

U.S. Department of Education
2016 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. Nadine McDermott

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

Official School Name Todd Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 45 Ingham Road

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

City Briarcliff Manor State NY Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 10510-1704

County Westchester County

Telephone (914) 432-8062 Fax (914) 941-0125

Web site/URL http://www.briarcliffschools.org E-mail nmcdermott@briarcliffschools.org

Twitter Handle https://twitter.com/superkaish Facebook Page https://www.facebook.com/pages/Briarcliff
-Manor-School-District/303873686477888 Google+ _____

YouTube/URL _____ Blog _____ Other Social Media Link _____

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. James Kaishian E-mail jkaishian@briarcliffschools.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Briarcliff Manor Union Free School District Tel. (914) 941-8880

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. Michael Haberman
(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, write N/A in the space.*

Part I – Eligibility Certification

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

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The public school has met their state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) using the most recent accountability results available for the year prior to nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, a public school must meet the state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) for the year in which they are nominated (2015-2016) and be certified by the state representative. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2010 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, or 2015.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school 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. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2015-2016) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

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

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
 - Suburban with characteristics typical of an urban area
 - Suburban
 - Small city or town in a rural area
 - Rural
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2015 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	41	41	82
1	35	42	77
2	35	38	73
3	64	42	106
4	65	45	110
5	66	52	118
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	306	260	566

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 16 % Asian
 - 2 % Black or African American
 - 8 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 71 % White
 - 3 % 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 2014 – 2015 school year: 1%

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, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	6
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	2
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	8
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	582
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.014
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	1

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

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Finnish, Korean, Chinese, Arabic, Polish

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 0 %
Total number students who qualify: 2

8. Students receiving special education services: 7 %
37 Total number of students served

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

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

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 6
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers	27
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	24
Paraprofessionals	27
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 22:1

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

Required Information	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011
Daily student attendance	97%	97%	96%	97%	95%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2015.

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

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

Yes No

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

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

Todd School provides a safe, positive learning environment that assures the academic and social development of each child. Our students are creative, critical, independent thinkers who strive for personal excellence. As a learning community, we prepare our children for their future by fostering empathy and embracing individuality.

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

PART III – SUMMARY

Todd Elementary School serves students in grades K-5 and is the only elementary school in the Briarcliff Manor Union Free School District. Briarcliff Manor UFSD is a small district that serves approximately 1,470 students in grades K -12. Briarcliff Manor is an affluent, suburban community that is approximately 6.7 square miles and is located in Westchester County with a population of approximately 8,000. Families move to Briarcliff because of the longstanding quality of its three schools in a county of many similar high-quality schools. Being a quaint community, proximate to New York City, Briarcliff is perceived as a very attractive place to raise and educate children. We primarily serve Briarcliff resident students; however, each year there are tuition students who choose to attend our school.

Established in 1953, Todd School originally enrolled 200 students in grades K-6 and today houses 566 students grades K-5. Todd School was named after the first teacher and principal, George A. Todd, Jr. Historically, there has been a strong alignment between the educational goals of parents and students and the mission of Briarcliff schools within the community. This is commonly known as “the Briarcliff standard.” The parent organizations partner effectively with the school staff and administration to maintain this relationship between educational aspirations and consistently excellent results.

Contributing to the uniqueness of Todd School is the tradition and commitment by the school community to “The Golden Rule of Todd School” and the school goal of empathy. Habits of Mind, along with mindfulness, permeate our school climate and culture from our hallways to our classrooms. When you enter our school, Habits of Mind signs hang in the main lobby as a visual representation of what we value as a school community. Another visual representation of Habits of Mind is the beautiful ceramic murals that were designed and created by each student and staff member through the leadership of our art teacher and in collaboration with an artist in residence. The themes of the student murals include the Golden Rule, peace, stewardship and sustainability. A separate staff mural is dedicated to past, present and future students of Todd School. Our Mindful Garden is a stimulating landscape which provides the seeds that allow students to blossom. Other examples of traditions include the Principal’s School-wide Read Alouds, which occur throughout the year with a focus on Habits of Mind, as well as our annual Field Day, Jump Rope for Heart, Winter Sing and multi-cultural assembly. These traditions support the vision statement and allow for students and faculty to work interdependently with the goal of fostering empathy within the school community.

At the heart of Todd School’s success is the belief that all children are intrinsically motivated to learn. Our rigorous curricula in all content areas are aligned with the standards and allow flexibility so teachers can design instruction that is responsive to the individual learning needs of students. Through problem-based learning, in conjunction with the study of Habits of Mind, our students have opportunities to acquire knowledge and apply what they know beyond the content learned to solve real world problems. In addition, a collaborative culture inspires and challenges all students to realize their full potential academically, emotionally, physically, socially and culturally. We nurture the development of the whole child through the daily learning experiences in which our students are engaged. Todd School is a home for the mind where the foundational building blocks are laid for all students to be successful in and prepared for this global society. The annual school goals of literacy, numeracy and empathy provide continuous opportunities to operationalize the vision for Todd School by fostering thinking dispositions, a growth mindset and the power of “yet.” Cultural diversity enables us to celebrate the traditions of our students and provides occasions to promote empathy and honor individuality.

Our philosophy and vision are the linchpins to our success, a success that has been recognized by the New York State Education Department’s designation as a Reward School for Exemplary High Performing School in 2013, 2014 and 2015. For the past five years, Todd has ranked as a top ten school in New York State and within the top five in Westchester County. Using data systematically to improve teaching and learning has contributed to this success. The Response to Intervention (RtI) team, along with the Strategy Teams and Teaching and Learning Council, provide forums to analyze and use data to improve teaching and learning.

Finally, we are proud of our results and recognize that state assessments are only one measure of our success in educating students for the future. While Habits of Mind are not explicitly measured on standardized tests, Todd School strives to provide a myriad of opportunities to cultivate these thinking dispositions that will create the blueprint of endless learning opportunities and prepare our students for the future.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Cultivating a fundamental foundation in literacy is vital to students' success in school and in life. Our faculty is committed to staying current with new and innovative curricula and scientifically research-based instructional practices. We were proactive in transitioning to Common Core by engaging in research and a school-wide dialogue that resulted in the adoption of our language arts and mathematics programs, Reading Street and Primary Mathematics. Our core curricula are clearly defined and aligned with the New York State Common Core Standards and provides assured experiences for students throughout their elementary education.

In our language arts program, we use a balanced literacy approach to develop skillful readers and writers. Complex literature, including both fiction and informational text, builds content knowledge that allows us to integrate writing in response to literature. Essential questions, which reflect a common theme, frame our literature units. Students are immersed in the elements of literature in all genres where oral language literacy and listening skills are emphasized. Specific comprehension skills and strategies are taught along with vocabulary, phonics, spelling and grammar. Practice occurs daily in a whole class setting, through small group instruction and independently during literacy centers. Teachers differentiate and use a wide variety of instructional strategies to foster successful, independent readers. These strategies include guided reading, close reading, literature circles, Readers Theater and Socratic Seminars, which promote thinking dispositions and critical thinking. Sets of leveled trade books, available in our school book room, are used to enhance our curriculum.

Systematic curriculum and instruction in writing are aligned K -5 and focus on the genres of narrative, informational and opinion. Students have opportunities to write poetry, journal entries, persuasive and descriptive essays, scripts, digital book reviews and “glogs.” Through the writing process, students learn to generate and organize ideas, find their personal voice, expand word choice, develop sentence fluency and correctly apply conventions. Units of study are designed to allow students to work at the intersection of disciplines by integrating social studies and science.

Our social studies/ELA web-based curriculum was developed by our Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) and is aligned with the Common Core Social Studies Framework. Each inquiry unit focuses on geography, history, civics, government and economics. Emphasis is placed on developing foundational research skills through the use of a variety of print and digital resources. Compelling questions allow students to read and analyze primary source documents, synthesize their learning and apply it in written form.

Primary Mathematics, our K-5 program, targets mathematical understanding and is designed to promote the essential learning of logical and critical thinking through problem solving. This is a Singapore Mathematics framework which parallels the Mathematical Practices in the Common Core State Standards. The concrete-pictorial-abstract (CPA) instructional approach allows students to demonstrate understanding by using multiple models to approach rigorous math concepts at various cognitive levels. This approach also fosters conceptual understanding by allowing students to think deeply about math concepts before learning the "rules" or formulaic expressions. As a result, our students think as mathematicians by developing the dispositions to be effective problem solvers, investigating possibilities and making real-world connections that are indispensable life-long attributes. Primary Digital is our online math curriculum that is aligned philosophically and pedagogically with Primary Mathematics. This learning management system is a valuable multi-media resource that provides our students and parents with an opportunity to access curriculum at home.

Our BOCES Science 21 curriculum is implemented in all grade levels to engage students as scientists and engineers through the study of life and physical science. Students apply the scientific method during these inquiry based and interactive modules. Hands on experiments provide opportunities for students to predict and hypothesize, classify, explore and organize data to draw conclusions about their investigations. In our

units of study, students use scientific tools and learn academic vocabulary within the context of the unit. There is a strong emphasis on the importance of recording data accurately while writing lab reports. The science and engineering program is enriched through technology, literature, field trips and in-class presentations by scientists.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

At Todd School, we place equal value on all content areas by regularly scheduling instruction in art, general and performing music, library, physical education and technology (Encore classes). Our 45 minute Encore classes foster student learning across the curriculum through interdisciplinary units of study. Students in kindergarten through second grade are scheduled for library, art and general music once in a six day cycle and physical education three classes in a cycle. Technology instruction for these primary grades is a flexible model that includes student lab time. Our technology and library teachers also serve as coaches and valuable resources for faculty. Students in third, fourth and fifth grades have technology, library, art, and general music once in a cycle with physical education twice. Our innovative Encore schedule allows our intermediate students to be reorganized into six different color groups, a design which fosters collaboration and social and emotional development. In addition, students in fourth and fifth grades may elect band, orchestra and/or chorus. These ensembles meet once or twice each cycle. Enrollment in the performing music program highlights its success with approximately 95% of the fourth and fifth graders participating in band or orchestra and about 50% in chorus.

Through the study of the elements and principles of art, our visual art curriculum allows students to think and create as artists. Units of study provide opportunities for students to learn art history through studio art techniques including drawing, painting, pottery and three-dimensional elements. Technology is infused through multi-media art such as webpage design, photography and multidisciplinary projects. In the spring, students proudly display artwork at our annual Music and Art Festival.

General music is a course of study in comprehensive musicianship with a focus on music literacy. Students acquire an understanding and appreciation of other cultures and languages, develop their creativity and imagination, and learn to value and respond to music from around the world. To foster the development of music literacy and to create a foundation for performing music, students learn how to compose and to play African drums, recorders and other percussion instruments.

Our performing music curriculum allows students to apply their general music learning to the study of instrumental and/or choral music and to perform as an ensemble. In chorus, students learn how the voice works as an instrument. Students learn how to read a choral score by studying many genres including repertoire in world languages. The band and orchestra programs offer a choice of a wind, percussion or string instrument. Through whole and small group instruction, the instrumental program develops comprehensive musicianship as well as life skills such as organization, goal setting and time management.

The cornerstones of our library program are research, information evaluation and love of reading. The essential process of research is explicitly taught and scaffolded using current curriculum topics taught in the classroom. Our teacher librarian inspires students to be lifetime learners and lifelong readers through a robust author visit program, ongoing reading promotions and digital reviews of new and popular literature. In the last decade, circulation has increased almost three fold which reflects our dedication to literacy.

In physical education, our commitment is to instill the value of lifelong physical activity through curriculum that fosters the physical, psycho-motor and effective domains. Physical education classes improve students' fitness through a focus on strength, flexibility, body composition, wellness, and muscular and cardiovascular endurance. Students participate in special programs to promote motor skill development such as Jump Rope for Heart and National Circus Project. A unit of study also integrates the rock climbing wall to excite students about fitness. Sportsmanship and teamwork are key components of the program.

Technology has changed the way our students learn and acquire knowledge. As a result, Todd School is at the forefront of the Briarcliff 2.0 initiative to put technology in the hands of all students and staff. Technology is infused into all curriculum areas. All students have access to computers in our technology lab and library. In grades K-3, there is access to laptop carts, and in grades 4 and 5, there are 1:1 devices. In technology class, tomorrow's global digital citizens collaborate, create, communicate and think critically. The Encore classes foster cognitive, effective and kinesthetic learning and prepare students to think creatively and meta-cognitively by working at the intersection of disciplines.

3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

To achieve our instructional goals, we use a variety of effective instructional methods and interventions to individualize instruction. All classrooms have interactive whiteboards that allow engaging whole group and small group instruction. The physical classroom design supports the diverse needs of students, including use of specialized furniture such as stand-up desks, noodle chairs and active learning spaces (mobile furniture). Each classroom is equipped with a research-based amplification system that equalizes sound distribution to enhance student engagement.

Teachers use the problem-based learning approach, focusing on authentic, open-ended problems that engage students in meaningful learning. Learner active, technology infused (LATI) classrooms provide opportunities for students to gain content knowledge while solving complex, real world problems using collaboration and critical thinking skills. Technology is integrated through the use of laptops and applications such as One Note to create interdisciplinary learning and allow for differentiation.

Various ELA instructional methods and interventions are available to meet all students' needs. My Sidewalks, a parallel program to Reading Street, serves students who face reading challenges through strategic interventions. In addition, Orton Gillingham approaches are available to students with reading disabilities. Individualized enrichment opportunities are incorporated into the curriculum using more complex text, close reading, and critical thinking analysis. Interventions are delivered in both whole and small guided reading groups, using scaffolding and modeling.

In mathematics, classroom teachers use multiple instructional methods to meet the needs of their students. Guided math is the framework for small group instruction that provides an opportunity for teachers to address specific needs of students. The Concrete-Pictorial-Abstract (CPA) approach is at the heart of the Primary Mathematics program. Topics are introduced using an anchor task, engaging students in a problem-solving process through discovery and exploration of a concept. Teachers access a variety of resources, including Primary Digital, our math learning management system which provides additional opportunities for differentiated instruction. Pathways is a math enrichment program that is offered to students who have demonstrated needs beyond the curriculum. Students work on complex problems at a faster pace and at a deeper level.

Through the RtI process, students are identified as needing support, intervention or accommodations to access the curriculum. Support service teachers use a collaborative model to support students in the areas of reading, math, speech and language, social skills, occupational and physical therapy, and English as a New Language (ENL). This allows for intensive differentiated instruction in a small group setting. To ensure the least restrictive environment for our students, special education teachers provide direct and indirect consultant services to students and teachers.

4. Assessment for Instruction and Learning and Sharing Assessment Results:

To sustain a high level of academic success for all students, Todd School champions the importance of collecting and utilizing both formative and summative assessment data to drive decisions for instruction and intervention. Each fall, state assessment data is analyzed by all grade levels using the World Café Discussion Protocol. Grade level teams use this data to develop additional instructional methods and strategies to target skills and plan for instruction. For example, when teachers identified an achievement gap concerning area and perimeter, they engaged in Lesson Study to develop an anchor lesson to target these skills.

Our systematic school-wide ELA and math assessment plans provide dates and guidelines for administration of common benchmark and curriculum-based assessments that are aligned with our ELA and mathematics curriculum. Using a three-tiered approach to assessment and instruction under Response to Intervention (RtI), all benchmark and state assessment data are closely analyzed for trends across grade levels. As a result, programming adjustments and individualized interventions are developed. Individual and/or small group reading, math and language supports are available for all students as well as enrichment math classes in grades four and five. By analyzing benchmark data from the Academic Improvement Measurement System (AIMSweb), an achievement gap in phonological awareness was revealed. To close this gap in reading, we have developed specific interventions and scheduled additional instruction for phonological awareness.

Classroom teachers use data to recognize and provide enrichment opportunities for high achieving students and continue to effectively instruct students performing below and within grade level expectations. Student needs are met through differentiation, guided reading, guided math, individual progress monitoring and re-teaching. Classroom teachers and the RtI team work together and meet as Strategy Teams to develop individual interventions and high impact instructional strategies. These are based on Reading Street and Primary Mathematics benchmark data, Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) and individual curriculum based measures such as weekly curricular tests, writing samples, and observational records.

Student achievement information is consistently disseminated through RtI, grade level team meetings and faculty meetings. Success is shared with our educational partners through parent-teacher conferences, CSE/504 meetings, report cards and Board of Education meetings. Our school's accomplishments, as well as future educational goals, are shared with our community at publicly televised Board of Education presentations. Data that reflects the results of both formative and summative assessments are used by administration to provide targeted professional development opportunities for teachers. Having an organized and systematic approach to instruction and learning is essential to ensure academic progress.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Fostering a positive climate and culture is central to our Todd School learning community. With a focus on empathy, we have created a supportive culture to enable students to meet academic goals while promoting emotional intelligence. To achieve success in these domains, Habits of Mind, mindfulness, growth mindset and adhering to “The Golden Rule of Todd School” are emphasized throughout the students’ daily lives and are explicitly taught and practiced in our classrooms, on the school bus, in the cafeteria and on the playground. Teachers receive professional development to infuse these dispositions into the curricula and school climate. The Mindful Garden is a dedicated learning space where students reflect and practice being mindful in a calm atmosphere. As a result, students are better able to self-regulate their emotions and build more positive social connections, resulting in a decline in student discipline referrals and an increase in student accountability.

We believe that teaching empathy is a lifeline to the heart and soul of our school. To promote empathy and “The Golden Rule,” formal lessons are designed to appreciate diversity within our school community. To further our vision, students participate in the Stuff the Bus program where they collect pajamas and books for needy children in Westchester County. Other examples include food and clothing drives held during the holiday season to support our local children’s hospital, food bank and ASPCA. Our fifth grade music ensembles also perform for the senior citizens in the community. In addition to giving back to the community, students aesthetically enhanced our school hallways by creating ceramic tiles reflecting their understanding of the Golden Rule, peace, stewardship and sustainability.

Within our school, teachers are supported in a myriad of ways and actively promote a positive school climate and culture. Common planning time is scheduled for each team to foster collaboration and communication and to capitalize on individual teacher’s strengths. There are formal and informal teacher leadership opportunities that provide a collaborative and collegial relationship between the faculty and administration. These leadership roles provide an opportunity for teachers to share their expertise and to initiate new ideas to improve our school. Teachers are recognized for their contributions to the school climate and culture. They work in partnership with administrators in school-wide goal setting, curriculum development and student placement.

As a result of cultivating a positive culture and climate, the whole child is nurtured, academically, socially and emotionally, and teachers feel valued, respected and supported.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

At Todd School, parents and the Briarcliff community are essential partners and provide mutual support to ensure the educational success of our students. Our school climate is welcoming to parents, and we provide them with countless opportunities to support our teachers and students. Prior to school beginning, an Open House is hosted to welcome families into their classrooms. A kindergarten transition session in September, as well as new student and parent orientations, make students and their families feel at home.

Our district website and newsletters serve as valuable resources for parents and the Briarcliff community. Our public relations firm works collaboratively with our administrators and teachers to ensure that the website is current and highlights student achievement and school events. Through our student information system, parents have open access to the Parent Portal that provides student data and other essential parent information. We also use social media to further promote and communicate district events and student centered activities through the use of our BMUFSD app, Twitter and Facebook.

The Briarcliff PTA plays a vital role in engaging parents in our school. The PTA supports enriching experiences for students, such as field trips, assemblies and author visits. We co-sponsor learning sessions for parents on current educational topics and provide training in new curricula. For example, our Math Parent Workshops provide training in the Singapore Mathematics philosophy that is aligned with Primary

Mathematics. In addition, the Briarcliff Manor Education Foundation and Friends of the Arts are organizations that work to actively involve families and our community. These two organizations have awarded almost three hundred grants and initiatives that have enhanced curricular and co-curricular experiences for all students. Grants span all academic areas and encompass projects, programs, professional development and equipment that touch every child, every day.

The doors at Todd School are always open to the community. Our facilities are utilized throughout the year by the Recreation Department. We host meetings with local preschool directors to ensure a smooth transition to kindergarten. In addition, teachers collaborate with universities to sponsor student teachers and field experiences. Students have opportunities to experience the world beyond their classroom. We partner with the Briarcliff Public Library to offer a video book talk program. The Jacob Burns Film Center, a local cultural arts center, provides opportunities to learn the techniques used to tell a story through film. We build a bridge between school and our community that highlights and celebrates student success and excellence in education.

3. Professional Development:

Professional development is a vital component of our learning community, the goal of which is to build capacity of teachers and administrators. It is paramount to providing assured experiences for our students as well as to effectively implement the shifts in the Common Core Standards. Over the past five years, teachers and administrators have received onsite and offsite professional development to support and ensure Common Core alignment in all curricula areas. Our learning sessions focus on critical thinking, analysis and synthesis of information resulting in our third grade ELA scores going from thirty-second in New York State in 2012 to seventh in 2015.

All faculty participate in two learning sessions monthly that support our school-wide implementation of Habits of Mind. We start our learning sessions with a mindful moment and then engage teachers in interactive strategies and purposeful experiences that they use with students in classrooms. Resources are shared with teachers in a digital faculty learning lounge. Our work is driven by an essential question that provides a focus for our learning sessions. We have established data points that reflect the question with live data collection. Teachers have also been trained by an international expert in Japanese Lesson Study. Several Lesson Study cycles in mathematics have provided teachers with an opportunity to collaboratively research and design anchor lessons to support the philosophy and pedagogy of Primary Mathematics. Our rigorous professional development has resulted in our fifth grade students ranking number one in Westchester County on the New York State math assessments for the past three years.

District-wide professional development opportunities for teachers and administrators focus on problem based learning and the learner active technology infused classroom (LATI). Teachers create student-centered classrooms that focus on authentic real world problems fostering collaboration and critical thinking skills. Briarcliff School District is a member of the Tri-States Consortium of high performing public schools which uses an alternative assessment model of qualitative and quantitative data analysis to enhance student performance and foster systematic change. Teachers and administrators receive training so they can participate in Tri-States evaluations. There are ample opportunities for teachers to teach teachers in areas of expertise. Examples include training in One Note and our librarian presenting a workshop on “Rev up Reading with Digital Student Reviews” at the annual New York State Library Association’s conference.

Our commitment to professional development reflects the robust culture for learning that has led to our high achievement.

4. School Leadership:

Todd School is a learning community that fosters continuous improvement for all administrators, educators, staff, students and parents. Creating a collective and shared vision with all constituent groups has led to our success as a school. The leadership philosophy can best be described as visionary and actionary. We believe that good leadership is also good “followship,” as administrators share the responsibility of leading by working alongside teachers. In order to achieve success for all, the structure of principal and assistant principal is supported by teacher leaders who serve as team leaders and curriculum leaders. In addition, the administrative team works collaboratively with the PTA, Briarcliff Manor Education Foundation (BMEF) and the Briarcliff Friends of the Arts (BFA) to enrich our programs.

There are numerous forums for school leaders to collaborate on decisions to improve student achievement. The Teaching and Learning Council (TLC) is comprised of grade level team leaders and curriculum leaders. Each representative shares his/her expertise by providing input and feedback on current curriculum initiatives. The TLC was the forum to research Common Core math programs and resulted in the adoption of Primary Mathematics and Primary Digital. Through our Response to Intervention Team (RtI), comprised of support service providers and the assistant principal, areas of expertise are shared to support, improve and enrich learning for our students. Strategy Teams were newly formed this year and are comprised of the RtI Team and our grade level teams. The purpose of the Strategy Teams is to create a forum for meaningful dialogue to discuss and develop high impact instructional strategies and resources to support the Todd learning community. Faculty Cabinet, another teacher leadership opportunity, includes team leaders representing all grade levels and departments. Each representative provides input and feedback at each meeting regarding the operations and management of our school. Lastly, the administration hosts monthly team meetings to foster communication and to support the work of the building. The purpose of these leadership meetings is to ensure that best instructional practices are implemented consistently to ensure student success.

The organizational structures described above reflect a collaborative model of shared leadership that generates a yearly pattern of student growth. We imagine this pattern as a positive, upward spiral which indicates a commitment to, and a reflection of, continuous professional learning and educational progress.

Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Habits of Mind serve as an internal compass to prepare mindful, self-directed learners for future uncertainties in this global society. An upward spiral of success for our students at Todd School can be attributed to our commitment to infuse Habits of Mind, mindfulness and a growth mindset into the culture, climate and curricula. The study and implementation of these thinking dispositions provide a shared vision and common language that serve as a connective thread permeating all aspects of school life for students, staff and parents. As a result, Todd School is certified as a Habits of Mind International Learning Community of Excellence.

In the second half of the second decade of the 21st century, it is imperative that we cultivate dispositional thinking so students know how to behave when they are confronted with a problem to which an answer is not immediately apparent. Moreover, developing these patterns of skillful thinking moves beyond acquiring content knowledge to having the disposition to know how to apply it. Embedded in the New York State College and Career Ready Standards (CCR) is the language of Habits of Mind. These standards require students to apply past knowledge in complex ways and to be metacognitive. Other examples include having a questioning mindset, solving a problem multiple ways, persisting, and being open to continuous learning.

We are strategically implementing Habits of Mind, mindfulness and a growth mindset school-wide. Live data collection is ongoing and includes exit tickets from our Habits of Mind Learning Sessions, observations using a Habits of Mind Excel Tracker and evidence from our Instructional Rounds. Our success is evident when we analyze discipline referrals and student and teacher surveys, tally classroom visits to our Mindful Garden and observe mindful moments on our school buses and in hallways. The language of Habits of Mind is ever present and is woven into the fabric of our daily lives. “After I finish I will look over my work and see what can be improved and add more detail. I will think about what I am thinking about in the text and see if it makes sense.” “I learned that I am good at some things and not others, but I have to keep persisting and striving for accuracy.” These exemplary student statements echo throughout our school.