

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

Official School Name PS 9 Sarah Anderson Elementary School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 100 W 84th Street
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City New York State NY Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 10024-4604

County New York

Telephone (212) 678-2812 Fax (212) 873-4681

Web site/URL https://ps9.org E-mail ssaunde2@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* Mr. Kamar Samuels E-mail ksamuels@schools.nyc.gov
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name NYC Geographic District # 3 – Manhattan Tel. (212) 678-5857

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 Mr. Lucas Liu
(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):
- 19 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 10 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 0 High schools
 - 1 K-12 schools
- 30 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	87
1	82
2	74
3	71
4	83
5	68
6	0
7	0
8	0
9	0
10	0
11	0
12 or higher	0
Total Students	483

*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):
- 0.5 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 8 % Asian
 - 3 % Black or African American
 - 13 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0.5 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 58 % White
 - 17 % 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: 4%

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	15
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	7
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	22
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021	566
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.04
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	4

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

Albanian, Arabic, Bulgarian, Chinese, French, Georgian, German, Hebrew, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, Marathi, Malayalam, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Serbo-Croatian, Spanish, Swedish, Tamil, Turkish

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 3 %
15 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 18 %

Total number students who qualify: 87

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP: 17 %
Total number of students served 82

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>4</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>10</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Developmental Delay	<u>33</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>3</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>31</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Intellectual Disability	<u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness

9. Students receiving special education services with a 504: 0 %
Total number of students served: 1

10. Number of years the principal has been in the position at this school: 1

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.	28
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	12
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	12
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	4

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%	96%	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 ☐ No ☒

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

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

Every child in PS9 will succeed! At the heart of our professional community is the belief that every child can succeed, and a commitment to empowering learners with knowledge, confidence and a growth mindset so that they go forward with emotional fortitude and become successful members of the broader community.

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

PS9 is located on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. We are a community school, serving the students in our geographic zone. Our student population is socioeconomically diverse including families living in permanent housing, low-income housing as well as families who are doubled up or living in shelters. Twenty-five languages are spoken by families and 12 languages are spoken by staff. We embrace and celebrate our cultural diversity; 10 percent of our students were born outside of the United States. We believe that students should be proud of their heritage and celebrate this annually via a school wide International Night.

Everything that we do as a school community is in service of creating a safe and engaging learning environment for all. Collectively, we believe that if students, staff, and parents work together to improve learning experiences for all students, and we continually develop the instructional expertise of our teachers, all students will learn in deeper and more meaningful ways. We have enthusiastically embraced the challenge of differentiation and rigor for all of our students. Our Assistant Teacher (AT) program is in service of this idea. Each classroom has a dedicated AT who is currently pursuing a career in education. They are trained by our staff to support students, socially and academically.

At PS9, we are focused on engaging and motivating students. We provide students with a positive learning environment that supports the holistic development of every student academically, socially, and emotionally. We provide our students with the tools necessary to achieve their future educational and professional goals. In the classroom, we incorporate social-emotional themes throughout the curriculum. For example, during reading, we discuss the decisions that characters make, how a character's thoughts/behaviors convey kindness or respect, etc. Additionally, a growth mindset is modeled and practiced, underscoring the importance of perseverance, understanding, and patience towards oneself and others. Students are encouraged to try their best, know that mistakes happen, and to use mistakes as learning opportunities to help their overall growth. We recognize the importance of the mind-body connection by utilizing the Move-to-Improve program multiple times throughout the school day. Through purposeful movement as a class, students benefit from increased focus, improved energy, and reduced feelings of stress.

We have utilized Devereux Student Strengths Assessment (DESSA), a social-emotional screener, that has enabled us to identify and support specific student strengths and areas in need of improvement. From the DESSA screener data, PS9's social worker and guidance counselor created short-term groups to enhance and build students' skills. We are incorporating Yale's RULER curriculum for supporting students' ability to recognize, understand, label, express and regulate emotions. With consistent use of the RULER curriculum, we expect that students will be better able to become more self-aware and further develop their ability to self-regulate. PS9 upholds the importance of acknowledging our community's core values of kindness, gratitude, friendship, perseverance, and courage through books, quotes, poems, and/or songs. Each core value is highlighted at different points throughout the year with assemblies, bulletin boards, school-wide activities, and/or posters to reinforce how each student embodies these values both inside and outside of school.

At PS9, our staff members are supported through professional learning opportunities, such as Ackerman Institute's trainings on bias, gender inclusivity, and gender awareness and PS9's equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) committee that provides a framework for teachers to identify their own biases, incorporate multiple perspectives particularly when teaching about historical events, and include narratives of marginalized individuals to enhance students' understanding of people/cultures that are both similar and different to themselves. As a community, we have provided families and staff with learning opportunities from experts in the field on social emotional topics such as supporting positive behavior and emotion regulation with students.

At PS9, we recognize the true importance of blending social-emotional learning and support into all aspects of the school environment, as we seek to cultivate each student's ability to be a thoughtful, caring, and resilient member of our world.

Within every subject area, our curriculum is built around our commitment to ensure that students develop higher-order thinking skills. Lessons are delivered via the workshop model. We deepen student engagement by providing opportunities for authentic questioning and discussion, using Hess' Depth of Knowledge (DOK) and Bloom's Taxonomy as guides. While this can be seen specifically in our implementation of "talk moves" and "accountable talk," it pervades every facet of our school. Students are asked consistently across all subject areas to self-assess using standards-based success criteria (both process and product facing), learning targets, teacher and student made checklists, and peer feedback. This is developed progressively from kindergarten to grade 5 and builds continuity across and between grade-levels. The purpose of this work is to drive performance, but more importantly, it ensures that students know where they are within each standard and assignment as well as the expectations of next-steps. Students benefit from frequent and actionable feedback, ensuring their engagement, progress, and self-efficacy.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

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

The process used at PS9 in developing an ELA curriculum congruous with the standards has been ongoing and deliberate. We do not follow one curriculum because no one curriculum met the needs of our diverse learners. Instead, as a school with high teacher retention and an administration who believes in distributive leadership, we have been able to build our own curriculum.

Our approach to teaching reading, centers around the five pillars of early literacy and reading instruction. This is based on the vast, interdisciplinary body of scientifically-based research about reading and writing that has been conducted over the last five decades known as the Science of Reading. All of our K-2 educators and special educators through grade 5 are fully certified in the Orton Gillingham approach to multi-sensory literacy. This is a structured, phonemic awareness program that efficiently teaches children to decode and encode. We have deliberately interwoven our social studies units with our reading and writing units in order to build students' content knowledge. Teachers utilize the workshop model and incorporate balanced literacy strategies. We also utilize the Six Traits of Writing framework which uses the six qualities of exemplary writing to guide lessons, assignments, and assessments.

Formative and summative assessments are used to ensure that students are making growth throughout each unit. Data is used to drive instruction and revise curriculum as necessary. As a school, grades K-5 use the F&P Benchmark Assessment System and "quick writes" based on Six Traits as summative assessments three times a year (fall, winter, spring). Acadience (grades K-2) and MAP assessments (grades 3-5) are also used to measure progress and achievement in reading three times a year (fall, winter, spring). We norm the grading of all summative assessments annually and store the data electronically in a shared folder to ensure that we are working collaboratively and continuously toward the success of every student. When data shows insufficient progress, staff and administrators meet to plan interventions. New York ELA test scores for students in grades 3-5 are another summative assessment tool. Each fall, we analyze the previous year's data to determine patterns of where our students are excelling and where they need further development. We then reevaluate the curriculum to ensure that we are providing sufficient opportunities for students to build these skills from K-5.

Teachers in every classroom use formative assessments during students' independent reading and writing time to monitor progress within the focus standards daily. Success criteria and learning intentions are posted prominently for each subject. Our teachers, assistant teachers, and paraprofessionals work together to track who is approaching, meeting, and exceeding expectations on a shared checklist. We then use this data to create small groups (guided reading/writing, or strategy groups) for the following day.

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

There is no one math curriculum that meets the needs of all students, but we found the continuity of one program necessary as a foundation for our math instruction. Grades K-1 were using TERC because of the constructivist approach and grades 2-5 were using Engage/Eureka. Over time, we found that there was a disconnect between the vocabulary and strategies our students used and teachers taught, which complicated learning as students moved to grade 3. As a result, we now use TERC in kindergarten only and Engage in grades 1-5. To supplement the curriculum, all grade-levels utilize Number Talks, Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI), and 3 Act Tasks. Grades K-2 also use Every Day Counts to reinforce basic mathematical skills.

Number Talks is used to develop flexible thinking and mental computations are practiced to develop fluency with number sense and strategies. Staff analyzed student work and concluded that many students struggled to persevere as they tried to discover math patterns and relationships. CGI and 3 Act Tasks were incorporated in order to build problem solving skills and address this need. By providing students with

opportunities to talk about complex math problems, we have found they are improving their reasoning skills and are more successful explaining their mathematical thinking both orally and in writing. Using these resources, teacher teams have collaborated to develop rigorous and highly complex math units of study. As the standards change and math practices evolve, we strive to continue to teach math in a deep and meaningful way.

Formative and summative assessments are used to ensure that students are making growth throughout each unit. Data is used to drive instruction and revise curriculum as necessary. Acadience (grades K-2) and MAP assessments (grades 3-5) are also used to measure progress and achievement in math three times a year (fall, winter, spring).

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

PS 9 uses UC Berkeley's FOSS Next Generation kits to support the teaching of science through firsthand, active investigations. Each grade, K-5, engages in one physical science, one earth science, and one life science investigation throughout the school year. FOSS presents all learners, regardless of prior knowledge, language, or background with opportunities to participate in multisensory learning as standards are addressed.

FOSS is scaffolded so that students build scientific thinking alongside content. Students answer questions, design solutions and gather evidence to explain real-world phenomena. The content and hands-on investigations help students make sense of their observations and solve problems.

In order to best support all students, including those who are less proficient in speaking, reading, and writing, investigations often involve purposeful grouping of students. Assistants, paraprofessionals, and/or out of classroom staff, including speech and ENL teachers, will support students from the pre-teaching of vocabulary to the actual investigation. This is designed to ensure that all students have access to the material and understand the concepts taught.

Teachers bridge concepts and understandings from the science curriculum with the English language arts curriculum. This connection gives a meaningful purpose to the learning and teaching of reading and writing as well as speaking and listening. This includes how students must listen to or read texts critically and weigh the evidence within a text in order to form opinions.

There are both formative and summative assessments throughout the units to identify meaningful learning trends. Throughout the investigations, teachers monitor authentic student thinking through a variety of activities, such as science notebook entries and response sheets. Teachers and students use benchmark assessments to assess student knowledge before and after each unit.

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

PS9 uses the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) K-8 Passport to Social Studies program as the basis for social studies instruction. This program allows students to make sense of the world they live in, make connections between major ideas and their own lives, and see themselves as active members of a global community.

Each grade engages in several units throughout the school year. Each unit includes lessons and activities that challenge students to think like historians. They are prompted to raise questions, think critically, consider many perspectives, and gather evidence from primary source documents. Chronological processing, decision-making, and historical research and analysis are explicitly taught. Teachers integrate pre-assessments at the start of each unit to measure students' prior knowledge and guide instruction, and post-assessments at the end of each unit to evaluate student growth.

For more than a decade, PS9 social studies content has been embedded into our ELA units of study. As a result, in both social studies instruction, teachers work to ensure that the students are consistently using evidence-based reasoning with the support of content-rich informational texts.

Continuity of instruction is also apparent in the fact that out of classroom specials such as technology, music, art, physical education and Spanish have access to grade-level curriculum maps. Authentic collaboration occurs, allowing cluster teachers to support and reinforce what is being done in the classroom. For example, the technology teacher routinely supports the work of third grade classroom teachers in social studies by working with students to design an interactive Google Map as students learn about the difficult journey of immigrants from Europe to the US in the 1800s. This cross-curricular collaboration can also be seen in Spanish. The Spanish teacher adapts her units of study to align with the social studies curriculum for kindergarten through grade 5. As an example, in grade 4, students learn directional words as they make maps of New York.

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

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

At PS9, we utilize the play-based NYCDOE PK Interdisciplinary Units of Study curriculum, along with supplemental social emotional learning programs and enrichment classes. Each unit promotes exploration within various themes that target the five different learning standard domains: Approaches to Learning, Physical Development and Health, Social and Emotional Learning, Communication, Language and Literacy and Cognition and Knowledge of the World. Our students engage in these units through multisensory experiences in learning centers where different supplemental materials are added throughout the different units. This play-based curriculum provides teachers and students with the flexibility to explore students' interests and meet students' needs, especially for ELLs and students with special needs. We also utilize two supplemental social and emotional learning programs, The Fun with Feelings program and RULER, to help develop these critical skills. The units of study in PK have been intentionally designed to align with the K-2 units of study, to ensure continuity.

Every day, students engage in dramatic play, sing alongs, read alouds, storytelling, creative writing, organized play and structured social skill development. As the “first face” of the school, families are welcomed into the classroom community to participate in their child’s learning. This initial sense of “community” is carried over into the rest of their school experience.

Almost all of our students in the PK program move on as students in PS9 kindergarten. They have shown to have well developed number sense and literacy skills. These students display evidence of more sophisticated social emotional skills than their peers by being able to separate from their parents, self-regulate more easily, and by building new friendships and connections at a faster pace. Lastly, teachers have reported that students with special needs are identified earlier, which allows interventions and student support to be provided to enhance student success in the primary grades.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

2a. Arts (visual and/or performing)

PS9 provides a visual arts program for students in PK to grade 5 taught by two visual arts educators. Art instruction is provided at least once a week for 45 minutes in dedicated art-making spaces. We work collaboratively to spiral the curriculum using the benchmarks outlined in the New York City Blueprint for visual arts as a guide to ensure students’ acquisition of essential skills and knowledge in the visual arts.

Students engage in both product and process oriented art projects that exercise their creativity. Students participate in several art making strands including: drawing, painting, collage, printmaking, sculpture, and design. Students make connections to other subjects, learn about careers in the arts, make careful observations, and community resources, such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art. We explore art and artists

from several cultures and time periods. Students engage in comprehensive visual arts experiences that encourage them to express their artistry and draw ideas from the materials in the art studio.

Art Night is our annual culminating event in which every PS9 student exhibits artwork and the school is transformed into an “art gallery.” During this time, the art teachers work with parent volunteers to provide art making activities for families to make together. It is a joyous end of year celebration of the students’ creativity and growth.

2b. Physical education/health/nutrition

The physical education curriculum at PS9 is designed to keep students moving from the first time they enter our gymnasium doors in PK to well beyond their fifth grade graduation into their adult years. We believe in lifelong movement and developing a love for all forms of physical activity. Students receive one or two 45-minute gym classes weekly, and have 30 minutes of recess daily. Our goal is to give our students the knowledge and tools needed to prepare them for decades of self-regulated movement so that they can become physically literate individuals. By introducing students to a variety of activities ranging from individual skills such as juggling scarves and dribbling a soccer ball, to large-scale team building activities like Turtle Tag and Magic Stones, we equip our students with the ability to organize and program their own movement routines regardless of available space and resources. Students not only gain an understanding of “how” to move, but also “why” movement and physical activity is important. As a Move-To-Improve All-Star school, all of our teachers are trained to incorporate Move-To-Improve activities into their daily instruction, from stress-relieving breathing exercises to students demonstrating their mathematical prowess in the form of multiplication jumping.

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

PS9’s Spanish program was implemented with the collaboration of parents, teachers and administrators over 16 years ago and continues to be an important part of the student’s experience. Students in grades K-5 receive Spanish instruction at least once a week for either a 35 or a 45-minute period. It is a language-driven program that is integrated throughout the school. Instruction is done through music, movement, read alouds, movie-making, interactive games that encourage communication, and project-based learning that helps promote students to think creatively and flexibly, while developing social skills.

All of this is done through thematic units that are reflective of what is taught in content areas. For example, in grade 2, Spanish class engages in the La Comunidad unit, while in social studies, they are studying My Community. Through this enrichment program, students gain cultural pluralism, increase cognitive connections, enhance and reinforce the skills and strategies that are taught in English. All using the World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages.

We have students who speak Spanish as their first language. Our program allows those students an opportunity to be the “expert” and to be proud of their heritage and language. As mentioned previously, our Hispanic students represent one of the groups that has underperformed compared to their peers and this gives many of them an opportunity to feel confident.

2d. Technology/library/media

At PS9, every student from grades 2-5 visits our computer lab replete with 32 iMacs once a week for 45 minutes. The curriculum consists of typing instruction, coding tutorials, use of a plethora of presentation software, as well as a curriculum that aligns with units from their individual grade-level classes to include a technology aspect; for example, students in fifth grade create an iMovie documentary based on their research about Westward Expansion. Students also receive instruction about Digital Citizenship derived from sources including Google’s Internet Awesome as well as Common Sense Media; students learn how to navigate the online world including cyberbullying, real versus fake information, and cybersecurity among other topics. In addition to the computer lab, all students have access to Google Chrome Books from kindergarten through grade 5 in their individual classrooms utilized at the discretion of the classroom teacher to enhance the curriculum, as well as aid with research and writing.

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

PS9 students receive music instruction in PK through grade 5. They have music once or twice a week for 45 minutes. Music in PK is aligned to NYCDOE units, and is collaboratively planned alongside the PK teacher. Students are immersed in kindergarten-readiness experiences such as taking turns, performing the steady beat with known and new repertoire, dancing with a partner, moving in a circle, exploring dynamics, texture, and tempo with a broad range of classroom instruments, all through the lens of multicultural song, dance, and art music. Students in K-3 learn and perform folk song and dance from countries represented within our school community. Third grade, in collaboration with the NYC Ballet, prepares a dance performance. Fourth graders, using the Link UP curriculum, perform an inclusive repertoire at the world-renowned Carnegie Hall with their recorders, alongside the NYC Philharmonic. With guidance, students in fifth grade facilitate discussions and develop perspectives around current music trends, influence, and impact on culture and society. They also are introduced to instruments such as the ukulele, bucket drumming as percussion, and the violin. Families are invited to participate in accessible virtual performances during which students showcase songs and folk dance by performing with family members.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

We base instruction on school and class-wide data. We collect formative and summative data to guide teacher instruction to support all students, especially those who are performing below grade level. Within each classroom, teacher instruction is based on the workshop model. This consists of the “I do, we do, you do” model and allows students to see modeling before completing activities. The workshop model allows teachers to implement scaffolding, modifications, and differentiation for each lesson. Teachers identify small groups of students based on their needs during independent work time. During small group instruction, teachers are able to reteach a skill or provide differentiated support. For example, during a whole-class lesson on identifying the main idea of a text, the teacher would present the reading skills, model how to do it with an example, and then provide differentiated texts at multiple reading levels for students to practice the skill on their own level. This allows each student to access the standard through their individual entry point. During daily independent work time, teachers are able to utilize the assistant teacher in the classroom to provide modified instruction based on specific student needs.

State test score data reveals that students with disabilities and Hispanic/Latino students significantly underperform as compared to the whole school population. Our analysis indicates that there is a great deal of crossover between these two subgroups so we track their progress separately.

The Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) model has been an effective program to provide more tailored instruction during the independent work time. In addition, the What I Need (WIN) program (see below under special programs) has proven to be successful both academically as well as for social emotional relationships.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

Many of our teachers are dually certified in general education and/or gifted education. This supports our community and the diversity of learners. Although our community has undergone significant shifts, moving from a school where the majority of students were identified as gifted (2012), to now fully representing our community with 100% general and special education students, we have maintained our commitment to rigor and our expectation of high academic achievement. Our goal is to meet the needs of ALL of our learners. We believe in enrichment through extension as a method to engage and challenge students with different abilities while they continue to develop both intellectually and socially with their chronological peers. Enrichment provides an opportunity for students performing above grade-level to explore topics with more depth at their own level of academic ability, allowing for deeper content knowledge and showing their learning in a variety of ways.

Staff utilizes flexible grouping in order to facilitate opportunities for students performing above grade level to access content at appropriate academic and complexity levels as well as develop important social-

emotional skills such as collaboration, problem-solving, and communication. Our ICT model not only nurtures our students performing below level, but is a wonderful setting for differentiation for our students performing above grade level as well. The workshop model allows teachers to implement modifications and differentiation for each lesson. It allows teachers to pull small groups of students based on their needs during independent work time. During small group instruction, teachers are able to extend a skill and provide differentiated support.

3c. Students with disabilities:

PS9 supports students with disabilities in a multitude of ways. When a teacher has concerns about a specific student, the first step is to collect relevant data about the child and consult with the child study team. Our approach is nuanced and we always try interventions before a referral since not every child who is struggling has a disability. The child study team consists of our principal, assistant principal, school psychologist, guidance counselor, social worker, and Individualized Education Plan (IEP) teacher. Together, they discuss the teachers' concerns and look at the students' data to determine what supports the student needs to reach their fullest potential. If the team determines that the student would benefit from special education services, the teacher has a meeting with the child's family and the special education evaluation begins.

Our school is able to provide a variety of services for students with disabilities. Students who qualify for special education services can qualify for ICT (Integrated Co-Teaching), SETSS (Special Education Teacher Support Services), occupational therapy, physical therapy, support from paraprofessionals, and social emotional support with a guidance counselor or social worker. Special education teachers and service providers meet weekly to discuss student progress, share strategies, and complete IEP evaluations.

We are also able to provide students with short term, focused support through our RTI (Response to Intervention)/WIN model. Assistant teachers, paraprofessionals and out of classroom support staff are also engaged to support students.

Beginning in 2010, we embraced the ICT model and now have at least one ICT class in every grade. This allows students with disabilities to participate in the least restrictive environment. The benefits of the ICT classroom for all students, especially those with disabilities, are bountiful. By having two teachers in the classroom, there are more opportunities for differentiated instruction and small group work. Our ICT classroom teacher teams work together to address all student needs within the classroom.

3d. English Language Learners:

While we have a small population of English Language Learners at PS9, they are represented in all grade-levels. In order to ensure the students receive every instructional and social emotional support we offer, we try to group all of the ELL students together into one class. This ensures that they receive high quality instruction from both the classroom teacher and ENL teacher, who plan together weekly and collaborate daily. As a result, we can ensure that each student receives differentiated and/or scaffolded instruction in every subject, whether or not the ENL teacher is present.

As a former classroom teacher, our English as a New Language (ENL) teacher is dually certified, ensuring that she can provide integrated ENL instruction both in and out of the classroom. Our ENL teacher utilizes the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model for her lessons, incorporating explicit instruction in reading, writing, listening, and speaking daily, regardless of the subject. Pre-teaching and reteaching Tier 3 vocabulary is embedded into every lesson. By utilizing success criteria in every grade, students are always able to engage with the content, even if they are unable to do so in English yet. For newcomers who need additional support, we provide bilingual glossaries (which are available for use during assessments), dictionaries, multilingual texts, and iPads for translation and remediation. Accommodations are provided for all ELL and former ELL students during classroom and state testing to ensure they can demonstrate their knowledge in spite of language barriers.

It is a priority that all of our students' cultures be represented in the curriculum. We do so by constantly revising our shared texts in the classroom and by integrating discussions about language, music, customs,

and foods into our instruction (including art, music, PE, technology, and Spanish). We have more than 30 bilingual staff members to support our communication with new students and families.

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

In an attempt to maximize resources and support the needs of our diverse learners, we have implemented school-wide WIN (What I Need) periods for each grade. During these periods, all available staff work with small groups of students to support literacy development. While we are always focused on our lowest-performing third of students, all children are placed in a WIN group that meets their individual needs, whether they are below, on, or above grade-level. Students who are currently below grade-level are placed with our staff with the most intervention training. Paraprofessionals and assistant teachers receive training and support in guided reading and work to support small groups of students who are on or above grade-level. Informal assessment data from these sessions are shared and monitored weekly. WIN cycles, similar to an RTI cycle, last 4-6 weeks after which adjustments are made based on student progress. Student progress is measured both formally and informally. Three times a year, we conduct school-wide running records to formally assess the students' independent reading level and areas of need. In addition, we utilize i-Ready benchmark data to adjust groupings based on missing skills.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

The curriculum at PS9 has been influenced by the work of John Hattie, specifically his work around “Visible Learning.” Several professional learning opportunities around this topic have been provided for staff, including assistant teachers and paraprofessionals. Hattie’s research indicates that the two most impactful school practices on student learning and engagement are “Collective Teacher Self Efficacy” and “Student Self Efficacy.” Teachers have worked on writing success criteria for each unit of study, which supports students in their academic growth. Students can follow the steps they need to take in order to complete each assignment or project.

Students are also surveyed about how they feel about the support and feedback they receive, the level of trust they have in the staff and their peers. This provides insights for teachers, again, as to student self-perception of level of independence and self-motivation. Strong student self-efficacy ensures that students participate more, persist through challenges, and have a general attitude that they can succeed as we prepare them for college and future careers. We teach our students specific learning strategies to foster a growth mindset. We use peer models when evaluating classwork and assessments so that students learn to give and receive feedback. We work together to identify the language of a fixed versus a growth mindset.

PS9 has a long and proud history of engaging and motivating students through our Core Values program, as well as recently utilizing the RULER program schoolwide to foster a sense of community and strong social-emotional learning.

Another program designed by our staff to support all students is our Focus Students. Students can be identified for a variety of reasons including, but not limited to attendance issues, family dynamics, social emotional needs, and academic concerns. Students are identified at the beginning of the year then matched with an out-of-classroom staff member. This staff member makes sure to check in with their specific student regularly, attending publishing parties and celebrations, creating another adult who knows them well and who is looking out for them.

A consistent focus on our students’ social-emotional well-being and growth throughout the year creates a solid foundation that allows us to emphasize academic needs and growth as well, which leads to strong preparation for middle school and beyond.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

The partnership between families, school staff, and community members has been one of the driving elements that has driven student success and school improvement. One of our most successful strategies is the automatic membership of all parents into PS9’s Parent Association (PA), which works tirelessly to ensure our standards of education remain high. Through our PA, parents are given many opportunities to actively engage in academic and social-emotional learning alongside the teachers and the students. In an effort to ensure that there are opportunities for all families to engage in meaningful volunteerism, the PA offers opportunities ranging from helping students check out books in the library to planning and running the annual Book Fair.

We offer various teacher presentations and workshops for parents throughout the year, highlighting various curriculum areas. The monthly PA meeting is an additional opportunity for out of classroom teachers to share their curriculum and goals for students. All classroom teachers send home monthly newsletters. The Core Values team sends home bi-monthly newsletters to highlight school activities and provide book lists to continue fostering the home-school connection. The EDI Committee also sends out a family newsletter throughout the year to engage families in similar discussions. The impact of our intentional efforts to engage parents is evident on the NYC Schools Survey, where 97% of families say that teachers and families think of each other as partners in educating children.

Being located in New York City's Upper West Side lends itself to a myriad of community partnerships which provide students with enriching experiences including the Museum of Natural History, the New York Historical Society, the NYC Ballet, and Carnegie Hall. Programs such as Landmark West bring architecture, neighborhood history, and historic preservation to life through their youth education program. Our partnership with the private Arts and Athletics after-school program provides a place for students to interact in both academic areas and physical activities such as basketball. We also collaborate with the Ronald McDonald House Charities to highlight the importance of helping our community and supporting those in need.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Distributive leadership is the driving force at PS9. As per an independent evaluator who conducted the Quality Review in January of 2020, "Distributed leadership structures are embedded in the organizational design of the school. Teachers have strengthened their instructional capacity and self-efficacy, improved instructional coherence, and increased student achievement. The work of effective teacher leadership and school teams as in the Focus Committees and the Coherency Team play an integral role in key decisions that affect student learning."

Grade-level meetings are scheduled weekly, both within and across grade-levels. During these sessions, teachers review student work, success criteria and student data in order to revise and align the curriculum with the standards. There is an emphasis on building continuity of practice across and within the grade-levels. Our work with Steve Ventura, a consultant from Corwin and expert in John Hattie's tenets of Visible Learning, has become the foundation of our work in this area. The impact can be seen in teachers' work to develop success criteria and learning progressions for specific standards across and within grade-levels. This work is even more successful because over the last 10 years, 100% of our teaching staff have remained at PS9 unless their families moved or grew.

In May and June, staff meet and share progress with this work, including continued alignment of standards. This serves as an example of administrative support, ensuring that all grade level teams have two dedicated days of time to collaborate and plan for the following year. Administration takes suggestions from staff. During the last school year, teachers came to administration requesting support in fine-tuning the math curriculum. In response, we had a consultant come in and provide multiple sessions in which staff could choose between Number Talks, Cognitively Guided Instruction, and 3 Act Tasks.

Since funding is tight for professional development, we have taken advantage of the expertise we have in our own building. As part of every IPC (Individual Planning Conference), teachers meet with administration to discuss goals for the year. During these meetings, staff members share their personal goals but in addition they share areas that they would like to improve upon as part of the inter-visitation program.

The impact of this work overall has been an increase in the instructional collective self-efficacy amongst the staff. Data collected by administration over the last two years supports this assertion. The intentional design of teacher teams has supported the development of trusting relationships and a sense of accountability unto one another that is remarkable.

4. School Leadership:

The leadership philosophy at PS9 is built on cultivating trusting and meaningful relationships with all stakeholders. The principal prioritizes knowing everyone well through a general open-door policy, by being present at arrival and dismissal, and by creating spaces for developing connections. As a guiding premise, creating an environment that facilitates connections between other people ensures that people feel safe and cared for. As a result, they will be more inclined to do the same for others.

The Coherency Team, made up of administration, a teacher from each grade team, a special educator and an out of classroom representative, come together monthly to discuss schoolwide instructional goals, school climate and culture, and next steps. The team members are the liaisons between administration and staff.

Every year during the month of June, we have a “retreat,” led by the Coherency Team. Staff volunteer to meet after school hours to reflect on the previous school year and develop next-steps for the following school year. We use these takeaways as the basis for developing the CEP (Comprehensive Education Plan) for the next school year.

Focus Committees came from discussions during our 2022 retreat. Retreat participants (80% of the staff) saw a need for schoolwide collaboration with a focus on student achievement. As a result of these conversations, we now have schoolwide structures in place to support four subcommittees, each led by staff: EDI; SEL; Math Rigor; and ELA Rigor. Facilitators are responsible for leading the group through the process of developing a theory of action and identifying goals. Work from these committees is shared at Coherency and at ILT (Instructional Leadership Team). Committees are intentionally diverse, with representatives from different grades, programs and roles. The ILT meets throughout the year to ensure alignment of goals, review procedures and protocols and prioritize next steps.

Distributive leadership underpins how decisions are made. The various committees have been established to ensure that teacher voice and ownership is elevated. Teachers are self-motivated and self-directed. Building on the notion of “collective responsibility,” teachers take pride in their work and are involved in key decision-making.

After 18 years with our previous leader, this is the current principal’s first year at PS9. She was selected with the support of the superintendent and outgoing principal because her belief system and leadership style aligned with the school culture and previous administration. One of the priorities throughout her transition was to work closely with the former principal and current assistant principal to ensure alignment and guarantee a smooth changeover.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

PS9 has worked hard over the last several years to address the diverse backgrounds of students, families, and staff. Over the last few years, we have focused on ensuring that everyone, from the youngest students to the oldest staff members and families, feel heard, seen, and supported in our community.

Our community represents more than 25 countries from around the world and we speak close to 30 languages. We are proud of that and want to celebrate it! The PA partnered with administration to create International Night. This is a celebration of global representation at our school and a place for families to build relationships. Last year, nearly 500 students and family members participated in an evening of cultural learning. Families designed displays representing 24 countries and we also hosted cultural performances and an international food tasting. Students and teachers collaborated to create a video that highlighted the linguistic diversity within the community, which has been shared since then at tours for prospective families.

Additionally, we have created both staff and parent Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committees to ensure we are continuously growing in these areas. This grew out of the School Leadership Team’s focus several years ago as well as conversations at the “retreat.” Each year since their creation, the committees have focused on different topics. The first year, we created a mission statement, with input from staff, families, and students. This year, we revised it to reflect our growth and progress. In previous years, we’ve had book clubs, speakers, and provided resources through newsletters to continue the education of the entire community around equity and inclusion. Our entire staff have been trained in equity/bias awareness. However, as our community has changed, we realized that we needed further education and this year had additional professional development around gender diversity, creating a partnership with the Ackerman Institute.

Our classes are created with diversity and inclusion in mind. Each grade has at least one ICT class, with both general education and students with IEPs, and we ensure that all general education students get a chance to experience an ICT class. Whenever possible, students who are learning English as a new language are placed in classes with individuals with a similar background, and we’ve created systems to easily enable oral and written translations for families using our resources within the community.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE

We believe the PS9 WIN (What I Need) program has been most instrumental to the school's success. The idea came from teachers during our annual staff retreat several years ago. Classroom teachers were struggling to meet the needs of diverse learners in isolation; we needed to maximize the expertise of a limited number of staff in a limited amount of time while driving instruction for all students. The result has been outstanding, not only for the success of our students, but also in bringing our staff together. It's no longer "my class" or "my students," it's now "our kids." Children are proud to have multiple teachers; they understand that everyone needs something different and that this changes over time (like their WIN groups and teachers). Assistant teachers and paraprofessionals are thoroughly trained in instructional practices in order to improve the teacher-student ratio. WIN groups are composed of no more than six students with similar learning needs and meet twice a week for 30-45 minutes for four to six weeks at a time. While our emphasis this year has been on literacy, we have utilized WIN time for math skills as well in previous years, focusing on the area our students struggle with the most: interpreting and solving word problems.

In order to share assessment data with the relevant staff, we have created tracking sheets for each grade. This includes a list of all students' names, identifies any individuals with special education or ELL needs, and lists formal assessment data including NYS test scores, benchmark assessment scores, independent reading levels over time, and any specific notes about that child's learning needs. By looking at historical data, we are able to ensure that all children are making progress over time. We work together between WIN cycles to formally reassess students then meet to regroup and discuss any student-specific concerns, especially when we observe a plateau in data. Finally, the tracking sheets include a space for all WIN teachers to write their informal assessment data, ensuring that we are able to share our observations even when we are unable to meet in person.

During parent orientations, PA meetings, and via written newsletters, we have shared the design and purpose of WIN with our parent community. In addition, parents have the opportunity to speak with their child's WIN teacher during parent-teacher conferences.

While we continue to identify students who may be in need of a referral for special education services, we have found that WIN is an intervention that benefits our entire community and hope to continue this practice long-term.