

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. Dina Ercolano

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

Official School Name P.S. 158 The Bayard Taylor School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1458 York Avenue

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

City New York State NY Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 10075-8815

County New York

Telephone (212) 744-6562 Fax (221) 772-8424

Web site/URL http://www.ps158.org E-mail dercola@schools.nyc.gov

Twitter Handle _____ Facebook Page _____ 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.

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Ms. Bonnie Laboy E-mail BLABOY@SCHOOLS.NYC.GOV
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name New York City Department of Education, District 2 Tel. (212) 356-3739

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

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

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

Date _____

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

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

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

Part I – Eligibility Certification

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

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. 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):
- 938 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 305 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 438 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 1681 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	34	38	34
K	70	55	125
1	67	72	139
2	51	55	106
3	71	49	120
4	44	47	91
5	53	57	110
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	390	373	763

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 10 % Asian
 - 4 % Black or African American
 - 10 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 1 % 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: 2%

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	14
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	0
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	14
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	775
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.018
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	2

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 5 %
39 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Albanian, Chinese –any, French, Georgian, Greek, Hebrew, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Mandarin, Maltese, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 12 %
Total number students who qualify: 88

8. Students receiving special education services: 16 %
124 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.

- 2 Autism
- 0 Deafness
- 0 Deaf-Blindness
- 1 Emotional Disturbance
- 1 Hearing Impairment
- 0 Mental Retardation
- 0 Multiple Disabilities
- 0 Orthopedic Impairment
- 28 Other Health Impaired
- 21 Specific Learning Disability
- 68 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: 1
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	36
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	10
Paraprofessionals	11
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	14

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	95%	96%	95%	95%	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 X

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

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

PS 158 is a nurturing, learning community committed to educating the whole child. Our inclusive school environment encourages the abilities and talents of our students.

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

PS 158, located on York Avenue, lends itself to a family centric community. There are two hospitals on the periphery of the school zone and dozens of local small businesses. Our families are medical professionals, restaurateurs, educators, and entrepreneurs, as well as an extraordinary international community. All of which offer a variety of experiences, culture and support to our school.

Our students come together from a wide variety of socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds. PS 158 students are incredibly well rounded, with passionate interests that extend beyond our school building. We have student athletes, dancers, actors and singers who have garnered many awards and accolades.

The emphasis we place on differentiated instruction and attention to the whole child allows each student to incorporate their individual skills and talents into their learning experience.

PS 158 traditions serve as touchstones with our community. We welcome Kindergarten and Pre-K families with an ice cream social. In October, the entire neighborhood community is welcomed to our Octoberfest block party to share games, rides, treats and a thrilling haunted house. Later in the fall our students participate in a fun run benefiting the Ronald McDonald House. Other traditions embedded in our school are grade level enrichment programs (such as Circus Arts and Ballet Hispanico), the Spring Benefit Auction, International Night, the fourth and fifth grade talent show and field day.

PS 158 is evolving and we are proud to see new traditions. For the past few years we have been honored to have high school seniors, who were PS 158 students, as the keynote speaker at the 5th grade graduation. It is amazing for the 5th graders to see the journey they are embarking on, through the eyes of a former student. Another wonderful tradition we have begun is a monthly school spirit/community outreach day. Once a month our staff and students participate in a spirit activity that is linked to a community service project. One month we all dressed up like a beloved literary character and we connected that to a book donation to a school in need. These traditions are embedded in our culture and are part of the soul of our school.

Our school has had many milestones we could reflect upon, but the ones that stand out most are the moments where we have collaborated with others. We have co-located with a number of schools, allowing us to share ideas and support with colleagues from other schools. We have had a very rewarding and long-standing partnership with Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP), growing from the first professional development session our teachers attended to becoming a lab site and example to other schools. Finally, we take great pride in building capacity within our school and are so pleased when we see our staff take on new challenges and responsibilities. It is very common to see teachers grow and become coaches, and then administrators. This provides a continuity of mind and spirit that permeates the building.

PS 158 is over 100 years old. In 1895, a school trustee, W. Horithal, embarked upon opening a new school, in Yorkville, in order to educate the growing population of immigrant children. PS 158 opened on Jan. 9, 1899, with 263 male students. Journal records were discovered noting that the students observed the 100th anniversary of the death of George Washington and the first graduation was held on June 27, 1899. It has been a thriving community school ever since.

PS 158 is committed to developing life-long learners for all students and adults. In order to connect classroom learning to each learner's needs and skills, teachers and students provide and receive feedback that is specific, actionable and timely. Teachers are constantly collaborating and participating in Professional Development (PD). A shared-decision PD committee meets regularly to conduct learning walks and patterns are shared to guide the PD focus for the year. Teacher teams and teacher-self-selected topics are studied throughout the year to further pedagogical and content mastery. Our studies have led to the implementation of goal-setting practices across all grades, and providing teachers and students ways to achieve their goals.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

At PS 158 we teach units of study aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards across all content areas. Our teachers plan these units using curricular resources provided by our many learning partners, such as the TCRWP and Mathematics in the City (MitC). With their students and data in mind, our teachers adapt these units to fit their many diverse learners. We are guided by the Universal Design for Learning (UDL), a philosophy that we integrate into our teaching to give all students, including SWDs and ELLs, access to quality differentiated instruction that meets their specific needs. We support students in taking ownership of their progress by working with them to self-assess and set goals in all subject areas.

Much of our Response to Intervention (RTI) is provided through assessment-based small group learning. Through our work with the TCRWP, the Teachers College Inclusive Classrooms Project (TCICP), and MitC, our teachers have learned how to specifically identify instructional needs and develop individualized plans for each student. They are also able to organize students in small groups for targeted instruction in each specific core content area.

ELA

PS 158 implements a balanced approach to literacy instruction, integrating instruction with authentic reading and writing experiences in order to support students in becoming lifelong readers and writers. Daily, students are engaged in read aloud, shared reading and writing, minilessons, independent reading/writing, and small group work, including guided reading, strategy lessons, and book clubs. This provides them the opportunity for explicit instruction from both their teachers and peers, read and write in the company of others, and work independently to practice all they have learned.

With the support of staff developers, our teachers plan units of study that are designed to meet the needs of the readers and writers and refine their methods of teaching. They study data and think about how to best move students reading and writing levels through conferring, small group work, and whole class instruction.

Teachers assess their students across the year. Students' levels are determined and monitored through running records and performance assessments made to meet the common core standards. Writing units begin with an on-demand piece which are then assessed using common core aligned learning progressions. These assessments guide their whole class and small group instruction.

In addition, teachers use this data to determine and set the appropriate individualized goals and next steps for each student. Then, they chart a path of instruction to support students in reaching those goals. Our work is based on research done by Fountas and Pinnell, Richard Arlington and Marie Clay.

Across both reading and writing students have access to grade-level texts and materials and are encouraged to make choices about what they read and write. The classroom libraries are leveled with a range of multi genre texts so students can enjoy both rich literature and informational texts on topics and by authors of interest. In writing, there are many choices: paper choices, topic choices, and choice from a repertoire of strategies to employ and develop their work -- students can sketch out, act out, work on a story map, plan or flesh out ideas with peers to engage in the work.

Math

At PS 158, students learn mathematics through authentic investigations that offer multiple entry points and solutions that involve perseverance and sense-making. With staff developers, we continuously revise our curriculum to meet our students. We have designed CCLS-aligned assessments in order to gauge student understanding.

Teachers analyze student work to inform instruction and address misconceptions through small group instruction and one-on-one conferences. Students' work is assessed for mastery through on-going checks for understanding and formative/summative assessment. Fluency expectations are practiced through number talks, number strings and math centers.

Open-ended math investigations are explored at every grade level where students can use appropriate mathematical models, different mathematical representations and a variety of math strategies to form ideas that are then shared back to the class community. Authentic problem solving allows students to draw on their past experiences and link mathematics to other subjects. Across classrooms, students work with technology, play interactive games, act out story problems and model the mathematical content with manipulatives.

Science and Social Studies

For Social Studies and Science, teachers design lessons integrating literacy and math around the Scope and Sequence and use Teachers College Literacy in Other Contents, a curriculum that we helped create at PS 158. Students also access content through centers that utilize visual, auditory, sensory resources. Students analyze content through primary sources, videos, music, images, poetry, art, statistics, maps, graphs, artifacts and differentiated texts. We carefully set up workstations to provide RTI for students who need extra assistance.

For all content areas we continually refine our practice to respond to classroom data, student feedback, inter-visitations and labsites, structures where teachers, coaches and staff developers model best practices.

In our Pre-K classrooms, our teachers respond to the knowledge of children, child development, and content to plan and adapt the curriculum, aligned to the Pre-K Foundation for the Common Core. We engage children as active learners, using a range of effective, developmentally appropriate strategies to create connections throughout the day. We utilize The Creative Curriculum, an interdisciplinary units of study which nurtures the development of the five domains: approaches to learning, physical development and health, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, and cognition and knowledge of the world. To respond to students, we use the Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment to collect and analyze authentic student observations and work.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

At PS 158 we offer our students a wide variety of curriculum in the daily schedule in addition to core academics, as we believe it is important to provide a supportive learning environment for all our students at every level. Our schedule includes:

Music

Through Music our students discover music content and skills. Students engage in singing, performing, learning instruments and cultural music.

Media Center/Technology

The media center is a state-of-the-art learning environment available to all of our students to develop students' ability to think critically and creatively in an information-rich society. We offer a wide variety of learning experiences, including digital literacy learning in literacy, social studies and research opportunities. The objectives of the PS158 media center curriculum include fostering creative inquiry through information literacy skills that support CCSS goals, and beyond. By offering multimodal opportunities to enhance both discovery and creation, our students become active partners in constructing their own learning experiences. We teach social responsibility in using our technology integrated programs, including digital storytelling and collaborative communication platforms, to promote transliteracy in problem solving, decision making, and innovation. Each of our classrooms is also equipped with document cameras, laptops, and iPads, to which students have access.

Physical Education/Health

Every student has PE where pertinent motor and cognitive skills are learned and practiced. Nutrition and healthy lifestyle choices are also addressed regularly. Children learn a variety of team and individual sports such as football, hockey, volleyball, basketball, tennis, track and field, soccer, circus arts, dance and movement. The goal of the program is to encourage the children to develop a strong sense of self-esteem by allowing them to experience the excitement and value of physical activity in a participatory rather than competitive atmosphere.

Arts

Art experiences in Pre K – 1st grade are designed to stimulate an interest in the appreciation of art. Students develop skills in drawing, painting, collage, printmaking and sculpture. Fine motor coordination is enhanced through hands-on experiences with manipulation of related materials.

In grades 2-5 children express and interpret what they see, know, feel and imagine. Students are involved in a range of studio experiences that include sketching, drawing, painting murals, collages, mobiles, quilting, and clay sculptures. Students are also introduced to Art History which includes a study of Architecture and Design.

Enrichment

PS 158 also offers each grade an unique enrichment opportunity.

Our youngest students participate in a 6-week movement workshop that promotes physical education, gross motor skills and improved hand/eye coordination in a fun and lively atmosphere.

Kindergarteners receive six weeks of music and movement enrichment in their classrooms, which focuses on introducing students to the fundamentals of dance.

Our 1st grade students discover creative and physical techniques involved in clowning from real life clowns! Students learn the different types of clown characters (Auguste, boss clown, sad clown, silly clown) and skills learned include: role play, mimetic representation of animals, balancing a feather on hand, finger, nose and chin and even plate spinning and scarf juggling.

In 2nd grade students explore, preserve, and celebrate Latino cultures through dance. This custom-tailored program brings teaching artists to the classroom; students explore a range of dance styles by infusing teaching and learning with dance, arts and culture.

Our 3rd grade students participate in a Hip Hop program whose primary goal is to instill dance technique while retaining a student's inherent love of dance through positive and supportive teaching methods. These classes offer a variety of Hip-Hop styles and help build confidence.

In 4th grade our students participate in Salsa classes that include footwork, partnerwork, styling/spinning, performance technique, dance/music theory, Latin culture and history as well as stretching and conditioning. Training exercises used in every class are drawn from fundamental dance techniques used in Ballet, Jazz, Ballroom, Hip-Hop and Salsa.

Our 5th graders experience The Constitution Works (A program of the Justice Resource Center). This program offers students the knowledge of the law, the legal process and the fundamental principles upon which these are based. The fifth grade also works with the Boom Box program which is an exciting performance program that gets our fifth graders drumming with found objects.

In addition to these school scheduled enrichment programs, PS 158 also offers extensive after-school activities through our Club158. We strive to offer experiences that give our students a better understanding of the world they live in so they can define their own paths and become well-rounded, productive members of society.

3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

At PS 158 all teachers collaborate in professional structures to develop and promote the implementation of school wide instructional practices incorporating the Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts to consistently provide rigor and access for all students. Across the vast majority of our classrooms, teachers and at times, students, use and create assessments that range from DOK 2 To DOK 4, rubrics and checklists that align to our curricula and provide a clear picture of student understanding, achievement and social/emotional development. Through this work, meaningful feedback is given to students and teachers for ongoing refinement of curricula, tasks, and instructional practices.

We believe students learn best when they are cognitively challenged and engaged in the process. For example, students pose questions to one another, design learning opportunities for each other in student-led conversations, read-aloud and small groups. Additional evidence of student contributions to the exploration of important content comes through in peer conferring, partnership/book club conversations, math discussions and social studies centers. Through these instructional strategies, students serve as resources for one another, and are given the supports to explain and elaborate upon their thinking.

Depending on the special needs of our students, teachers further tailor these instructional strategies to achieve high performance among all student populations. For instance, English Language Learners (ELLs) may be reading additional related picture books about the social issue topic before/along with the chapter books utilized during a unit of study. In the interpretation unit, readers are taught the strategy to note repetitive phrases or objects to understand the overall significance of the story. So as a support for ELLs, teachers may provide repetitive phrases beforehand, rehearse the conversations beforehand, so all students can access the text and participate more fully in classroom conversations.

Our curriculum provides various access points, scaffolds, and accommodations for all students. For instance, in the first grade poetry writing unit poetry centers are designed to access all learners and incorporate all learning modalities such as visual, kinesthetic and auditory. To ensure SWDs and ELLs have an entry point to this process, modified checklist are tailored to their needs through the use of pictorial representations, mentors, translated copies, and student examples. We are a community of learners where each learner's individual needs are evaluated, recognized and supported through various instructional methods best suited to meet those needs.

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

Over the past years PS 158 has worked cyclically and iteratively to align instruction to the Common Core Learning Standards across all subject areas. Through shared practice students are able to use and transfer what they have learned in one subject area to others to allow more depth and rigor in their practice. Our work with the CCLS has provided the opportunity to raise the level of instructional rigor and expectations. Our ongoing commitment results in coherent connections across literacy, math and content area subjects, such as science and social studies. We use an assessment-based instruction model that allows us to collect data as we continue to develop standards-based curriculum. Student assessment results let us know where we need to rework what we have done. We see this process as dynamic, meaning that even when we feel we understand a standard or a shift, we continue to evaluate student progress to ensure that our curriculum is meeting the needs of all students.

We continually refine our practice to respond to classroom data, student feedback, inter-visitations and labsites. Labsites are professional learning structures where teachers, coaches and staff developers can model best practices, co-teach collaboratively created lessons, or conduct inquiry research in an actual classroom setting. Faculty and students utilize and create rubrics that align with our CCLS. These assessments also promote vertical cross-grade alignment. We assess student mastery and ensure the alignment between our units and assessments. To do this, we use CCLS-aligned units of study from TCRWP, running records, writing assessments, read-aloud assessments, and performance tasks.

We use pre and post assessments and teacher anecdotal records, student self-assessments, and running record and reading level data. This analysis helps us to revise the curricula to meet the needs of the class, and to refine tasks under the context of UDL. Our students are also actively involved in on-going self-assessments in a variety of ways. For instance, in second grade book club conversations, posted in the room, are supports and tools teachers have taught into, such as the Rising Stars of Book Club Talks. These tools, co-created between the teachers and students, guide students during conversations to hold themselves accountable along a rubric of conversation content and participation.

We have the expectation that we are learners and we will think about the work and how we will always make it better based on student assessment, data and feedback. In these ways we have thought together, collaborated, and worked on a variety of methods to support each and every learner in our school community.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

PS 158 is a nurturing, learning community committed to educating the whole child. Our inclusive school environment encourages the abilities and talents of our students by providing varied opportunities and resources for each child to develop social-emotional, academic, creative, and leadership potential. This belief drives all decisions made at the school.

We realize that students are important partners in the learning process. We support them in taking ownership of their progress. Across a vast majority of classrooms, higher order thinking skills are nurtured and promoted across all areas. Teachers incorporate Webb's Depth of Knowledge and Bloom's Taxonomy to design curricular tasks to develop student's abilities to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate. There are various systems in place to support our commitment to the social and emotional growth of our learners. To that end, we have developed and nurtured school-wide restorative beliefs and practices which include restorative circles, affective statements and peer mediation.

Our focus on supporting age-appropriate independence can be seen at every grade level across the school. Teachers work collaboratively to identify what each student needs in order to become independent and teach into routines so that students learn their independence. We also guide our students to transition on to the next grade level, paying close attention to major transitional milestones, which are foundations preceding college and career readiness. Our goal is to become a more inclusive school community so that all students with disabilities receive special education services in the least restrictive environment - for all subjects throughout the school day all while being included with their peers. We feel that it is extremely important to create a school-wide flexible service delivery model so that special education is viewed as a service and not a place. It is our intention to carefully create an individualized program for each student based on each individual student's needs and goals.

The culture of PS 158 is a culture of going above and beyond to support the mission of educating the whole child. To ensure success to this end, a culture of clear expectations and communal obligation has been instilled throughout the structures of the school. This begins during the interviewing phase of prospective teachers, where our interviewing committee communicates expectations to join in on June Planning days, summer institutes for literacy and math, and participating in classroom-environment walkthroughs with the coaches in June. Teachers are encouraged and supported to join interdisciplinary professional development committees. Teachers not only receive support from school leadership, and staff developers, but from within the community by employing inter-visitations between teachers. It is through our multifaceted system of supporting students and faculty that we can unequivocally state that at the core, we are a community of learners.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

At PS 158 our parent involvement policy was designed based upon a careful assessment of the needs of all parents, including parents of English Language Learners and students with disabilities. The school's policy is to keep parents informed by actively involving them in planning and decision-making in support of the education of their children. Parents actively participate on the School Leadership Team, the Parents' Association, and other volunteer opportunities. Educational research shows a positive correlation between effective parental involvement and student achievement. To maximize the level of family engagement in the school we have implemented parent-engagement nights, which are evenings of student-guided sharing, where students, families and teachers reflect on the learning and growth through this past year. We also maintain an open door for parents to come and monitor their child's progress through our open school week, and our open monthly Family Fridays, where parents are invited to be a part of their child's learning.

We know that information is one of the key aspects of having an effective community partnership. We have created weekly newsletters as well as a school website in order to keep parents informed. We support our parent coordinator through workshops and training to make sure we are always staying ahead of the curve when it comes to parental engagement. We firmly believe that we are a community of learners and our parents are key stakeholders in ensuring this continues. Parents attend curriculum planning sessions, and have workshops designed for them by our staff developers. PS 158 supports parents and families by providing materials and training to help parents work with their children to improve their achievement level, providing parents with the information and training needed to effectively become involved in planning and decision making in support of the education of their children, and providing assistance to parents in understanding City, State and Federal standards and assessments. Our school can consistently boast that parents feel that this is a school that includes them beyond the legal bar set by the state and city. Parents are truly treated like a valuable asset in ensuring successful outcomes for their children. Parents feel encouraged to provide feedback, volunteer their time, and maintain open honest lines of communication.

PS 158 has consistently been a school lab site for hosting other learning communities. We host coaching institutes, literacy institutes, Mathematics in the City Learning Communities, national and international visitors, and have been the models of instructional excellence for the Danielson group. We are mentors to many schools and educational institutions. Our teachers are selected to lead Summer Institutes to create exemplars of teaching excellence for our nation's educator community.

3. Professional Development:

At PS 158 we are a Professional Learning Community. We believe in a robust and differentiated professional development program designed to assist teachers in maximizing their skillset and knowledge base. Continuously striving to refine teacher practice, professional development is focused on improving the individualized learning experience of teachers and students. The belief held by the school community is that by focusing on the learning of all stakeholders, improved student learning and achievement will be the natural outcome.

The school has both an internal and external approach to staff development. This consists of school wide external supports from Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, Mathematics in the City, Generation Ready, and Teachers College Inclusive Classroom Project. These outside organizations deliver differentiated cycles of professional development that offer teachers the opportunity to partner with research think tanks, learn about the latest and greatest, and study the current and cutting-edge research and professional texts. Taken all together, they provide a schoolwide structure of curriculum and cycles of professional development for the entire staff.

Internally there are several structures, both formal and informal, in place to help the staff members. We have three full time coaches who work to organize internal professional development cycles. They meet the individual needs of teachers in their growth as pedagogues. There is a professional development committee which consists of a cross-grade team of teachers which is used as a vehicle to schedule, assess, and act as a conduit between grade teams and school leadership about professional development cycles.

There is common planning time built into all teacher schedules where faculty and staff meet. This time may be used for subject/grade based meetings, and are intended to help teachers better use data to inform their instruction. These sessions may be used to analyze student work, share cross-grade best practices, establish a shared vocabulary, develop lesson plans or deepen teacher content knowledge within each domain.

Teachers see themselves as leaders, whether they are formally leading a team or coming to the table with ideas. In addition to the professional development committee, which has been a source of significant teacher voice in the school, teachers are encouraged to both express what they want, what they need to learn, and what kind of support they need to achieve their goals. At PS 158 professional development is a collaborative mindset where teachers share their strengths and recognize the areas where they want to grow. It is upon this foundation that our community of learners is built and continues to grow.

4. School Leadership:

At PS 158 we have a coherent vision of school growth by having a commitment to ongoing learning, curricular and pedagogical refinement. Our scholarly approach to teaching and learning has created a culture of constant improvement in teacher practice and continually raises expectations for the whole community. This begins with the leadership in the building. It is a belief that the distributive model of leadership works best for our school. We leverage the talents and experience of our staff to accomplish many goals.

We place an emphasis on hiring hard-working individuals and develop them with best practices. We provide a tremendous amount of support starting from the summer before teachers start working here. We offer professional development to all teachers, including new hires, with research-based organizations in math and literacy. The leadership brings in top notch staff developers to continue ongoing learning for all staff members throughout the school year. We make strategic decisions about staffing, teacher assignments, budget, space, resources and scheduling structures that all align with professional growth and learning. At the same time, we make it a priority to hear from every staff member and build capacity from within by valuing distributive leadership in a variety of decisions. The school leadership consistently communicates high expectations to staff, teachers, families and students, and provide support to meet those expectations.

One way we focused on improving the quality of teaching and student progress is our work with our students with IEPs. In partnership with the Teachers College Inclusive Classrooms Project, teachers work to design cycles of small group reading instruction (assessing, grouping students based on needs, teaching, redesigning instruction and regrouping students) utilizing a station-teaching format.

Teachers learn how to not just level students, but to specifically identify instructional needs and develop individualized plans for each student. Utilizing a stations-based approach, we designed a 2-period block of time to implement the literacy stations structure and provide 30 minutes of direct and targeted instruction for each small group. The end of the year data from these students showed vast improvement for all students in special education classrooms.

We then took the model of station teaching used with the students with disabilities and expanded it to a greater population of students. These students, under careful analysis of their data, showed that they would benefit from this focused instructional model. We dedicated additional staff members to review student data across grades 3, 4 and 5. Progress-monitoring was a key component in this intervention model. Flexible scheduling was done this year so that students with disabilities are with their grade-level peers in the least restrictive environment. In addition to academic growth, this allowed for greater development of social-emotional growth as students made connections with peers.

Our goal is to become a more inclusive school community so that all students with disabilities receive special education services in the least restrictive environment. We feel that it is extremely important to create a school-wide flexible service delivery model so that special education is viewed as a service and not a place.

Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Being a Professional Learning Community is what makes PS 158 successful. Embedded in our overarching professional development culture is the Learning Walk structure. Our cross-grade PD committee consists of one grade-selected representative and meet regularly to reflect upon and make decisions regarding professional development cycles. To make informed decisions, the PD committee engages in two or more Learning Walks at the beginning and end of the school year, in literacy and math, with our staff developers, in-house coaches and school leadership. On these learning walks, we visit every single classroom, with a focus, looking for trends, areas of celebration and next steps. The committee's conversations and feedback is shared with the school in a timely manner. This single practice influences the shared decisions amongst school leadership and all stakeholders.

One example where the practice directly related to student outcomes is when the Learning Walk resulted in our work focusing on student engagement and independence. We then spent the next year focusing all PD on fostering independence and empowering each student to be active participants in their own continuum of learning. Age-appropriate independence can be seen at every grade level across the school. Teachers work collaboratively to identify the moves that students need to become independent, teach into routines students learn to become independent and create tools, charts and systems for ongoing practice.

Student independence and ownership is a recipe for success. For instance, students in various grades are leading student-led conversations, being the ones posing the questions to each other and adding on to each other's ideas. Students are also in student-led small groups where students can identify an area of strength and offer to lead a small group to teach other students who independently acknowledge their need. Students make their own charts and mentor texts to encourage one another.

Across a vast majority of classrooms, students use student-friendly, co-created self-assessment rubrics to develop a common language, set goals, promote conversations, assess/revise thinking and expand students' own understanding.

Another example of students holding themselves accountable to their own strengths and next steps are math centers differentiated in the context of UDL. Across grades, students generate ideas of which centers they need. For instance, second graders make informed decisions on their different sets of facts in fluency centers. Kindergarteners choose the differentiated version of the game they are ready for, choosing between one numeral dice, two dot dice or one numeral and one dot dice.

Our work in fostering independence and ownership has led to deeper critical thinking, strong student voices and mastery of content. These qualities have all contributed to our students' consistent achievements on standardized tests. In truth, at PS 158, we believe that our work is never done. We provide opportunities and resources for each child to develop social-emotional, academic, creative, and leadership potential. This belief drives all decisions made at the school. With respect and trust, students, faculty, staff and families, are committed to developing life-long learners in school and beyond.