

U.S. Department of Education
2023 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name Pearls Hawthorne School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 350 Hawthorne Avenue
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Yonkers State NY Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 10705-1831

County Westchester

Telephone (914) 376-8250 Fax (914) 376-8257

Web site/URL https://www.yonkerspublicschools.org/pearls E-mail msayegh@yonkerspublicschools.org

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* Dr. Luis Rodriguez E-mail LRODRIGUEZ2@YonkersPublicSchools.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Yonkers City School District Tel. (914) 376-8100

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 Rev. Steve Lopez
(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):
- 31 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 2 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 5 High schools
 - 1 K-12 schools
- 39 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	45
K	68
1	79
2	97
3	81
4	99
5	84
6	66
7	87
8	76
9	0
10	0
11	0
12 or higher	0
Total Students	782

*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
 - 18 % Asian
 - 13 % Black or African American
 - 42 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 21 % White
 - 6 % 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: 3%

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	9
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	18
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	27
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021	831
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.03
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	3

6. Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Spanish, Malayalam, Urdu, Arabic, Bengali, Romanian, Tagalog, Korean, French, Chinese, Hindi

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 1 %
8 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 36 %

Total number students who qualify: 284

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP: 18 %
Total number of students served 142

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>30</u> Autism	<u>94</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>11</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Developmental Delay	<u>2</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>4</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: 2 %
Total number of students served: 13

10. Number of years the principal has been in the position at this school: 8

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	4
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	47
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	15
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	73
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	3

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 16:1

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	92%	95%	94%	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. 2012

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

To provide a safe, nurturing, and holistic learning environment for our diverse population. Excellence in learning will be reached by supporting positive character traits and community consciousness, academic rigor, critical thinking, and adaptation to alternate learning modalities through differentiation and data driven instruction that fosters a growth mindset.

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

<https://www.yonkerspublicschools.org/nondiscrimination>

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

Students entering prekindergarten and kindergarten are individually evaluated using a nationally normed standardized aptitude test (I.Q.).

Students entering grades 1 through 8 are assessed using multiple criteria: a nationally normed standardized test of school ability, the New York State Testing Program, teacher evaluations and report card grades.

PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW

PEARLS (Program for Early And Rapid Learners) is a PreK-8 school located in the southwest quadrant of Yonkers, New York. PEARLS is an ethnically, nationally, and socio-economically diverse community with hundreds of students arriving by bus from other quadrants of the city. Admission to the school is based on an assessment matrix that includes an entrance exam, teacher recommendations, report cards and standardized test results. PEARLS is a dedicated magnet program for academically talented students. All teachers are required to hold their Gifted Education Extension. Our vision is to create a learning environment that prepares early and rapid learners to be contributing members of a global society. The PEARLS philosophy holds high expectations for all students and focuses on a holistic approach to child growth and development. The techniques are based on the philosophies of Benjamin Bloom, Joseph Renzulli, and Howard Gardner.

The PEARLS mission is to provide a safe, nurturing, and holistic learning environment for our diverse population. We strive to cultivate metacognitive skills and encourage self-directed learning. We aim to support positive character traits and community consciousness. Our school is dedicated to excellence in learning, academic rigor, critical thinking, and adaptation to alternate learning modalities through differentiation and data driven instruction that fosters a growth mindset. The school provides enrichment and extension of the core curriculum through integration of technology and the Arts. Teachers and staff collaborate and engage in professional development opportunities. Partnerships among all stakeholders will ensure that our learning community will prepare students with the necessary experiences in order to contribute successfully in the 21st century; becoming career and college ready and globally productive. This mission will empower students to become life learners, attuned to the diversities, challenges, and opportunities of the real world.

Along with staff, parents work side by side developing an atmosphere of creativity and shared discovery. Student projects reflect the interactive learning and higher-level thinking skills that are encouraged in our classrooms. Working cooperatively across the grade levels, our PEARLS students demonstrate independence, self-direction and decision-making skills. Over the years, PEARLS students have consistently performed well on NYS Assessments. PEARLS achieved an accountably status of good standing, demonstrating success in all performance goals.

PEARLS provides advanced academic programs which address the strengths, needs, and interests of academically talented students. At PEARLS, students receive a research-based education where gifted teaching and learning strategies are used to meet the educational and social needs of academically talented students. Teachers differentiate instruction and use strategies such as curriculum compacting to address students' individual academic strengths and encourage them to explore subjects in much greater depth. There is an emphasis on creativity, higher order thinking skills, and experiential learning.

In all the classrooms, teachers provide a print-rich setting for children to learn and grow. Within our classrooms, teachers use a literature-based program which integrates reading, writing, grammar, phonics, and spelling. PEARLS students become involved in the writing process from an early age. They learn to be fluent readers and writers. Our focus is hands-on learning, including an inquiry-based science program, and a project-based social studies curriculum. PEARLS is a lively, exciting setting where children, staff and parents learn and grow.

In addition to our academically talented program, PEARLS also has a Special Education program for students with Autism. There are two types of classes in the program. The Special Education Class 8:1:2 consists of 8 students; 1 Special Education teacher and two aides. It is designed to meet the needs of students with Autism Spectrum Disorder manifesting severe developmental delays. The focus is an evidence-based, highly structured teaching model, using specialized techniques. Behavioral interventions are implemented to address high management needs. Social interaction, communication difficulties and toileting/personal hygiene needs are also addressed. The next class is the Special Education Class 12:1:2 (High Functioning Autistic Program) A Special Education Class consisting of 12 students; 1 Special Education teacher and 1 Teaching Assistant. This class designed to meet the needs of students with Autism

Spectrum Disorder who are functioning on a higher cognitive level. Students are exposed to the general education curriculum and the NYS State standards. When possible, it is encouraged that the students are offered flexible scheduling where they are integrated with the general education students.

Parents are actively engaged in the school community through classroom activities, workshops and PTA funded programs. A School-wide Enrichment Program is built into the daily and weekly schedule. Students participate in national academic competitions and Middle School students are offered a STEM Afterschool Program.

Looking to the future, the PEARLS community envisions a program that remains dedicated to meeting the unique educational, intellectual, social, and emotional needs of our gifted students.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

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

The PEARLS teachers utilize the Benchmark curriculum. It meets the needs of various learners with vertically aligned units. Aligned with Science of Reading research, Benchmark Advance is a core language arts program that provides a cohesive structure for the development of literacy skills and content knowledge. The curriculum comes with an online assessment component and digital examples of all materials. The curriculum allows for teachers to give various reading and writing assessments within each unit. There is a focus on text complexity that allows for students to think critically when reading the text. The assessments are aligned to what students will see on the state assessment. Teachers design their units to correlate with other content areas and use a multi-strategic approach to instruction.

Teachers use the curriculum as a guide but select additional outside text at a higher reading level due to the accelerated learners at PEARLS. Teachers supplement independent reading materials so that students are challenged at their individual level. Instructional approach to reading uses guided reading groups, assessments, NWEA, Achieve 3000, parallel tasks, IXL to target skills and Flocabulary. Read-aloud techniques are used to support themes to culturally responsive education, holidays, biographies, and multicultural themes.

The Middle School uses a novel, expository writing and responses to literature approach to literacy. They select independent reading books based on each students' level and interest. Students participate in literature circles, where students self-select the book they want to read and analyze it in a group. Middle School Students participate in a Project-Based Learning approach to analyzing text. Students select themes in literature to discuss and debate. Students participate in Socratic seminars to express and share ideas. The instruction shifts from the teacher facilitating instruction to student-lead learning.

The Middle School ELA teachers are certified instructors to facilitate the Jacob Burns Film Center's "Image, Sound and Story" Curriculum. The teachers have access to the Jacob Burns Film Library. Students are able to explore how ELA skills connect to film analysis and literacy. Students also have the opportunity to showcase their skills through the creation of short films, focusing on shot types, color palette and sound elements. Students work collaboratively to bring their unique stories to life while engaging in film literacy.

PEARLS 8th graders have the opportunity to expand their creative writing skills on the campus of Sarah Lawrence College. Yonkers Public Schools has a partnership with Sarah Lawrence College's Writing Program, to develop the skills of advance writers through the Mentorship of a Sarah Lawrence College Professor. Students work interactively with other 8th graders across the district to develop and celebrate their writing talents.

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

PEARLS utilizes the Eureka NYS Math curriculum. Eureka Math is a full complement of PreK–8 print materials from the NYS Math Modules. The student workbooks offer teachers multiple ways to differentiate instruction, provide extra practice, and assess students. The curriculum focuses on comprehensive curriculum and is a holistic program for high standards and rigor. It provides deeper understanding of the "why" behind the math. The math context is more concrete and allows for collaboration. Students build on and transfer mathematical knowledge. The curriculum is built on the eight standards for math curriculum.

PEARLS follows the districts Math Vision developed by the Math Vision Committee. This vision helps to inform math instructional support and professional development. Are you G.A.M.E.? G stands for Growth Mindset. The belief that all students can learn math and mistakes are viewed as learning opportunities. Varied student strategies are encouraged, showcased and challenged. Social Emotional Learning opportunities are naturally infused in lessons to build positive relationships amongst all

classroom stakeholders. A stands for Access. This includes scaffolded tasks with access points for all ability levels. Differentiation and accommodations create equitable access to materials and opportunities for students. There is intentional use of technology and math tools to support learning for all. M stands for Math Talk. Teachers and students use academic tier 3 vocabulary which is explained and applied. Students collaborate and ask high-level questions. Accountable talk structures are in place for productive dialogue. Finally, E stands for Experiential. Students are given tasks that are relevant and connected to the lives of our students. These require real world and community-based problem solving with Interdisciplinary and inquiry-based learning experiences.

At PEARLS, students participate in non-routine tasks to encourage flexible thinking, cognitive effort and perseverance. Teachers design pre-assessments prior to each module and identify students who can compact the curriculum and complete an independent enrichment project. Daily exit tickets allow for on demand assessment at the end of each lesson. IXL is used to create a customized learning experience. Students participate in their own collection and reflection of data and making next steps to move to the next level agency. Growth mindset is crucial for students to stay in the struggle. It allows for high performing students' success with their identity. They need encouragement taking risks, perseverance and normalizing error.

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

The science curriculum uses an engineering approach to engage students, whereby students construct engineered systems and use systems thinking to understand the physical science principles of how they work. The themes addressed include electrical engineering, chemical engineering, mechanical engineering, and environmental engineering. Students are taught through decentering methodologies—model-based learning and Universal Design Learning. The combined goal of these equitable and inclusive methodologies is to provide students with multiple access points into lessons. Thus, one extended lesson can be examined using several cognitive lenses via differentiated stations. During differentiated stations, exploration is encouraged to build shared classroom experiences. Small group instruction is woven into the exploratory environment to encourage students to cross borders between their alternative ways of knowing and the culture of science and engineering. In these small group experiences, the physical science disciplinary core ideas are developed via student-teacher conversations and student-peer conversations. Having acquired the science cultural experience, students engage in evidence-based writing to develop science disciplinary language skills, whereby exploratory differentiated stations provide context for developing models that are comprised of drawings. Serving as evidence, these models are developed and used to facilitate the writing of scientific arguments.

Often assessments use alternative achievement metrics such as (1) collaborative service-learning opportunities in the form of students teaching learned content to elementary and middle school students in the autism program and (2) cumulative projects that strive for cultural pluralism via multiple communicative elements using expressive formats that mirror students' ways of knowing and making sense of science. An example includes student-generated stop animation videos whereby students construct physical models using Legos to symbolize and explain mechanisms of the physical science principles that were investigated. For assessments, the goal is always to provide students with authentic experiences that are indicative of the real world.

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

The Social Studies K-12 curriculum is aligned with the New York State Social Studies Framework (2016) and the National C3 Standards (College, Career, and Civic Life). It is a robust curriculum that is inquiry based and develops deep content knowledge and 21st century skills, such as critical thinking and problem solving, examining conflict and resolution, cause and effect, and similarities and differences. It also provides a strong foundation in citizenship and civic readiness.

The Social Studies program alignment to college and careers and the Regents exams, develops students' understanding of patterns in history, turning points in history, change over time, and point of view. The study of Social Studies includes learning about significant ideas, people, places, eras, themes, and developments on local, regional, national and international stages and this includes the City of Yonkers.

Historical inquiry and the integration of technology are important aspects in the curriculum. Students engage in active learning about the rights, roles and responsibilities of citizenship; government systems and structures; democracy; the Constitution and its foundation; and the historical foundation of the United States.

The Social Studies curriculum includes the study of global issues, geography, and history. Throughout the PK-12 continuum, students learn the skills of gathering, interpreting and using evidence; analyzing cause and effect; comparing and contrasting; using geographic and historical reasoning; civic participation and economics and economic systems.

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

Middle School students receive and participate in a school-wide enrichment period where students participate in Choice Passion Projects Learning. The projects are career-centered in which students create a business and product to market and sell. The students present the product in which they sell and fundraise in collaboration with the PTA. Students also participate in mock job interviews, review state legislation and labor laws and learn to write resumes. Additionally, students have opportunity to create community-centered documentaries where they interview members both inside and outside of the school community.

The Middle School guidance counselor and teachers advise student government. Students participate in bi-weekly meetings to create school-wide initiatives, improving the school community. One example includes, student government members facilitating monthly Social and Emotional activities.

The guidance counselor works collaboratively with the school administration and teachers to plan and facilitate student assemblies that educate students on issues they will face in both High School and College. These have included anti-bullying, mental health and preparing for high school and college. During the 7th and 8th grade transition to high school and college, the guidance counselor spoke in depth about the various assessments and requirements for the high school and college application process. Teachers and administrators from the various Yonkers High Schools are invited to speak with the PEARLS 8th grade students prior to making their balloting choices for high school. The guidance counselor also collaborated with the Yonkers Youth Work Program in support students in getting working papers.

In addition, Middle School students are members of National Junior Honor Society and follow the Everyday Pillars of NJHS which include: Everyday Scholarship, Service, Leadership, Character and Citizenship. Students have the opportunity to leave PEARLS with three NYS Regents credits. We offer Living Environment, Algebra I and Spanish Assessment Checkpoint A.

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

For schools, such as PEARLS, that offer preschool for three and/or four-year-old students, there is a core curriculum that is provided to all students. Our Scholastic Reading Program, PreK on My Way, targets all domains of learning, addressing early learning guidelines that support higher achievement outcomes and prepare students with a foundation of skills. This program incorporates a language, literacy, and math components for each theme which progresses from teacher modeling to child involvement in small group and child independence during centers. To address the social and emotional needs of the PreK students, the teachers utilize the PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies) Program. The PATHS program was developed by an experienced team of clinical psychologists and child development professionals. The program offers a comprehensive, and evidence-based SEL curriculum for pre-kindergarten students.

In addition, PreK is aligned with NYS early learning standards that coordinate with K-3 academic standards. These standards are discussed with the students with each project/activity that is explored and are always posted with student work. This allows students to take ownership and regularly familiarize themselves with these standards. This also aids the transition to K for both parents and students in regard to the standards. Lastly, PreK uses the NYS Math Modules as our math curriculum which aligns with the school-wide math program.

There are a multitude of indicators which provide evidence for the impact of early education on school readiness and success in the primary grades. Collegial feedback is a definite source of evidence. As colleagues report back that students in their classes who have had a PreK experience versus those that have not had many of the readiness skills for academic learning. For example, stamina to stay on task, social-emotional development, problem solving skills, emotion regulation skills which lead to success in the primary grades.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

2a. Arts (visual and/or performing)

Music and Arts Education is an integral part of the total school instructional program at PEARLS. Arts instruction is based on New York State Performing Arts standards. These standards encompass music, theatre, dance and both fine and graphic arts. Students are expected to demonstrate skills in performing and creating works of art, abilities to use a variety of art materials and resources, the ability to analyze forms of arts and the understanding of the cultural forces that hare artistic works. Music and Arts programs are augmented through collaboration with museums, cultural and governmental institutions. Students learn about art through a student choice-based studio approach. Students pick from various arts-based studios in the classroom to express their artistic talent.

The PEARLS music program is comprised of a Band and Choir. The program offers its students the opportunity to showcase their emerging talent while providing music education, confidence, friendships, and volunteerism. Since September 2022, our band and choir have performed Winter Concerts, Performed for National Parent-Teacher Association President, Anna King, Westchester East Putnam Parent Teacher Association Luncheon and City of Yonkers Veterans Day. In February 2023 the PEARLS music program was awarded the City of Yonkers Mayor's School Spotlight Award.

2b. Physical education/health/nutrition

The Physical Education teachers follow a Fitness Based Program in which they focus on units of study including Bodyweight training, Endurance training, Flexibility training, Cardiovascular training and Individual Fitness Testing/Plan. Students learn team building skills. They learn to support their classmates by participating in various sports-based activities. Each lesson is taught in a structured sequence; introduction, warm-up, daily lesson/activity and closure. Our students with Autism receive adaptive physical education. Middle school students participate in intermural sports and sports club.

Our 7th and 8th graders engage in 90 minutes to 2 ½ hours of health education weekly, in order to support and foster social-emotional and intellectual growth and development. We incorporate a skills-based health education curriculum, Health Smart, which follows the National Health Education Standards and highlights the foundation of health education. Our students engage in peer supportive work within small groups before transitioning into independent skills practice. This helps to not only reinforce health skills learned but it gives them an opportunity to work the 21st century skills of communication, collaboration, critical thinking and creativity. These 21st century skills are used every day, in every classroom and within their community.

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

Students at PEARLS are offered Spanish in the 7th and 8th grade. Students learn basic vocabulary and structure for day-to-day situations. The course stresses communication and culture, making use of a variety of ancillary materials and appropriate technology applications to present the language in its natural environment. Students attain language proficiency through acquired cultural knowledge and the development and use of the four language skills---listening, reading, writing and speaking. A Smart Board is used to present the vocabulary, and lessons through Power Points. Students watch authentic videos that contain closed captioning for better understanding. Students use Chrome Books to practice IXL, Kahoot, News ELA, Quizlet, Teams, Rockalingua, Univisión App, DuoLingo, Forvo.com, YouTube, Quia Spanish,

research a particular topic, and take assessments through Castle Learning. The Realidades program provides Grammar Tutorial videos to briefly review the grammar lessons we learn in class.

Students are exposed to as much of the language as possible and are encouraged to speak Spanish as much as possible during the class. Students get a hands-on experience through participating in conversations and games. Student participation is encouraged through these social experiences. In addition to students learning about the language, students also experience and learn about culture alongside the language. Students learn and perform Spanish dance. The class is enhanced by multimedia to engage students in the language. In 8th grade, the students have the opportunity to take the Spanish Assessment which is a locally developed Checkpoint A Exam.

2d. Technology/library/media

At PEARLS, students are provided access to technology from Pre-K through 8th grade. We believe it is crucial for students to develop tech literacy. They must be able to utilize a variety of digital devices and platforms in order to communicate and problem solve in both academic and non-academic settings. All students and staff have the opportunity to work in one of our two computer labs or library media center. The students in Pre-K to 2 have classroom iPads available to them daily. All students in grades 3 to 8 have an individual Chromebook that they utilize for instruction. All students are able to use these devices to access the district online resources that are available on the Yonkers Public Schools through the Clever sign-on portal. The teachers use the devices to plan and differentiate instruction, allowing students to work at their own learning levels, compacting out of mastered instruction or to advance and remediate skills. Students are also offered the opportunity to utilize a 3D printer and participate in a robotics program. The library media specialist provides a wide range of skills and technical abilities to research, explore, implement and assess what is best for our students, teachers, and families.

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

Capturing their learning experiences at PEARLS, Eight Grade students complete a free-verse poetry unit that showcases not only their academic but also social and emotional experiences. Below is an excerpt from a student poem which served as an “Ode to PEARLS” before moving up to high school.

Pearls Hawthorne School

PEARLS is a school,

not just any school,

but a school filled with young gifted and talented students

seeking to be successful in the reality of life.

In PEARLS we learned to give it your all,

no matter how hard the task is

because when you believe that you can grow,

a shining star is what will show.

Friendships in PEARLS enrich beauty in our lives

and makes them valuable.

Our closest friends make life worth it

and the journey entertaining.

PEARLS is fun,

events and competitions,

field trips and parties,

so many fun activities to strengthen bonds and priceless relationships.

PEARLS is just so genuinely happy that it is truly a bliss,

and I will glorify the memorable moments I had in this place,

For the time being, I'll treasure these happy times while I'm still here,

during the next 3-4 months...[Silence]...that's where we graduate...

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

Utilizing a Multi-Tiered System of Support, (MTSS), this framework helps to identify and support students' performing below grade level. Students receive classroom-based accommodations and teachers complete a Student Support Team Packet. Teachers collect data based on target concern in classroom performance and interventions they put into place. A collaborative meeting with school support staff, teachers, parents and administration is held to review the data and interventions and a course of action is planned. The actions plan may consist of a School Level Accommodation Plan, a recommendation to the CSE committee or to explore if the child qualifies for a 504 plan. The course of action and the progress of the student is revised every four to six weeks. At that time, a decision is made to continue intervention or if additional measures must be put into place. Students who are performing below grade level can also receive Title I Reading services. Students who work with the Title I teacher are identified using the NWEA MAP scores received each year in the fall. The Title I Reading teacher uses a mixed model of push in and pull out supports to meet the more individualized needs of each student. The Title I teacher also serves as a resource for teachers to provide additional reading classroom intervention. Parents are part of the support network for their children with the Title I Reading teacher providing reading strategies and NYS Assessments Workshops.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

Teachers utilize the NWEA MAP data, NYS data and classroom pre and post assessments to identify students who are performing above grade level. Using the Renzulli Model for gifted education, teachers compact students out of individual lessons or units of study and provide them with enrichment activities or accelerated curriculum. Examples of this include Choice Boards, Flipped Model Classroom, Individualized Instruction through IXL and Achieve 3000 and Project-based Student Lead activities. Teachers provide students Enrichment Choice Boards that provide students with the option to select a topic of choice and learn in a manner that engages them. This encourages students to be more engaged, accountable and independent in their learning.

3c. Students with disabilities:

Students with disabilities that are part of our Autism Program receive instruction using the TEACHH model. The TEACHH program uses schedules designed to help students understand their various instructional and social activities thought their school day. The classroom is organized with specific areas for different types of tasks. Students learn together through group lessons and complete individual learning and skill-building at independent workstations. The classes participate in social activities like group time, playtime and snack time. Students have individualized visual schedules of their own activities. The goal is for students to

become more independent. Students who need additional supports have a variety of experienced providers available to assist them. Providers including an Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist and Psychologist are all available to service students according to their needs and IEP goals. Students may also receive assistance from certified Resource Room and Speech Teachers to support their academic needs.

As part of the Special Education Robotics Program students read about how to build robots, their own simple robots. Students create a Scribble and Bristle bot. After building students write their own instruction manuals telling either how to use it or how to build one's own similar robot. Students participate in inter-visitations with other classes and teach them how to create their own robots. In addition, students learn how to utilize a coding program to create a code and path for their robot. Finally, through a partnership with Saunders High School students learn how to fly drones from students completing their work-study program.

3d. English Language Learners:

At PEARLS, English as a New Language (ENL) students receive a culturally and linguistically responsive instruction using a stand-alone pull-out model. The program incorporates social and academic language skills that enforce the content being taught in their mainstream classrooms. A collaborative effort between teachers, school psychologists, and specialized teachers creates a program that bridges the gap between the student's lived experience and general education. Using an MTSS school model, PEARLS uses data-driven and problem-solving expertise to reinforce the student's academic and non-academic needs. Adhering to our academic talent program standards, we align our instruction, interventions, and MAP assessments with New York State guidelines by providing grade-appropriate reading comprehension tasks and facilitating language acquisition. The program serves ELL students of different backgrounds and languages to achieve the fifth and final ENL level of Commanding.

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

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Each morning the announcements incorporate a kindness challenge from the principal. Starting the day with a positive message and encouraging students to be kind to each other. Each classroom has a strong focus on mindfulness, and teachers utilize a variety of resources for self-reflection and regulation. Throughout the day, teachers complete a social emotional-based lesson for students to check-in with how they are feeling. This allows the teachers to understand the state of mind of the students for the day and helps guide the teachers approach. At various points of the day, the teachers incorporate self-check-ins, a question of the day, read-alouds, and videos that supports the social emotional theme of the month. Questions about the read aloud or video are a vehicle for students to discuss and share. Teachers implement individual and class rewards system that allow students to self-monitor and growth to build confidence by earning rewards. There is a strong focus on developing a Growth-mindset. Students are taught not to see challenges as setbacks. They learn that even if they struggle with certain skills, their abilities can foster and grow. Students see that with perseverance, their skills can improve over time.

In order to cultivate college and career readiness, the curriculum offers student choice. Students are able to select their own learning topics which motivates the students to engage in learning. Students are also offered choice during the school-wide enrichment periods. Enrichment opportunities are developed by teachers based on student interest. Students select the activity of their choice, allowing for student choice, increased student engagement and commitment to the task. Students work collaboratively to solve a problem and learn to socially and emotionally engage with each other. This aides in building a sense of classroom community. Students have the freedom to critically think and solve complex problems. There is a strong focus on “I can” statements. High cognitive functioning skills are stressed as well as in-depth study and research. The thematic units are developed and integrated across the curriculum areas. Teachers work collegially to create a stimulating and exciting environment in which children are challenged to meet high expectations and are encouraged to achieve personal excellence.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Communication with families is a key factor contributing to the school’s success. There are weekly Blackboard Connect messages to the parents by the school administration as well as the PTA. Several modes of communication are used throughout the grade-levels. Student planners are used to help students develop organizational skills and build communication with families. Teachers also use a variety of technology platforms such as class Dojo, Microsoft Teams and Schoology to communicate with parents and students.

The teachers and administrators set appointments that are convenient for all parties. The parents can also request a conference if they would like to address their child’s progress. In the fall, the first big parents’ visit is Open School Night. Parents have an opportunity to hear an overview of the school-wide goals that are part of the School Comprehensive Education Plan. They are also introduced to the staff and given the School Profile from the previous year. They are informed of the school’s successes on the New York State Assessments and the plan to support the students who need assistance in some skills.

One of the strongest and most active PTAs in the Yonkers Public School is found at PEARLS. Our PTA is comprised of volunteer parents who devote numerous hours of their time to support our teachers and administrators in enriching the students’ education at PEARLS. PEARLS PTA advocates for the students of PEARLS and focuses on issues that affect them. They work with the administration and teaching staff, sponsoring various enrichment projects that enhance the educational and social curriculum of the school, such as field trips, and science, art, theatre workshops and chess program. The PEARLS PTA provides numerous enrichment opportunities for the students by fundraising throughout the year. Examples include Tina’s Read-A-Thon, Bingo Night and school dances. The PTA has received several awards and recognitions including; Family Engagement Award from NYS PTA, Trailblazer Award from NYSPTA, On Target Award from NYSPTA, Early Bird Membership Award from NYS PTA, Good Apple Membership Growth Silver Apple Award badge from NYS PTA, On Target Award badge from NYS PTA, Male

Engagement Award badge from NYS PTA and Founders Day Award badge from NYS PTA.

PEARLS has a partnership with Stop and Shop that provide families in need with meals and gifts for the holidays. In addition, they offer fresh fruit on Fridays to provide students with a healthy snack.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Professional development activities give faculty the opportunity to discuss trends, research current practices, implement research-based practices, and reflect on outcomes. PEARLS yearly PD plan outlines professional learning opportunities leaders and faculty will receive to specifically address learning outcomes for the school community and commitments in our School Comprehensive Education Plan.

Teachers participate in a yearly professional book talk. The book is selected by the Professional Development Committee and is a focus and crucial component of the professional development throughout the year. School Administration selects relevant articles to share with teachers and participate in small group discussions using specific conversation protocols. The protocols allow for productive conversations, build collective understanding, and drive school improvement. Teachers participate in classroom visitations and learning walks. These walks provide teachers with the opportunity to learn and grow from each other without evaluation or judgment. It is an opportunity to experience the learning in action and build capacity within our own school building.

The master schedule is created so that teachers have weekly common planning meetings. Teachers meet on the grade-level to review grade level assessments and collaborate to plan instruction. Bi-Monthly meetings are also held after-school. School-wide staff members read a book to support the social emotional learning. A PLC planning sheet is used to guide administration planning further PD. School Building Leaders and Pupil Support Staff read, *All Learning Is Social and Emotional* by Nancy Frey, Douglas Fisher and Dominique Smith. While reading, School Building Leaders, Teachers and Pupil Support Staff identified key resources that apply to classroom instructions. Teachers focused on integrating lessons on the elements of an SEL Curriculum including, Identity and Agency, Public Spirit and Social Skills. School building leaders and the professional development committee identified Professional Development dates, topics and activities designed around *All Learning is Social and Emotional*.

4. School Leadership:

The PEARLS leadership - Principal and three Assistant Principals - promote a collaborative approach to leading the school. The belief is that, for our students to achieve, the participation of all constituents is paramount. There is a Shared Decision-Making Team which consists of administrators, teachers, parents, and CSEA members. This team's main goal is to ensure outstanding academic achievement for all the students at the PEARLS School.

A quote that best exemplifies The PEARLS Administrative Team's philosophy is, "Resonate leaders know when to be collaborative and when to be visionary, when to listen and when to command. Such leaders have a knack for attuning to their own sense of what matters and articulating a mission that resonates with values of those they lead. These leaders naturally nurture relationships, surface simmering issues, and create the human synergies of a group in harmony," (as found in *Primal Leadership* by Daniel Goleman).

Shared Decision-Making Team identified specific indicators in the New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) Teacher Practice Rubric that are used to measure a teacher's implementation of a Culturally Responsive SEL curriculum. They used *All Learning is Social and Emotional*, the New York State Education Department (NYSED) Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education Framework and the NYSUT teacher rubric to align specific SEL and culturally responsive instructional practices to specific indicators. During teacher observations, administration collects low inference data on the specific indicators identified to rate SEL and Culturally Responsive instruction. During post-observation conferences administration provides teacher ratings and feedback in the identified indicator. Collaboratively teachers and administration develop next steps which will be monitored in the next observation.

During weekly common planning, the administration holds small group meetings with teachers. Teachers define specific commitments they will make in regard to taking ownership over improving the school the total school community. This process involves all stakeholders in the process of perfecting and formalizing to what each member of the school community will commit.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

School building leaders, teachers and pupil support staff utilize the NYSED Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education Framework as a guiding document to build a culturally responsive curriculum and culture at PEARLS. PEARLS uses the four pillars as a guideline for Professional Development and the focus for Common Planning Meetings (Welcoming and affirming Environment, High expectations and rigorous instruction, Inclusive curriculum and assessment, Ongoing professional Learning).

Differentiation of instruction is embedded in the instruction in order to meet the needs of the diverse population of the students at PEARLS. By creating a positive, engaging environment in the classroom, the teachers pave the way for real learning. In order to meet the needs of all students, the teachers collect data about individual learners and about the class as a whole. Assessing the students' learning is a complex task that requires keen observation skills and recording of information in a systematic way. The teachers make informed decisions about what skills are necessary to teach each child, what materials to use, and what strategies will result in the most effective learning.

There are school-wide campaigns to support a social emotional theme, such as kindness month. Students participate in school-wide activities to engage all members of the school community. Some of the activities engage students in discussions around how to maintain PEARLS as a Community Against Bullying (CAB). Teachers focus discussion to bring awareness to what bullying is and how to prevent it.

Our PTA multicultural show-case is organized based on the culture of families that attend the school. Parents volunteer to bring in materials to showcase in the lobby. The classrooms work on projects that are correlated and displayed in the main lobby of the school. Teachers share their own backgrounds and share personal experiences to support the students in sharing about themselves. Students voice and choice is a crucial part of their instruction. Students working together in group, partners or independent. The classrooms aim to be an open safe culture in the room so that all students feel safe asking questions. Technology is an important piece to allow students to engage in the same standards at various levels, allowing for equity in learning.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE

The one practice that has been most instrumental to the success of the students at PEARLS is the focus on using data to improve student performance. The teachers focus on students who need remediation and those that demonstrate high performance but low growth on NYS assessments. To address the needs of the high performing low growth students, teachers utilize the Quadrant chart from the NWEA MAP assessment to identify and monitor the students who fell under the high performing low growth category. These students are offered pre-assessments prior to starting a unit of study or lesson. If these students perform at a mastery level on the pre-assessment, they receive differentiated instruction. To do so, teachers utilize curriculum compacting, an instructional strategy often used when teaching gifted and talented students. In order to compact the curriculum, teachers adjust the pacing calendar for students who have already displayed mastery. Teachers replace content students know with new content or enrichment projects.

In addition, using the Spring NYS /MAP results, individual teachers identify students who requires remediation and/or compacting. Within that sub-group, teachers will select five students and monitor their progress using Formative and Summative Assessments that are aligned to Next Generation Standards. To identify the needs of the remediation/accelerated students, teachers utilize a Unit Pre-Assessment.

During weekly grade level PLCs, teachers and School Leaders utilize weekly assessments and post-assessments to reflect on the effectiveness of selected teaching strategies, as they specifically relate to their sub-group. The teachers determine if the specified strategies need to be revised. Teachers utilize the assessments to identify student areas of weakness/strengths. Teachers will identify where in the curriculum they can address the areas of concern. Teachers identify specific Power Standards to address. MTSS strategies and supports are also utilized to support student.