ensures that we address their questions and concerns, and work as partners in their child's education and social-emotional growth. Additionally, we routinely invite parents into our school for functions, parent workshops, classroom activities, and PTA meetings. Each child's family is embraced as a significant part of our culture.

Our supportive environment has helped us to overcome challenges, particularly during the pandemic. When our educational system saw major shifts, P.S. 221 ensured that everyone was taken care of. Due to the dedication and creativity of our staff, we were able to maintain routines and collaborative events like we would in ordinary circumstances. When learning was limited to online instruction, teachers arranged live sessions so that children could see one another again. Our parent coordinator planned Find-A-Friend Fridays as a way for the children to see and engage with one another. Our principal and assistant principal posted daily morning messages in every Google Classroom. We provided entertaining videos, including a virtual talent show and staff greeting collage to remind our families and students that we are strong together and will always take care of one another. This continued dedication helped to make the shift back to school seamless and uplifting. The social emotional health of our staff, families, and students are always a top priority, and this enables us to consistently thrive in all academic endeavors.