

U.S. Department of Education
2020 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name Dows Lane Elementary School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 6 Dows Lane
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Irvington State NY Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 10533-2102

County Westchester County

Telephone (914) 591-6012 Fax (914) 591-6863

Web site/URL https://www.irvingtonschools.org/dowslane E-mail andrea.kantor@irvingtonschools.org

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

(Principal's Signature) Date _____

Name of Superintendent* Dr. Kristopher Harrison E-mail kristopher.harrison@irvingtonschools.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Irvington Union Free School District Tel. (914) 591-8500

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

(Superintendent's Signature) Date _____

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

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

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

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

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

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

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

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2020 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
3. The school configuration 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.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2014 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, or 2019.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district, as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
11. 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 (2019-2020) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools)

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

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located. If unsure, refer to NCES database for correct category: <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/> (Find your school and check “Locale”)

- Urban (city or town)
 Suburban
 Rural

3. Number of students as of October 1, 2019 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	61	68	129
1	68	59	127
2	55	64	119
3	84	62	146
4	0	0	0
5	0	0	0
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	268	253	521

*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 11 % Asian
 - 4 % Black or African American
 - 8 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 69 % White
 - 8 % 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 2018 - 2019 school year: 8%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain:

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	14
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	27
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	41
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	517
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.08
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	8

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

Ewe, Hebrew, Chinese, Portuguese, Korean, Tamil, Spanish, Russian, Wolof, Urdu, Japanese, Bengali, Arabic, Hindi

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 5 %

Total number students who qualify: 26

8. Students receiving special education services: 9 %

48 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>5</u> Autism | <u>2</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>14</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>7</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>19</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 1

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	26
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	24
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	36
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	10

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	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	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 2019.

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

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

Yes No

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

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

To create a nurturing learning environment where students thrive and develop into caring, compassionate individuals, and active learners.

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

Dows Lane Elementary School, in Irvington, New York, is a special place. Located 23 miles North of New York City, in Westchester County, the suburban town on the Hudson River, has been called a "picturesque village." The community is a mix of multi-generational Irvington residents and families moving from New York City. The New York Times published an article called "Creating Hipsturbia" describing Irvington and the Hudson River Towns.

As a kindergarten-3rd grade school we are committed to creating a learning environment that nurtures the whole child. We strive to create a balance between a rigorous academic experience and social emotional learning to best support students. Our school culture and climate are integral to promoting student achievement. We believe that children build knowledge as they think critically and creatively, collaborate, and communicate with others. Feeling positive about school and learning is at the forefront of our values. We want our students to become caring, kind, compassionate individuals who see themselves as lifelong learners and contributing members in society. Furthermore, fostering relationships and partnering with families best supports our students in their years at Dows Lane.

As a staff, we are continually learning and growing together. This year, our focus has been on joy. Aligned with the New York State Standards emphasis on play and fostering joyful engagement in young children, we started our learning in August, reading the article, "Joy in School" by Steven Wolk (Educational Leadership, Positive Classroom, pages 8-15). As Wolk states, "Joyful learning can flourish in school- if you give joy a chance" and that is what we have been doing. Our staff infuses joy and joyful practices into their daily work, and our students are joyful as they learn and play.

Our curriculum is rooted in the New York State Learning Standards, which we meet and exceed. As a District, we created Unit Maps using Understanding By Design (UBD) for content areas. All units begin with an overarching Essential Question (EQ) that helps guide teachers' instruction and students' thinking. Our focus is always to teach thinking. Instruction is multi-sensory, focused on developmentally appropriate practices. Our early childhood classrooms create conditions for learning that support all students. Classrooms are rich with literature that represent racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse families, honoring all of our students and our global society. As educators, our staff recognizes the importance of creating a learning environment that supports each child. Students who are learning English are supported in the classrooms by a push-in model from our English as a New Language (ENL) teacher. Intentional support and strategies in collaboration with families, helps enhance student learning. Students with disabilities (SWD), are offered targeted support with a Special Education teacher and/or Related Service Providers, based on their Individualized Education Program (IEP) in the Integrated Co-Taught (ICT) classrooms and Special Classes. Developmentally appropriate practices and educators with particular expertise help students reach their highest possible learning outcomes. Our Response to Intervention (RTI)/ Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) model supports students in small groups based on academic and behavioral needs. Three times a year, we use common benchmark assessments to evaluate the growth of every child. Each teacher attends a data meeting with the RTI/ MTSS Data Team to review their students. Students who are not meeting grade level standards are offered small group support from Related Service Providers. Classroom teachers offer differentiated, small group support throughout the day and during What I Need (WIN) time- an hour a day where students receive individualized instruction. Furthermore, all students participate in rich learning experiences in Art, Music, Physical Education, Library, World Language, and Science-Technology-Engineering-Mathematics (STEM) using the Project Lead the Way curriculum. Students are given opportunities for self-expression and joyful engagement while painting, singing, running, catching, and drumming on yoga balls.

In addition to our rigorous curriculum and instruction, we balance our day with social emotional learning. All staff members work with students to help them develop pro-social behaviors. Using Habits of Mind, an identified set of problem solving skills, as a foundation, we created monthly themes and activities to help children develop life skills. Our whole-school assemblies highlight those themes and support the classroom instruction. We embrace multicultural perspectives, and affirm individuality and diversity. In addition, we encourage school spirit with our school song called, Teamwork, that we sing at assemblies. And monthly,

everyone wears Irvington spiritwear or green/ white to show our collective spirit and school unity. Furthermore, our School Counselor visits classrooms and collaborates with classroom teachers to advance social emotional learning. In addition, our District Social Worker supports students and families in crisis and offers critical support. Using the Second Step program and an eclectic mix of strategies, our School Counselor, School Social Worker, and whole school embrace the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan of "Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child" model.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

1a. Overall approach, which may include overarching philosophy or approaches common across subject areas

At Dows Lane, our core Reading, Writing, Math, Social Studies, and Science curriculum is aligned with New York State Learning Standards and our District Goal: To implement instructional practices that elevate student thinking and understanding. Using the Understanding By Design (UBD) framework, we created planners with explicit student learning outcomes in each curriculum area. The UBD framework helps teachers focus their instruction to deepen student understanding. Our overarching goal is for students to make sense of their learning and transfer that learning.

All teachers follow the Unit Planners which provides a common learning experience across grade levels. We set high expectations and frequently monitor student progress. Daily, teachers use formative assessments, performance tasks, and exit tickets to adjust their instruction. Teachers also use summative assessments at the end of units. We use Aimsweb assessments as our benchmark measures for all students three times a year. We also have Data Meetings three times a year with teachers to discuss their students. Based on need, students may receive Tier 1, 2 or 3 interventions.

Every day, teachers differentiate instruction based on content, process, and product. In classrooms, teachers use Workshop Model, Station Model, and Direct Instruction Model to increase student engagement and ownership in learning. Teachers start with a short mini lesson (under 15 minutes) that connects to previous learning. The teaching point is clearly stated and visible for students. Students are then invited to "try it out" with guided practice, turn-and-talk, or other accountable talk activities. Students then transition to work independently, and the teacher rotates through the room or works with a small strategy group. At the end of the lesson, teachers solidify learning with a wrap-up/share.

Every classroom has a SMART Board or Newline Interactive board and 5-10 Chromebooks/I-pads. Teachers utilize technology purposefully to advance and enrich learning.

1b. Reading/English language arts

At Dows Lane, everyone is a reading teacher! We encourage everyone to see themselves as part of a collective reading team, helping all students master the art of reading. Besides teaching reading, our goal is to foster a love of reading.

Our English Language Arts curriculum follows a sequence of units aligned with the New York State Standards. Our Unit Planners include a Balanced Literacy approach with lessons that create conditions for a joy of reading and writing. All teachers use instructional approaches such as Guided Reading, Shared Reading, Shared Writing, Close Reading, and Read Alouds with rich, anchor texts. Our Literacy Coach supports teachers in their instruction and differentiation for students. She offers a coaching model in classrooms with teachers and facilitates professional development for grade level groups and whole-school learning. In addition, the Literacy Coach offers a Summer Literacy Institute for teachers to refine their instructional practices. Furthermore, our Librarian also collaborates with teachers to support literacy and explicitly teaches reading/ writing strategies in her lessons.

Three times a year, teachers use the Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System to assess students independent reading levels. Students are then exposed to high interest texts and texts on their reading levels to promote growth. Teachers use Reading and Writing Workshops for their direct instruction and small strategy groups for differentiated, individualized support. Teachers confer with students to assess their needs and then focus future instruction. In kindergarten- 2nd grade we also use the Wilson Foundations multisensory phonics program for our foundational skills. Students are exposed to explicit word-work instruction daily. Our 3rd grade teachers delve deeper into roots, prefixes, and suffixes, as students begin to decode difficult multisyllabic words. For writing, our teachers have been trained in The Writing Revolution

method of instruction by Judith Hochman, to help students improve writing skills.

Our three Reading Teachers offer Tier 2 and Tier 3 RTI/MTSS intensive literacy intervention support in a pull-out setting, based on students' data. In addition to small group support, we also have whole-school literacy assemblies where our classes "buddy-up" and sit next to their buddy-class to read a shared text together. These shared reading experiences immerse our youngest to oldest students in a wonderful literacy experience. We read "You Read to Me, I'll Read to You" texts by Mary Ann Hoberman and students read one part as adults read the other.

At the start of each year, our Literacy Coach and our 3rd grade team review the New York State ELA data. We talk about areas that our students were strong and areas where we need to adjust our instruction. In addition, we discuss students who were in additional RTI/MTSS services and those who did not receive additional services and reflect on their performance.

Recently, we have taken inventories of all of our classroom libraries and started to purchase books that are representative of our children and global society. We are creating conditions where we affirm individuality, respect varying perspectives, and integrate differences into our everyday instruction.

1c. Mathematics

Mathematics instruction at Dows Lane Elementary School is aligned with the New York State Standards. Teachers use explicit instruction to teach concepts with modeling via the SMART Board and with manipulatives, and then students work independently or in pairs to solve problems in a similar manner. Teachers use daily formative assessments and unit summative assessments to monitor students' understanding and growth. In addition to the whole class instruction, teachers use the station-model to allow students to advance their collaboration skills and the application of learning concepts. Teachers also use support programs such as IXL, a computer based program, to individualize instruction for students. Our math instruction is multisensory and captures children's imagination. Skills are integrated into a sequence of lessons that build as students grow. Students use manipulatives to learn concepts and solve equations and are taught to not only solve the problem, but also show their thinking.

Our Math/Science Coach supports teachers in their instruction and differentiation for students. She offers a coaching model in classrooms with teachers and facilitates professional development for grade level groups and whole-school learning. In addition, the Math/Science Coach has offered Summer Math Workshops for teachers to refine their instructional practices. At the start of each year, our Math Coach and our 3rd grade team review the New York State Math data. We talk about areas that our students were strong and areas where we need to adjust our instruction. In addition, we discuss students who were in additional RTI/MTSS services and those who did not receive additional services and reflect on their performance.

Our two Math Specialists offer Tier 2 and Tier 3 RTI/MTSS intensive math intervention support in a pull-out setting, based on students' data. In addition to small group support, we had a whole-school math assembly where our classes "buddy-up" and sat next to their buddy-class to solve math problems in a whole-school Bingo game. In addition, our Math Specialists, Math Coach, and Third Grade teachers organize a 3rd grade Math Night every year for students and families to play math games and practice skills.

1d. Science

We adopted Amplify Science, a hands-on interactive Science program, that enables students to "...think, read, write, and argue like real scientists and engineers." Teachers received training from Amplify and our Math/Science Coach. The units we chose from Amplify align with the New York State Earth Science and Life Science Standards. We teach the Physical Science Standards in our Science-Technology-Engineering-Math (STEM) classes using the Project Lead the Way (PLTW) curriculum.

Our teachers and our STEM teachers use a Hands-on Learning style of instruction. Teachers and students use the Engineering Design Model with 5 steps: 1) define a problem, 2) plan, 3) make/build, 4) test, 5) reflect and redesign. Teachers lead with direct instruction and then students take over the learning. Students

work in partnerships and small groups to solve a problem, build a structure, or collect data. Our kindergarten students created models of gardens to bring the monarch caterpillars back to the garden. Then, they planted milkweed seeds in our school garden for monarch butterflies to hatch in the spring. Our 1st graders created animal camouflage to help them survive in nature. The first grade team also wrote a grant for the "Amazing World of Mr. Green" presenter to visit each class and enrich their learning. Our 2nd graders learn about plant and animal relationships, as they investigate seed dispersal in an experiment. The 2nd grade team also wrote a grant for a Lego-engineering-robots workshop for their students to enrich their learning. And, our 3rd graders became scientists as they studied the patterns and traits of a wolf pack. Their learning will culminate with a field trip to the Wolf Conservation Center in South Salem, New York.

Students are assessed in Science from teacher observations, rubrics based on their creations and models, and self reflection of their own work.

1e. Social studies/history/civic learning and engagement

We use the Putnam/ Northern Westchester Boces Integrated Social Studies/ ELA Curriculum which aligns with the New York State Social Studies Standards and the Next Generation ELA Standards. Teachers use rich texts within their Reading and Writing Workshops to teach history and civic learning. In addition, teachers use literature from our Character Building Curriculum to help students learn about civic engagement and social responsibility. As a school, we honor and celebrate all National Holidays to help students develop an understanding of the world around them. Our teachers enrich lessons using the local history of Irvington. For example, students learn about the Wickquasgeck Native Americans, who resided in Irvington, and Dutch Settlers who used the Hudson River for trade.

In kindergarten, students learn about themselves, respecting others, and their role in the classroom. Their learning is integrated in our Physical Education classes, as the teachers reinforce the concept of individuality, personal space, collaboration, and respect for others. In 1st grade, students begin to delve deeper into their family and the differences and similarities of other families. Our librarian collaborates with 1st grade teachers to support students' learning about cultures and families. Our 2nd graders learn about our community and the country. Their learning is integrated with our Music program as they learn songs about the United States and perform for our school. Our 3rd graders learn about communities and cultures around the world. This worldly learning is integrated in their non-fiction reading/writing Units and also the Art Classes. Students study art from around the world and create African art. This year, the 3rd grade team is bringing the Red Trunk Project to each classroom. Each trunk is filled with crafts, clothing, spices, currency from another culture and will bring to life the stories of children from around the world.

1f. For secondary schools:

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Each day, our Kindergarten-3rd grade students enjoy a 45 minute enriching experience in Art, Music, Library, or Physical Education. Our 3rd graders also participate in World Language once a week. Our District plan for 2020-2021, will expand World Language to include both French and Spanish for Kindergarten-3rd graders. In addition our School Counselor provides Tier 1 character education lessons in classrooms.

Our students are immersed in creativity as they walk into our magical Art Room. Our Art teacher sings as she helps students to create, perform, respond, and connect with art through the Learning Standards. She states, "Art balances the curriculum to develop the whole intellect. This encourages self-expression, creative problem solving skills, and hand-eye coordination." In addition, our Art teacher partnered with our Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA) to create an evening Art Show, showcasing student work. Facilitating an Art Club at lunchtime, the Art teacher works with students to create masterpieces to adorn the walls of our school.

In our Music Room, students sing, dance, and play a variety of instruments. Our Music teacher ignites a genuine love for music. As she states, "My goal is to capitalize on the musician in every child and to ensure a lifelong engagement in music." She helps everyone learn our school song, Teamwork, and we sing it proudly at assemblies. Kindergarten students marched to "Carol of the Bells" by the Boston Pop Orchestra when we celebrated their early reading skills in our March of the Kindergarten Readers. Our 1st graders perform a winter concert which includes "America the Beautiful" and our 2nd graders perform "Fifty Nifty United States." Our 3rd graders sing and play recorders in their Moving Up Ceremony. Our Music teacher also helps select music for the loud-speaker as we dance out of the building before vacations. "Hakuna Matata," from the Lion King, is a favorite.

Students run, skip, and race into our gym. Our two Physical Education (PE) teachers offer students explicit instruction in movement, games, and fitness. In addition, they weave in mindfulness, circus activities, and drumming on yoga balls. Our PE teachers state, "...we teach children that moving and being active can be fun!" The teachers use iPads to record students in real-time as they practice, and then show the videos during class. In addition, our PE teachers taught every child how to use Rock-Paper-Scissors to resolve conflicts. Now, as a school, we use this strategy in a consistent manner. At the end of the year, our PE teachers organize Bulldog Day, a fun-filled, fitness day.

In World Language, our 3rd grade students are immersed in Central American cultures and languages. Our World Language teacher shares stories, games, and books from other cultures. La profesora states, "...students become explorers as they are exposed to language and culture through storytelling, multi-sensory activities, and sing-along. The goal of the program is to motivate and explore students' linguistic and cultural curiosities." She collaborates with our PTSA International Committee to organize families and community members to speak with students about different cultures.

Students say entering our library is like walking into a "reading dream." Our Librarian creates an environment of love, literacy, and learning. She states, "... the library is a place where students become effective users of ideas and information. Our goal is to promote and nurture lifelong reading habits for both reading for pleasure and reading for information." The library shelves are overflowing with rich literature, and there are stuffed animals and brightly colored flexible seating in every nook and cranny. Our librarian collaborates with teachers and administration to facilitate literacy assemblies, and she shares suggestions for new books that include diverse cultural backgrounds and an array of perspectives.

Our School Counselor and classroom teachers follow our monthly Character Education themes. Rooted in Habits of Mind and Second Step Curriculum, and the foundation of emotional regulation, our School Counselor helps all children learn about kindness, mindfulness, individuality, problem solving, and respect. She created a rainbow mural in our cafeteria showcasing students' buckets of kindness, based on the text "Have You Filled a Bucket Today?" by Carol McCloud. The collaboration of our School Counselor with classroom teachers has had a huge positive impact on student behavior and social-emotional learning.

3. Academic Supports:

3a. Students performing below grade level

We offer support for students in our thriving Response to Intervention (RTI)/ Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) system. Weekly, we meet as a team and discuss students who are struggling academically or behaviorally. In addition, we also review all students' academic data, using a protocol and Aimsweb and District measures, three times a year. Based on data-driven discussions, students in need of additional supports are identified. General education students, students with Individualized Educational Programs (IEPs), and students receiving English as a New Language (ENL) services are all able to enter our RTI groups.

Intervention groups are led by Related Service Providers in reading, writing, math, behavior, speech/language, social-emotional, and/or occupational therapy. Related Service Providers use research based programs in their intervention groups and all providers use the Direct Instruction Model with explicit instruction. Students are progress monitored once a week, and communication is sent home to families. Each

intervention is approximately 4-6 weeks long, and students are reviewed again at a RTI/MTSS follow-up meeting to assess progress and next steps.

While we use research-based interventions, as "out of the box thinkers," we also create interventions tailored to support individual student needs. For example, one unusual intervention was a behavior support plan for a student who was performing below grade level, despite his potential to achieve grade-level standards. Considering the research about connections, it was determined that this student might benefit from an individualized check-in with a preferred adult to stay motivated and on task in school. When asked who he felt most connected to in school, the student chose our Security Guard. While somewhat unconventional, a behavior support plan with our Security Guard was implemented and the classroom teacher monitored the plan. Gradually, the student's behavior improved and he was able to show what he was capable of in class.

3b. Students performing above grade level

Teachers are able to differentiate for students performing above grade level throughout the school day and during our What-I-Need (WIN) time. Within literacy lessons, students use independent reading books, and students performing above grade level are continuously challenged. Our Literacy Coach works with teachers, fine tuning their small strategy groups to meet the needs of all students. She models advanced techniques for each grade level to help challenge all students. Our math curriculum offers opportunities for differentiation within the practice sets and also in math stations. Our Math/Science Coach helps teachers infuse advanced math and deeper learning within the Math Units, based on student need. In addition, students use the IXL math program on Chromebooks and iPads during math station time, and work at their own pace and at their own level.

In 2nd grade, students participate in a school store and in 3rd grade, students participate in Genius Hour. Both are examples of differentiated learning times when students are able to create projects and collaborate with others. These are additional opportunities for students who are performing above grade level to excel. Our kindergarten-3rd grade students attend Project Lead the Way (PLTW) once a week. This is a hands-on Science Technology Engineering Math (STEM) program, which also allows opportunities for students to be challenged.

Our faculty continues to be successful in differentiating learning through the utilization of the District's comprehensive curriculum maps that provide a clear pathway to support the enrichment of learning. Additionally, teachers' access to countless instructional resources, coupled with a highly collaborative professional community, and a technology-rich environment provide the opportunity for every learner to be challenged in a rigorous, creative, joyful learning environment.

3c. Special education

Our Pupil Personnel Services (PPS), offers a continuum of services including Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) programs on every grade level. We have Kindergarten-1st and 2nd-3rd grade Special Classes, and Resource Room support. Students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and 504 Plans are offered support from our eight Special Education teachers and Related Service Providers. Our related service providers include school psychologists, speech/language pathologists, occupational therapists, a physical therapist, social worker, and consultations from a vision and behavioral specialists. All providers collaborate with PPS and building administrators for a cohesive, student-driven approach. In addition, we have Teacher Aides in all ICT rooms, Teaching Assistants in Special Classes, and 1:1 Aides for students with specific needs. All of those aides receive training throughout the year to best support the changing needs of students.

Special Education teachers in the ICT classes re-teach and review concepts for students based on the goals in their IEPs. Instruction is presented in a Direct Instruction Model using multi-sensory strategies, visual representations, and manipulatives. Students with IEPs are offered instruction in the least restrictive environment. Our Special Class teachers also use the Direct Instruction Model with research based programs: The Corrective Reading Program, The Reading Mastery, and The Moving with Math Learning System. Students in Special Class join a General Education class for lunch/recess and other specials. All Special Area teachers, Aides, and Related Service Providers read and sign off on the IEPs and 504 plans so

all of the accommodations and modifications are in place for the students throughout the school.

Communication with families is ongoing. We have formal and informal meetings to communicate progress. Special Education teachers and Related Service Providers progress monitor students weekly and we discuss their progress throughout the year, three times a year at the RTI Data meetings, and at annual reviews.

3d. ELLs, if a special program or intervention is offered

At Dows Lane, English as a New Language (ENL) students receive services from a certified ENL teacher in an integrated push-in model for students at higher proficiency levels and a stand-alone pull-out model for students at lower proficiency levels. Former ELLs continue to receive ENL services for an additional two years after demonstrating proficiency on the NYSESLAT. Our ENL teacher states, "... the program at Dows Lane is designed to teach English Language Learners (ELLs) social and academic language skills as well as aspects of the English language necessary to succeed in their core content classes. All instruction is aligned with the NYS Learning Standards and grade level curricula."

We have a collaborative ENL class on each grade level, and the General Education teacher and the ENL teacher work together to deliver instruction to our newest English learners. ELL students participate in whole class learning and small group work with both teachers. When students work in small groups, the teachers use the Direct Instruction Model with explicit strategies. If students require additional academic or social-emotional support, they may also receive RTI intervention services. Collaboration with families is integral for all of our students, and we take extra care to translate printed materials and use a translating app on mobile devices when speaking with families who also have limited English ability. Our ENL teacher and collaborating teacher meet monthly for planning sessions to review student data, progress, and prepare for upcoming lessons.

In addition to direct instruction, our ENL teacher collaborates with our librarian to ensure culturally diverse library collections are in every classroom. He advocates for all students to be exposed to rich literature that reflects and honors our diversity as a school, and our globally-connected society.

3e. Other populations (e.g., migrant), if a special program or intervention is offered

At Dows Lane, we work hard to promote individuality and respect for all. We value differences and teach our youngest students that differences should be celebrated. Our School Counselor collaborates with classroom teachers to read books, facilitate discussions, and implement student activities that help children gain empathy and openness for others. This past year, we partnered with the Hudson Valley, New York Chapter of the Gay, Lesbian, Straight, Education Network (GLSEN) to offer workshops for all of our staff. Our teachers, aides, Related Service providers, and custodial staff all participated in the workshops to continue to improve our school climate and make every child at Dows Lane feel valued and welcomed every day. Our Social Worker, School Counselor, Classroom teachers, and Administrators work confidentially with families who have shared information about their child's gender identity, gender fluid identity or transgender identity. In addition, we changed the signs on the outside walls of all of our single stall bathrooms to "gender neutral/all gender restrooms." Furthermore, we have rainbow signs hanging in every hallway and every classroom from GLSEN that state, "Everyone Welcome Here."

As a District, we started the year with an all-District presentation from Welcoming Schools, a project of The Human Rights Campaign Foundation, about creating and supporting respectful and supportive schools. Our goal at Dows Lane and as a District is to create classrooms that welcome all students and families, prevent bullying and unkind behavior, and help all students thrive.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

In the classrooms and at lunch/recess, our staff creates positive environments for students to thrive. During instructional time, teachers use questioning techniques which require students to think beyond knowledge. They also employ turn-and-talk/accountable talk experiences so all voices are heard. Our classrooms are interactive learning labs with Essential Questions and anchor charts purposefully placed for learning. Teachers use multi-sensory presentations, visual aides, and manipulatives to teach concepts and engage different styles of learners. Following the Irvington Understanding of Rigor, which guides our student learning experiences, we set high expectations and students work hard, experience productive struggle, and show grit as they learn new concepts. Students also have access to kinesthetic, flexible seating in every room. For example, we have scoop chairs, wobble chairs, beanbags, yoga balls, standing tables, low tables, lap-desks, and floor-desks. Students are empowered to chose options that best suit their learning needs.

In addition to academic engagement, our staff is also focused on students' social emotional growth. We infuse our Character Education curriculum and Habits of Mind into our daily routines. Students learn how to navigate friendships, problem solve, and resolve conflicts. We have positive behavior support systems in place and students fill in a "Stop and Think" form when they have a conflict. Our Principal and Assistant Principal work closely with students, teachers, aides, and families to support our District Code of Conduct and the positive development of each child.

Our Aides, who supervise lunch/recess, receive training throughout the school year to support students. We have well stocked outdoor equipment carts, jungle-gyms, and chalk- lots and lots of chalk. Our students love to color on the blacktops. This winter, our students and staff colored hearts all over the school to create a 'heart attack' that showed our love for Dows Lane!

As a District, we connect our youngest learners with our High School students multiple times during the year, and we also offer opportunities for students to collaborate with our 4th and 5th graders from Main Street School, our other elementary school in the District. Students feel connected to Dows Lane, and the larger Irvington community.

Our collective efforts engage and motivate the majority of our students. When a child needs more intensive support, we discuss the child's needs as a team at a RTI/MTSS meeting, and then the child may receive small group or 1:1 support from a Related Service Provider.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Collaboration with families and the community is essential to support our students. We have an active Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA) who help schedule volunteers and facilitate events. Volunteers help with our recycling/ composting program in the cafeteria, support our library, read to classes, and organize evening/weekend events such as: Principal Coffees, New Family Breakfasts, Literacy Night, Math Night, Garden Clean Up, Used Book Sale, Pre-School Carnival, Halloween Carnival, Movie Night, and many, many more. Our PTSA and the Irvington Educational Foundation (IEF) also offer generous grants to help enhance the learning experiences for our students. We have been fortunate to welcome Scientists, Historians, Musicians, and Storytellers from these grants.

We also have an active Site Based Committee, which includes community and staff members working together to improve educational outcomes. This year, our Committee planned a "Moving in May" project to emphasize fitness and wellness. This fun-filled project commences with a huge rainbow painted track on our fields for students to walk on at recess. In addition to wellness, the rainbow also represents our belief in inclusion for all students.

Communication with families is consistent throughout the year. Every Thursday, families receive "The Dows Lane Buzz," our weekly email blast. These emails contain upcoming events, schedules, and photos

from the week. In addition, the Buzz also includes links and resources for families to support their child's development. Families also receive regular communication from their child's teacher and have in-person conferences multiple times during the year. Progress reports are sent home three times a year. These include details about students' progress in academics and social/ behavioral areas. We use positive behavior support systems and call families to communicate behaviors that our students are working on. This collaboration in and outside of school helps unite a consistent message for students as we work hard together to help them become the best versions of themselves.

In addition to our families, we also work closely with the larger Irvington Community. Irvington Police Officers facilitate workshops about safety, crossing the street, and stranger-danger. The Irvington Fire Marshall visits to check in with students about fire safety. And, the Irvington Rotary Club collaborates with the Police Department to bring a pedestrian safety program to our students. Furthermore, we partner with local colleges and welcome student teachers in our school. Currently, we have five student teachers collaborating with our staff and students.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

At Dows Lane, professional development is ongoing and purposeful. In August, we mapped out a draft plan, based on the District's goals and the New York State Learning Standards. Our plan included a focus on content areas and social emotional learning, using our staff as facilitators and outside organizations/specialists.

At monthly Faculty Meetings, weekly grade level meetings, and Superintendent's Conference Days, staff learns about refining practices and new methods to teach our students. Teachers and staff also go to off-site workshops that they advocate to attend, or an Administrator finds for them, based on needs observed during an observation. This year, our Technology Department started to replace Smart Boards with Newline Interactive Boards. Before the boards were installed, teachers were given training opportunities to learn how to use the new boards. In addition, our 3rd grade team analyzed the New York State Math Assessment data with our Math Coach and determined that our students were not secure in fractions. Therefore, our 3rd grade team and our Coach worked together to create a mini-fractions unit to supplement our math instruction.

Our District offers embedded professional development each month in our Professional Learning Release Days (PLRD). On these days, students dismiss an hour early and staff has consistent time to collaborate. This year, our aides needed training to use evacuation chairs for two students in wheelchairs. Our Physical Therapist offers that training during PLRD time, so in the event of an emergency, our aides will be ready to use the evacuation chairs safely and properly. Furthermore, we offer choice for our staff. In the fall we surveyed staff to determine their needs and interests to effectively support every student's development. From those responses, we honed in on three areas: Assessment, Technology in the classroom, and Social Emotional Learning. Then, throughout the year, we offered choices at faculty meetings, and staff was able to attend whichever workshop they wanted/needed. At the end of each workshop, we gathered together for whole-staff communication and reflection.

We collaborate with the District Office to offer purposeful learning to meet the needs of our students and staff. This year, the District and Dows Lane brought in speakers from outside organizations to help our staff continue to create inclusive, welcoming schools for all students and families. Our staff feels valued, appreciated, and listened to as we react/respond to their changing needs to meet the ever-changing needs of our students.

4. School Leadership:

The Principal and Assistant Principal collaborate with District Office personnel to implement the District's Theories of Action, which are our shared values and beliefs. The Principal believes her main goal is to foster an extraordinary culture of learning. She sets high expectations for staff and students, refines and supports continuous learning, empowers others to lead, and honors diversity and inclusion.

information and daily events. At 7:00am, the Principal and Head Custodian meet. This daily collaboration allows for smooth functioning in the building. On Fridays, a "Reminder" email is sent to all staff. This includes weekly information, an inspirational quote/image, and article about education or wellness. Monthly, an appreciation note and piece of candy are placed in every mailbox. This 'love note' communication makes the staff feel valued and appreciated, and adds to our positive learning environment. Furthermore, during observations, walkthroughs, and meetings with teachers, Administrators offer explicit feedback to improve instructional practices and there are ongoing collegial conversations.

The Emergency Response Team (ERT) are also leaders in the building. These individuals assist with school safety throughout the year, and oversee all systems when Administrators are out. The ERT is comprised of Related Service Providers, including our School Nurse, who is our wellness leader. She posts interesting articles outside of the Health Office and maintains student and staff health. Our Administrative Assistant/Principal's Secretary is a leader in the building too. She proactively anticipates the needs of staff and leads/manages systems throughout the school. Our Grade Level Instructional Leaders (ILs) and Instructional Coaches are curriculum leaders, facilitating meetings and organizing professional development. Our teachers are curriculum decision makers and not just implementers of programs. They are responsive to students' needs and offer targeted instruction. Our Response to Intervention (RTI) Interventionists and Related Service Providers are also leaders, helping teachers analyze student assessment data and implement Tier 1 plans. And, last but certainly not least, our students are leaders. Our 3rd grade Student Council creates ideas for whole-school activities. They created large red hearts in our main lobby with the words "Spread the Love" over them. They left baskets of heart cut-outs and markers next to the large hearts, and made an announcement about their interactive-art display, asking students and staff to add ideas about how they spread love and kindness each day.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Our Response to Intervention (RTI)/ Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is our one practice that has been instrumental in our school's success. Weekly, our RTI team meets to discuss students academic and social emotional needs. We delve into formal data and informal observations to understand our children. Each member of the RTI team has a large orange binder with our meeting protocols, National Data, and other pertinent information at their fingertips for discussions. Our meetings, with classroom teachers present, are clear, efficient, and student driven. As a District, we use the RTIm Direct Frontline System for data management. Housing our student data in RTIm Direct, allows the student's history to follow them as they move from school to school within the District, so we build on their growth and needs each year.

Three times a year, the RTI Data Team has data meetings with classroom teachers. In 15 minute sessions, teachers rotate in and out of our Professional Learning Center (PLC) and discuss their students' progress based on our benchmark measures and classroom assessments. We discuss the progress of all students- general education students, students with IEPs, 504 plans, and English Language Learners. Our excellent core curriculum and instruction are effective for most of our students, and those students who need additional support are serviced within our small RTI intervention groups. Interventionists and Related Service Providers fill gaps, repeat and review skills, and offer intense, explicit instruction. Interventionists progress monitor students weekly, and students enter and exit services, fluidly throughout the year. Communication with families about RTI services is ongoing throughout the intervention timeframes. Families receive printed progress reports, emails, and calls from service providers. Interventions are 4-6 weeks and progress is reviewed at the weekly RTI meetings to determine next steps- students continuing interventions, starting new interventions, or exiting services. One of our Administrative Assistants works closely with all of our providers to ensure that the family communication is accurate and timely.

Recently, our RTI Team read "Imagine: How Creativity Works" by Jonah Lehrer refining our collective team practices and expertise. The RTI Team is a group of brilliant, strong professionals, each offering their expert opinions and support to help our children. We are in constant communication as a team, delving deep into academic and behavioral data to best help students succeed.