

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. Lena M Kim

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

Official School Name P.S. 098 The Douglaston School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 40-20 235th Street

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

City Douglaston State NY Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 11363-1508

County Queens

Telephone (718) 423-8535

Fax (718) 423-8550

Web site/URL

<http://schools.nyc.gov/SchoolPortals/26/Q098/default.htm>

E-mail lkim@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*Mrs. Danielle Giunta

E-mail DGiunta4@schools.nyc.gov

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

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

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board

President/Chairperson Mr. Alan Ong

(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
 - 72 K-12 schools
- 1753 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	27	19	46
1	14	18	32
2	14	19	33
3	18	23	41
4	15	8	23
5	14	16	30
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	102	103	205

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 27 % Asian
 - 5 % Black or African American
 - 15 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 46 % White
 - 5 % 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	3
(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)]	3
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	200
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.015
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	2

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 2 %
4 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Greek, Korean, Spanish

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 22 %
Total number students who qualify: 44

8. Students receiving special education services: 11 %
22 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.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <u>0</u> Autism | <u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>6</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>6</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>9</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Mental Retardation | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |
| <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities | <u>0</u> 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	1
Classroom teachers	10
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	6
Paraprofessionals	2
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

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 20:1
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	96%	95%	96%	96%	96%
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.

P.S. 98Q is a place where school and home come together to promote learning to meet standards of excellence. Our students have the capability to become self-disciplined, creative and independent learners. We believe every child will succeed in ways that reflect his or her own aptitude and interests.

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

Douglaston is a small, historic community within the borough of Queens, New York. Due to its size, Public School 98Q serves a small population of 205 children from families committed to striving and maintaining a strong school as the center of their community, as many of our students' parents, grandparents, and great grandparents were former students of the school.

PS 98Q began as small classes in a cow shed in what was then a farming community. In 1899 the president of the Goodyear Rubber Goods Company built a large home in the community and upon his death the home was converted to a K-8 school as the population of the community grew. The home was demolished in 1930 and replaced by the current school building, which continued to serve K-8 students until the late 1950's. A strong commitment to the arts, history, social engagement and family involvement was present at the inception of the school, and has been preserved to this day.

Our graduates have the opportunity to partake in a storied tradition at the culmination of their final year at PS 98Q. To celebrate their hard work and success in elementary school, students are invited to a celebratory luncheon at an iconic venue within the community. Students travel the well-known roads to the venue by foot, together as a graduating class to reinforce their connections to the community and to each other. Their pride, camaraderie and joy is evidenced by the spontaneous song and laughter that fill the streets as they walk.

To carry out our belief that every student possesses the capability to be a self-disciplined, innovative and independent learner, our school implements several strategies and programs that tap into the potential of each child and support success based on individual aptitude and interests. As a smaller school, we are afforded the ability to establish personal relationships with the caretakers of our students, which in turn, allows our students to feel that our school is an extension of home.

PS 98Q has several ongoing programs and unique initiatives in place that promote the home-school connection and strengthen the development of the whole child.

Utilizing their personal strengths and interests, teachers take on leadership roles to fulfill the ever-present and ever-changing needs of both students and the school as a whole. Many attend professional development in new programs and newly learned techniques are brought back to the school. As a result, at any given time there are multiple initiatives in classrooms, and separate clubs within and after school days, that reflect academic needs, cultural traditions, and societal interests.

To promote our students in becoming critical thinkers and communicators, PS 98Q is promulgating "making thinking visual" by utilizing the research-based Thinking Maps program. These maps afford students the ability to demonstrate and communicate their thinking. Students have the opportunity to organize their thoughts in a logical way, promoting collaborative and academic discussion, more organized writing, and a richer understanding of content. Our approach to utilizing Thinking Maps is taught and practiced daily in a way that allows students to take ownership of their ideas and contributions, while at the same time setting them up for success. Students' thinking demonstrates meaningful insight into classroom learning that ordinarily would prove difficult for diverse learners. Making thinking visual school-wide helps us speak the same language of learning across the school community.

PS 98Q believes that education goes beyond academics, and should encompass the interests of children and allow for experimentation in multiple subject areas. To that end, the school provides students the opportunity to choose from a variety of school-day clubs that offer learning through an array of subjects while allowing them to have fun. These clubs provide students the occasion to translate their classroom learning into real-life situations. We offer clubs that allow students to invest in the Stock Market, compete in national math challenges, experiment with robotics, write for the school newspaper, learn coding, and choral singing, to name a few.

This concept is extended through a self-funded after school program that provides students additional opportunities to learn beyond the academic day. The program runs the gamut from cooking, keyboard, theater, art, social game play, sports, and musical experiences with artists, to academic enrichment.

The excitement generated from these programs creates a sense of school-wide community and involvement with students of all ages that our children would not otherwise have the opportunity to experience. Students have a chance to have experiences with teachers other than their own, and become recognized as productive citizens of the PS 98Q community.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Our instructional focus – students will actively engage in collaborative conversations that encourage the exchange of ideas, based on evidence that generates deeper and stronger understanding and new thinking across content areas – is evident across the school. Teachers are challenging and engaging students in collaborative conversations. Students are grounding their robust conversations in evidence from text.

Our comprehensive curriculum is grounded in the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), the Instructional Shifts and the elements of the Framework for Great Schools. Through this alignment, we foster the transference of skills from one curricular area to another. The end goal for our students is that they become critical and creative thinkers, proficient readers and writers as well as well-rounded individuals who are prepared for college and career.

Teachers design lesson plans using the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) philosophy in order to provide access to the curriculum for all students. Explicit, systematic instruction is employed throughout the day and is designed to meet the needs of diverse learners. Utilizing the three (3) tiered RtI model, teachers provide students with targeted intervention within a small group setting. See 3. Instructional Methods and Interventions for more detail.

PS 98Q recognizes that literacy is the foundation for all other learning. Our balanced literacy approach provides for authentic experiences in reading, writing, speaking and listening. Across the vast majority of classrooms, students are using evidence from sources in order to make claims, develop opinions and think critically. Our teachers choose increasingly complex text across content areas to involve students in independent, partner and collaborative group work.

To that end, our chosen curricular programs are fully aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards. Rigorous instruction is implemented with an eye towards improving comprehension, questioning, vocabulary, and fluency for all students. We have chosen ReadyGen, Foundations, Write From the Beginning and Beyond, Lexia, and iLit to achieve these goals. Each program provides specific, research-based practices in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension.

The introduction of Thinking Maps provided an additional tool for supporting the thinking process by allowing students to organize their ideas to correspond with fundamental cognitive processes. Each of the eight (8) maps afford students common visual language to capture the salient points in a variety of text types. The maps are not a means to an end as students transfer their ideas to written pieces. As a result, across grades, we have seen an increase in the quality and volume of writing that students produce.

Our kindergarten-fifth grade math program has its foundation in constructivist theory which aligns to the CCLS math standards and the eight (8) standards for mathematical practice. By adopting the Go Math! program, we are exposing our students to complex math concepts through its systematic approach towards addressing the standards. Teachers incorporate hands-on and digital experiences through the use of manipulatives and interactive tools to promote conceptual awareness, and engage students in differentiated tasks that will allow them to apply learned content to relatable, real-life scenarios. To address our instructional focus, teachers are posing mathematical questions based on the Depth of Knowledge levels, which fosters discourse, conceptual understanding and skills application.

The NYC K-5 Scope and Sequence for Science, which incorporates the CCLS, the Next Generation Science Standards and New York State Learning Standards for Mathematics, Science, and Technology (MST) drives our science program. By incorporating STEM into our curriculum, we are able to allow students to experience how and why things work and develop an understanding of the world around them through the scientific method. Students approach the inquiry process through project-based learning and interdisciplinary problem solving.

With the help of our PTA, we maintain a partnership with The Children's Maritime Museum at Port Jefferson's Maritime Explorium where students engage in nautically-themed, science-based activities. Our upper grade classes were selected to participate in the EverFi STEM program. This computer-based program uses partnership with the National Hockey League to provide students with various learning modules that both educate and test their knowledge on STEM concepts including data analysis, life science and physical science. Additionally, we are taking part in a pilot program with ScienceFusion. Furthering the STEM approach to science, this program is designed to help students build an understanding of the scientific method through planning investigations, making observations, comparing data, and communicating results.

The NYC K-8 Social Studies Scope and Sequence incorporates the New York State Social Studies Core Curriculum, the CCLS and the New York State K-8 Social Studies Framework. In order to support the mastering of key concepts, students use trade books, primary and secondary source documents, online resources and field trips to bring historical events to life. Teachers draw on the abundance of local resources to supplement the instruction of social studies concepts. The unique circumstance of our historical placement in the community helps to make content relatable to our children's lives. We maintain a partnership with the Little Neck-Douglaston Historical Society which allows our students to experience walking tours of their town, study the architecture of the surrounding area, and develop an appreciation of the community's historical significance.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

PS98Q is committed to providing students with immersion in curriculum areas that go beyond, yet support and extend, work done in the classroom. These programs are designed to bolster growth in social-emotional development and provide students with experiences they might not have access to otherwise.

Through the support of the PS 98Q PTA, we are able to provide a visual arts program that serves our students for half a year per grade. Ashcan Art Studio of New York works with teachers to devise a course of study suitable to each grade level and supplements content area curriculum.

The music program at PS 98Q is designed to support core subject areas at all grade levels. Music learning is tied to social studies to provide context for music's role across time and cultures. Mathematics is supported through the study of rhythm and music theory, and science concepts are incorporated through the study of sound, harmonics, and neurology.

Our school has a full-time, certified music arts teacher who works with all grades for a minimum of two times per week. The music curriculum is aligned to, and extends beyond, the NYC DOE Blueprint for the Arts. Theories and knowledge in music are layered through the years, providing increasing depth and understanding of the importance of music in people's lives.

Our Kindergarten students gain familiarity with differing musical styles, dance, instruments, composers, and stage use. In 1st and 2nd grades, musical knowledge is deepened by adding basic music theory and creative movement. A culminating Spring Concert showcases their knowledge and confidence. All 3rd grade students learn music theory and recorder. In 4th grade, students study basic guitar, from picking melodies to chords. By 5th grade, our students are introduced to Ballroom Dancing, participate in a seminar on music history, and study the effects of music on the brain. Students in 3rd-5th grade can participate in weekly choral training as an elective.

A residency program with Midori & Friends provides face-to-face workshops with professional performing artists and after-school classes in a variety of musical genres. All students participate in a comprehensive physical education program that promotes fitness, coordination, healthy lifestyle, sportsmanship, and self-esteem. Every class is scheduled for gym activities during the week with a certified physical education instructor. Activities range from robust exercises to organized games. Every child is given a yearly physical fitness profile that measures their ability to complete fitness tasks, and provides strategies on how to improve well-being. Teachers and parents work together on a health and wellness plan to promote healthy lifestyles for families.

The entire school participates in Move-To-Improve, where movement is incorporated into classroom activities and monthly Zumba sessions led by teachers.

PS 98Q utilizes state-of-the-art technology designed to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills through project-based learning. All classes receive computer instruction twice a week in a computer lab setting with the goal of effectively integrating technology into all subject areas and implementing the 4 C's of 21st century learning –collaboration, communication, critical-thinking, and creativity.

In response to the growing demand for STEM-related fields, PS 98Q has included computer coding into computer science instruction. All students complete age-appropriate coursework in coding utilizing the Code.org curriculum. MIT's Scratch programming is taught in an after school setting for grades 3 through 5 as a stepping stone to the more advanced world of computer programming. Additionally, we offer robotics and web design to 4th and 5th grade students during Douglaston Club time.

In order to promote college and career readiness and prepare students for higher learning, we introduce them to productivity tools such as Excel, PowerPoint, and Publisher. We stress the importance of digital citizenship and internet safety.

All K-2 students receive chess instruction where they learn to observe carefully, increase focusing ability, analyze concretely, visualize next steps and think abstractly – all major factors in academic excellence – while having fun.

PS 98Q enriches learning through clubs run by teachers that incorporate direct and practical experiences, specifically:

- Ambassadors Club: Open to 5th grade students interested in community service.
- Math Olympiad: Students interested in mathematics compete throughout the year against schools from across the country.
- The Stock Market Game: Students learn about the world of business and are challenged to invest monies in the stock market, making real world decisions over time.
- Literary and Newspaper Club: Open to students in grades 2-5 who love to write. Creative works are published in the school newspaper-PS 98 Daily and in the school literary magazine-The Douglaston Quill.

3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

PS 98Q uses a variety of assessment tools to inform and guide our instruction and intervention strategy so that our students' individual strengths and areas for growth can be identified. Using on-going benchmark assessments, we develop systematic programming that allows students in need of additional support to receive Academic Intervention Services (AIS) in either or both ELA and math. Response to Intervention (RtI) operates as the backbone of our educational strategy designed to identify students who may be at-risk so that we can provide supplemental interventions targeted to their learning needs.

Teachers design lesson plans using the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) philosophy in order to provide access to the curriculum for all students. Explicit, systematic instruction is employed throughout the day and is designed to meet the needs of diverse learners. Utilizing the three (3) tiered RtI model, teachers provide students with targeted intervention within a small group setting. These groups are fluid and flexible and last for six (6) weeks. Depending on the tier, targeted, specific interventions are employed, including small group instruction, Great Leaps, guided reading and the Wilson Reading System.

Assessments are conducted at the end of each RtI cycle and progress is consistently monitored through collaborative conversations between school leaders and classroom and support teachers. Following each assessment, school leaders carefully review the results and make decisions about ways to further support each and every student. As students demonstrate progress throughout the RtI cycles, they are included back into the larger classroom environment.

During the Douglaston Club time, additional supports are provided using the blended learning/technology-based approach. Kindergarten through grade three students are using the Lexia Reading Core 5 Program while iLit is used for grades four and five. These online, adaptive reading programs engage students in multiple reading activities and allow us to gather performance data for teachers to use to differentiate their instruction. Additionally, every Friday is “Math Friday” where teachers differentiate math instruction in order challenge students at all abilities.

In addition to providing supports for our students who struggle, we also look closely at the students that excel and provide them with enrichment opportunities that allow them to go deeper with concepts. Systematic support is provided for students to think visually to improve their thinking processes, while deepening their understanding of the topics they study.

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

Upon release of the NYS ELA and mathematics item analysis report, we allocate time to share, review and analyze the data with our teachers. This report provides data that guides us in observing trends across each grade and per Common Core Learning Standard assessed. We schedule common grade level periods in order to provide multiple opportunities for teams of teachers to discuss assessment results, their impact on instruction and next steps.

We are currently using the Teachers College Running Records Assessment to measure fluency, accuracy and comprehension and identify each student’s independent reading level. This school-wide assessment is scheduled four times a year, beginning in September with a baseline which can be compared to the final assessment in June to gauge overall student progress. This data allows us to generate the independent reading and performance levels to determine how best to provide supports and extensions. Ongoing formative assessment in reading and writing allows teachers to make daily instructional decisions. Students use checklists and rubrics to self and peer assess so that they can self-monitor their progress towards individual goals.

In September, we administer a baseline Go Math! assessment in order to identify the specific skills that students have already mastered so that teachers can tailor their instruction by preparing enrichment activities or projects for students that have demonstrated mastery while providing supports for those who struggle. Teachers assess on a daily basis and use the results to determine groupings for students that require re-teaching and those who need extensions. In June, we administer the end of year assessment and utilize that data to determine supports for the following year.

Parents are kept informed of their child’s progress. Each Tuesday, our teachers participate in parent engagement activities. These opportunities allow for more in-depth conversations regarding student progress in regular classwork and assessments. Families receive a copy of the Individual Student Report (ISR) for students who took the NYS ELA and mathematics exams. Using the information from daily assessments and the ISR, teachers are able to provide families with a more detailed picture of their child’s progress towards meeting end of year grade level expectations.

In addition to the three (3) required report cards, we include two (2) interim progress reports which help to keep parents/families informed between official reporting times. Our progress reports include standards-based goals specific to each grade, independent reading level, end of unit math tests and published writing pieces. Once returned, these progress reports become part of the student's portfolio.

At PS 98Q, as a learning community, we consistently and systematically reflect and discuss student learning and teacher practice based on data. We believe this system of adjusting and improving teacher practice is the key to maintaining high levels of achievement.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

The school maintains a supportive learning environment that conveys high expectations for staff, students and families through ongoing guidance and feedback which holds all constituents accountable for student achievement.

The school community is committed to supporting a respectful and nurturing learning environment where students feel safe and can thrive emotionally and academically. The culture and climate of PS 98Q is one of inclusion where staff, parents and students are encouraged to be active participants in nurturing social and emotional well-being.

PS 98Q embraces the opportunity to engage children academically, socially, emotionally and physically. The school's objective is to impart students with a life-long passion for learning by instilling a strong foundation of academic rigor and core values to enable them to achieve their full potential and to excel in our ever-changing world. The school integrates these concepts into the curriculum through academics, the arts and enrichment opportunities. Because of the small size of our school, we have been able to provide a well-rounded education due to the collaborative efforts of the administration, teachers and parents. The school and our active PTA sponsor numerous workshops for students and parents. These include, Welcome Back to School Night, dances and family events, Zumba and Move to Improve, just to name a few.

PS 98Q offers unique programming that motivates the students to strive for personal and social responsibility. For instance, our monthly Bucket Fillers celebration honors students for their good deeds and actions, fostering feelings of worth and self-pride while also inspiring sensitivity and mutual respect for others.

Love of reading is nurtured daily and every student participates in the monthly Read-a-thon, where friendly competition between classes has children recording nightly reading to help their class win. In the fall, we have Book Character Day where students and teachers dress as a literary character. Our Marvelous Monday program invites parents/families into the classroom to read to the children and the Book-of-the-Month affords the principal the opportunity to read to and hold book talks with the entire school.

To further our focus on vocabulary development, PS 98Q has a "Smart Word of the Day" based on a monthly theme chosen by the faculty. Each day the children are provided with a new synonym and definition. This culminates in a Vocabulary Day Parade where the children choose a word of the day to share and sing songs for each theme written by our music teacher.

At PS 98Q everyone comes together for the greater good of the children. The family atmosphere helps make children feel at home fostering an engaged, safe, positive and encouraging environment for learning.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

We understand that our families are an integral part of the school community and play an essential role in successfully educating our children. To that end, we strive to fully inform and involve all parents in their children's learning experiences which in turn strengthens family and community ties. School leaders and staff effectively communicate expectations connected to a path to college and career readiness and successfully partner with families to support student progress toward those expectations. Community-home-school connections are paramount in developing compassionate, involved children and in fostering a neighborhood elementary school that is a home away from home.

Our supportive parent body is involved in fundraising for the academic needs of our students. Parents volunteer and are elected to roles on the PTA and on the School Leadership Team. We encourage all parents to participate in school events, workshops, and classroom celebrations. During the Spring Gala, local politicians, alumni and parents attend year after year to raise money to pay for enrichment programming to benefit the students.

Uniform systems are in place to increase academic communication with parents. This year, with the additional time for parent engagement, workshops are provided before, during and after school for parents to learn strategies to support their children at home. Workshops are conducted by our teachers, coaches, school leaders and Parent Coordinator.

School-home connection is open, consistent and meaningful. Teachers gather together once a month in the computer lab to write a school newsletter for families to share school updates. The school leader holds a monthly open forum called Coffee and Conversation. During that time parents may ask questions, share strategies for at-home learning and receive updates.

PS 98Q is a school with wonderful traditions. The annual World Heritage Celebration focuses on American history as well as students' individual cultural heritage to highlight our unique make up. The day is capped off by marching in the Queens Douglaston Little Neck Memorial Day Parade, one of the largest and oldest ongoing parades in the country.

Art is alive and thriving at PS 98Q and the community at large. The school, through its PTA, maintains a vibrant partnership with a local art school Ashcan Studio of Art. Our students exhibit their art work annually at the Queens Douglaston/Little Neck Library, where local government representatives present the children certificates of merit.

Through a generous grant from the Douglaston Little Neck Historical Society (DLNHS), our students are led by preservationists on a historical architecture walk to better understand the community where they live. Interwoven through all of these neighborhood activities are our alumni and parents, many of whom now send their children to PS 98Q. This school is central to uniting our community where many generations are residing and maintain close ties with one another.

3. Professional Development:

The heart and soul of professional development stems from the school leader's belief that learning is an elemental part of the human condition. PS 98Q is a community of learners, including the school leader, teachers, students, other staff members and parents. Multiple learning opportunities are embedded throughout the day.

The most important way to develop highly effective teachers is to support and guide them to understand their strengths and areas in need of improvement as educators. The school leader believes that one of her key responsibilities is to lead teachers to bring self-awareness of their own practice so that they can then take the initiative to improve pedagogy on their own. The goal is to help teachers trust in their capabilities and cultivate their own talents as they become drivers of their own learning.

Teachers actively participate in the professional development opportunities offered by the city, borough center and district on a variety of topics, including curriculum development, STEM, project-based learning, literacy and math. While teachers expand and build capacity by deepening their content knowledge, they become leaders in their newly acquired learning areas and share with their colleagues during structured professional development time.

A culture of collaboration is deeply embedded in the PS 98Q professional learning community and is continued through the collaborative inquiry team model that is focused on improved pedagogical practices and student learning based on data.

Every Monday teachers gather in horizontal and vertical teams. The inquiry process, which includes learning, implementing, analyzing, sharing and reflecting, guides the work. At the core of this professional development is the realization that the expertise lies among the team members. Teachers themselves are the content specialists, master teachers and mathematicians. Through the process of coming together as a team to learn about their students, their own teaching practices, and the process of learning itself, teachers become increasingly adept in learning and teaching.

At PS 98Q teachers learn from each other through inter-visitation to colleagues' classrooms. Teachers identify their pedagogical strengths and weakness and learn from each other by observing and questioning practice through reflective and honest conversations around teaching and learning. This creates a climate and culture that is based upon trust and respect.

The school leader continuously assesses and adjusts support to each teacher based upon individual needs. The goal of the PS 98Q professional learning community is to learn about how our students achieve as well as our own teaching practices so that we can help our students become independent learners.

4. School Leadership:

The leadership philosophy of PS 98Q is to develop an exceptional cadre of teaching staff that enables the members of the entire school community to be successful lifelong learners. The principal is an instructional leader who sets high expectations for herself, her staff, and her students. She leads by example and establishes a culture of reciprocal trust and positive attitude that supports the academic and personal growth of adults and students.

Through a firm belief in shared leadership, staff members are cultivated as leaders according to their individual strengths. They put on their leadership hats to conduct professional learning opportunities, model lessons or serve as mentors for colleagues and play an integral role in the decision-making process. Established structure provides opportunities for teachers to engage in structured professional collaboration on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership.

When leading a community, it is important to honor established traditions and hear the ideas and opinions of all members. The prior, long-standing principal consistently encouraged and reinforced high expectations in the areas of professionalism, instruction, and creating a nurturing environment. The new principal is eager to systematically highlight the strengths of the school and its history while bringing about new initiatives that are necessary to move the school forward. This is being accomplished by creating systems and structures that foster consistent transparent communication to the entire school community. These initiatives have been developed with a great deal of thought and research into what the organic needs of the school are. Changes are communicated through monthly newsletters, Coffee and Conversation with the principal, School Leadership meetings and PTA and staff meetings so that all constituents are on the same page.

Teacher and student surveys/questionnaires are another communication channel that gauges teacher reflections and helps to identify possible misconceptions about beliefs, practices, programs and initiatives. Student surveys allow the school leader and teachers the opportunity to gauge student perception and understanding of varied initiatives. A student feedback box outside the principal's office invites meaningful opportunities for student voices to be integrated into the school and community vision.

All members of the school community play a crucial role in providing instruction for our children. A clean and efficient learning environment is possible because of a custodian's hard work. The lunchroom and auditorium become a place for learning because of dedicated school aides. Learning happens when students enter the building and continues when they go home. Recognizing and respecting all members of the school community brings energy and positive spirit.

With the vision of having our students become future leaders, the school leader believes that the attainment of skills necessary to succeed in the 21st century are required and must be provided through rigorous instruction. To that end, creative scheduling has allowed for built-in enrichment and intervention periods

within the school schedule. In order to develop these college and career readiness abilities in our students in this ever-changing technological society, we employ a blended learning approach to meet the individual needs of each student. Through rigorous instruction in a nurturing environment the school leader hopes to provide an educational experience that affords our students the opportunities to learn how to persevere when facing challenges; to seek creative solutions when there seem to be no answers; and to be resilient when faced with disappointment.

Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

PS 98Q is a learning community that strongly believes in collaboration for student success. The school motto, “Today we lead our students. Tomorrow our students will lead the world” reflects the collaborative nature of our beliefs. Our educators recognize their responsibility to go beyond cultivating cognitive abilities in order for students to grow into model citizens. As our students move through these critical years of development, we provide the foundation to instill independent, creative thinking, character development and leadership skills so that they are ready and prepared to become leaders in our global world.

Every day at PS98Q, learning is continuous and not confined to the classroom. With the belief that education should encompass the whole child, our students are provided with multiple opportunities both inside and outside of the classroom to develop socially and emotionally. Our “Bucket Fillers” program rewards growth of character by showcasing those students who model exemplary behavior through interactions with others. By participating in the “Ambassadors Club,” students build leadership skills while they research a global community in need and sponsor school-wide efforts to support their initiative. In doing so, students are developing awareness and empathy for others through charitable service. Every Friday, our 4th and 5th grade students buddy-read with kindergarten and first grade students to instill the pleasure of reading, and as a byproduct, develop everlasting friendships. The 5th grade students serve as lunch monitors for kindergarten, thus becoming role models while developing the qualities a true leader possesses.

Independent, creative thinking permeates all learning at PS 98Q. This is accomplished by inviting students to entertain differing points of view. Through class debates students are encouraged to make a claim and use evidence to defend their position, as well as see the “whole picture” from different vantage points. In addition, a school-wide vocabulary initiative introduces an array of words related to a monthly theme. Students are exposed to new language through daily word announcements and original songs utilizing that month’s vocabulary, and are encouraged to apply the words in their learning experiences. With that foundation, students grow and develop their word knowledge so that they become effective communicators. Ultimately, our hope is that our students become skillful thinkers, speakers and writers who can inspire, support, move and lead.