

U.S. Department of Education
2015 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mr. Robert Curtis Groff, III

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

Official School Name P.S. 244 The Active Learning Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 137-20 Franklin Avenue

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

City Flushing State NY Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 11355-3871

County Queens State School Code Number* 25Q244

Telephone 718-445-5730 Fax 718-445-5856

Web site/URL http://www.ps244q.org E-mail rgroff@schools.nyc.gov

Twitter Handle

@ps244q 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 that it is accurate.

_____ Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Mrs. Danielle DiMango

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

E-mail: DDiMang@schools.nyc.gov

Other)

District Name School District 25 Tel. 718-281-7605

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

_____ Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board

President/Chairperson _____

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

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

_____ Date _____

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

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

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

Include this page in the school’s application as page 2.

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 school has made its Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) or Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, a public school must meet the state’s AMOs or AYP requirements in the 2014-2015 school year 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 2009 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: 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, or 2014.
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

All data are the most recent year available.

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

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 26 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 7 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 12 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 45 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. 4 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.
4. Number of students as of October 1 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	20	16	36
K	72	58	130
1	59	55	114
2	42	43	85
3	44	31	75
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	0	0	0
Total Students	237	203	440

5. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 87 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 7 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 3 % White
 - 1 % 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.)

6. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2013 - 2014 year: 3%

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, 2013 until the end of the school year	4
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2013 until the end of the school year	7
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	11
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1	440
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.025
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	3

7. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 61 %
245 Total number ELL
 Number of non-English languages represented: 9
 Specify non-English languages: Mandarin, Cantonese, Spanish, Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Bengali, Gujrati, Farsi
8. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 79 %
 Total number students who qualify: 316

Information for Public Schools Only - Data Provided by the State

The state has reported that 79 % of the students enrolled in this school are from low income or disadvantaged families based on the following subgroup(s): Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals

9. Students receiving special education services: 10 %
41 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 categories.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <u>0</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>3</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>18</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>19</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>1</u> Developmentally Delayed |

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

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers	20
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	10
Paraprofessionals	8
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	5

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

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

Required Information	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010
Daily student attendance	97%	97%	96%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools)**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2014

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. Please summarize your school mission in 25 words or less: Our mission is to foster academic excellence in a caring environment through a partnership of family and community, ensuring students lead healthy and productive lives.

PART III – SUMMARY

The Active Learning Elementary School (TALES) P.S. 244 is an early childhood public school serving 441 students in Pre-K through 3rd grade situated in Flushing, Queens (New York City District 25). We opened in 2008 and our focus is to foster academic excellence in a safe and caring learning environment, through a partnership of family, staff, and community. We continually aim to stimulate students' minds, nourish their bodies, and develop character and place special emphasis on the belief that there is a strong connection between health and wellness, curriculum tailored to student needs, and high academic achievement. We believe that we have been able to show a connection between these areas over the course of the last seven years as evidenced by our state test scores, learning survey results, high interest in attending the school, and many other areas.

TALES was designated as an early childhood choice school by the district and as such, students gain entry through a lottery. Since 2008, the school has developed a strong reputation in the community and as a result, there are more applicants than we can accommodate. Last year, over 650 applications were received for Kindergarten and over 450 for only 36 Pre-K seats.

Entry to the school is open to the entire district; however, our school community is reflective of our immediate neighborhood with approximately 87% of families being direct immigrants from China. Many of our families know little or no English when they arrive and are struggling financially, often working extended hours. Overall, 79% of our families qualify for free or reduced lunch, 11% of our students receive Special Education instruction, and 60% of students from Kindergarten through 3rd grade are English Language Learners (ELLs). In Kindergarten where we take in an average of 130 students each year, 75% of students qualify as ELLs.

As we have continued to grow, there have been a number of key components that are unique to TALES that have helped us excel together. Among these is our use of the Responsive Classroom approach to community building, behavior, and discipline throughout the school. We also utilize Thinking Maps as a visual language for organizing thinking and Math in the City investigations as critical thinking models for students to emphasize explaining their ideas and processes as they come to solutions. We also place a heavy emphasis on ESL instruction and intervention. 43% of our teachers hold ESL certifications; this includes every cluster teacher and every push-in teacher, who work alongside the classroom teacher for one period each day. We also have a full time Reading Recovery and Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETTS) teachers who serve as intervention specialists. Our ELA curriculum is also of particular importance as we create our reading and writing programs in house, with teachers and administrators working together to pool ideas from a variety of research based, Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) aligned models to build units that are flexible to our students' individual needs and are consistent throughout a grade and school.

Now in our 7th year, TALES has a lot to be proud of and we continually strive to improve ourselves as a community of learners. We have received numerous awards from organizations such as the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine, the Alliance for a Healthier Generation, the Humane Society, the NYC Department of Health and recognition from the NYC Chancellors' office, the Office of School Foods and the Office of School Wellness. We have received many different types of press from around the world for being the first non-charter public school in the country to serve a vegetarian menu and demonstrate the connection between teaching health and wellness and academic achievement. Along with a 97.16 percent attendance rate year to date, we ranked #11 overall in NY State in Common Core Math and ELA results for the 2012-13 school year according to a New York City Department of Education press release and The Daily News. (No such report was released for the 2013-14 school year; however, our strength in academic achievement has continued).

Our emphasis on Health and Wellness has been successful for many years and often is the most recognized portion of TALES. However, we have excelled in other areas as well. Recently the NYC Office of Teacher Effectiveness toured the building and requested to record several of our teachers to feature in exemplary teaching practice videos and our ELA curriculum has been touted for several years for its effectiveness.

All of this work has been done together as a staff. Everyone in the school plays an important role and it is only through this collective approach towards achieving our goals that we are able to be successful. We hope to continue to improve and grow together for many years to come.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

In Reading, TALES employs a balanced literacy approach. Teachers revise units based in the Teachers' College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP) curriculum to meet the needs of our ELLs. We believe that students progress as readers when they are able to choose the books they want to read and have ample time to read independently. From Kindergarten on, students are taught to select "just right" books, or books that they are able to read with fluency, accuracy, and comprehension. During Shared Reading, teachers model reading skills and habits necessary for students to become proficient readers. In Guided Reading, teachers target a reading strategy that helps a small group of students make further progress. The intent of our Reading curriculum is to create a life-long love of reading, and to equip students with the skills and habits of mind necessary to negotiate texts with comprehension.

Likewise in Writing, our units of study are based in TCRWP, but are revised to meet the needs of our students. Students live as writers during Writing Workshop, and are guided through the stages of writing process. We also encourage students to write from their lives, no matter the grade. We believe that encouraging students to choose topics of interest from their own lives helps make writing an authentic form of communication. Students also focus on developing and articulating their opinions, conducting age-appropriate research, and providing evidence to support their arguments.

In Math, we use Math in the City. In this approach, there are sets of investigations that occur in each grade. This curriculum is aligned with our belief that the process and critical thinking that occurs during independent and group work is fundamental in students' understanding of math concepts. As such, the math congress is a critical component of enabling students to discuss problems and give each other ideas and feedback about solving a problem. In explaining the process they go through, students often come to a common understanding of what strategy works best.

In Science, we employ The Full Option Science System (FOSS) curriculum. We believe science is best taught through a hands-on approach and we have found that investigations supplemented with real-world extensions take advantage of students' natural curiosity to help them make sense of the world. When students were studying volume in the Measuring Unit, the science teacher posed the question of why Snapple bottles were not filled to the brim. After all, she challenged, the label read "16 ounces". Students arrived at a few different conclusions, from faulty advertisement, to the idea that the bottle held more than 16 ounces. Students had to come up with a way to test their hypotheses. In doing so, there was a lot of real-world application and engagement, as well as connections to Math.

Our ESL teachers write the Social Studies curriculum. It is aligned to the NYC Social Studies Scope and Sequence, and also integrates ESL grammar components that are based on an in-house grammar continuum. Teachers highlight grammar and vocabulary so that the lesson is an opportunity for more ESL instruction. We also believe field trips are a critical part of our social studies curriculum. TALES students go on many field trips throughout the year. We believe our neighborhood and our city to be another classroom from which we can learn and cement understandings.

Our students succeed because we focus on our population needs such as those of ELL students and constantly examine how to best serve them. Two years ago for example, we identified oral language as an area of need for ELLs. Since then, we have been very intentional about how to best infuse oral language opportunities in our units. We added a section for Oral Language Supports to our units to hold us accountable for researching and discussing how to address this need. We constantly share ideas and talk about our students' needs and communicate these needs with parents. When we noticed that students had difficulty negotiating "he/she/it," we began a "campaign," to target this need. We believe that making more teachable moments happen, both at home and at school, has led to our success in particular with our ELLs population.

PreSchool Addendum:

TALES' Pre-K program is one that is play-based and Reggio-inspired, and also embraces a structured Reading, Writing, and Math curriculum. Playing at the sand and water table therefore amounts to fun for a preschooler, but we recognize that it enables a student to develop the fine motor skills necessary to succeed in Writing Workshop in the primary grades. This purposeful play, integrated into all aspects of our Pre-K curriculum, enables our school to embrace what is developmentally appropriate for children but also lay the foundation for school readiness and success in Grade K-3.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

In realizing our mission of educating the whole child, we devote resources and time to many other curriculum areas that we believe are an essential part of any well-rounded education.

We believe Art is essential in nurturing our students' creative intelligence. Teachers teach Art as an extension of Social Studies in the classroom. In addition, we partner with Studio in a School to bring a 14-session targeted art residency to our Kindergarten through 2nd grade. Teachers collaborate with the resident artist to create a unit of study that complements and extends classroom work. This year, the Kindergarten residency is focused on Imaginary Animals as an extension of their Nonfiction Unit in Animals; the Second grade residency is focused on New York City and NYC public art as an extension of their Social Studies unit. Last year, the resident artist worked in collage and portraiture to extend the 1st grade's Author Study unit on Ezra Jack Keats.

Students in Pre-K through 3rd grade also have at least one period of music each week. Our music teacher integrates music from around the world in her curriculum; the reasons for doing this are twofold: 1) students' identities are celebrated and affirmed 2) students are exposed to the rich diversity of different cultural backgrounds. At school-wide performances, students perform songs in more than one language as a celebration of our diversity. Our music teacher also has an ESL license, so she is able to provide music instruction through an ESL lens, thereby addressing our high-ELL population. In addition, we have partnered with Schools that Rock to bring violin lessons to our students in an after-school setting.

TALES also places a great emphasis on providing our students with the tools to lead healthy and productive lives, which is part of our mission statement. We do this by spotlighting health and nutrition, movement in classrooms, healthy foods throughout the school, providing physical education to all students, and developing parent understanding in these areas. Our work in this area is unmatched. Our commitment to health and nutrition and physical education has earned us the distinction as one of the two healthiest schools in NYC, and in the top 0.04% of schools in the nation by The Alliance for a Healthier Generation. We work with Fitness and Nutrition for Kids (Fan4Kids), an organization that provides a weekly health and nutrition curriculum that supplements our own.

We have also partnered with the Coalition for Healthy School Foods to become the first school in the nation to spearhead an all-vegetarian lunch program. Our belief is that teaching students to understand what it means to live a healthy lifestyle in early childhood translates into nurturing adults who can make informed decisions about health and productivity later on in life. In the last three years, we have reduced the number of students that would be identified as obese by about 15% while raising the attendance rate to 97%.

Additionally, we believe that technological literacy for all students is important. We know that in order for students to be competitive in a global economy, it is essential that they develop an understanding of technology. Each of our classrooms is equipped with a Smartboard, and we devote professional development resources to ensure our teachers are familiar with integrating this technology into their lessons. Parents are also invited into the classroom for workshops on using technology at home. We also have laptops for full-classroom use, beginning in Kindergarten, as well as ipads that students are able to utilize.

Along with our focus in these areas during regular school hours, this work is also reflected in our extended day program taught twice a week for 90 minutes each day. We currently have 13 groups of 10 students each, including classes on each grade level engaged in a variety of curriculum areas such as Music, "Green Team" (Environment), Visual Arts, Team Building, Cooking, Technology, and ELL intervention classes.

Our commitment to these other curriculum areas demonstrates our mission to nurture well-rounded students whose exposure to music and the arts, health and fitness, and technology, give them the tools to make smart choices to lead healthy and productive lives.

3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

There are a variety of instructional methods that we use throughout the school that have proven successful in meeting the needs of specific learners.

In all classrooms, teachers build differentiation into their unit plans and lessons to provide access points for all learners. In particular, we focus on differentiation for ELLs who are struggling, Students With Disabilities (SWDs), and those who need additional challenges. As a part of our Response to Intervention (RTI) protocol, we have a Reading Recovery program for struggling first graders. We also have adopted Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) as a tiered intervention for 1st and 3rd graders, and we are hoping to expand its use in the coming year. In addition, during spring breaks and summer breaks, we hold clinics for students struggling in Math and ELA. Both the Principal and the Assistant Principal pull small groups of third graders to provide additional intervention support, and each classroom works with an ESL licensed teacher for one period a day to provide direct English language instruction and small group work.

We also have found that Thinking Maps (a visual language of eight maps that represent the eight cognitive processes by which we think) enables ELLs and SWDs to organize their thinking in a concrete manner. The maps often allow students to complete a task with which they may have struggled otherwise while also increasing the rigor via a set of questions. The maps challenge a student to cite evidence, to consider different perspectives, and to synthesize information, all of which deepen the thinking surrounding a given task. In this way, the maps provide both a scaffold for students who require the organization of a map to structure their thinking, and a differentiated challenge to extend thinking.

Additionally, we have expanded our intervention this year with the addition of a Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETTS) teacher. This enables us to provide targeted instruction to Individualized Education Program (IEP) students who require additional services, and at-risk intervention for others who are struggling. Additionally, we have a Pupil Personnel Team (PPT) that work with students in the pre-referral stage to address intervention needs before a referral for services. When necessary, our School Based Support Team (SBST) comprised of a school psychologist, family worker, social worker, guidance counselor and other service providers assess the needs of and service our students for their success.

PART V – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Assessment Results Narrative Summary:

As stated in our assessment data, TALES has had significant success in students achieving at high levels.

Of specific importance is the success we have had in meeting the needs of students who are ELLs and qualify as economically disadvantaged. In large part, we believe that this is due to factors including but not limited to teacher professional development, focus on English as a Second Language (ESL), instructional strategies throughout the school, below average class size in 1st through 3rd grades, academic intervention services and resources focused on personnel working with students in classrooms.

In Math, we have been able to increase the percentage of students testing at level 4's from 22% in 2012-13 to 53% in 2013-14 with the number of students testing increasing from 46% to 68% during that same time frame. We have shown that even with the introduction of the CCLS exams, we continue to show strong achievement in Math across subgroups with 84% of all students attaining a 3 or 4 last year. In particular, our ELLs represented an increase in achievement of 3's and 4's by 23% from the year before.

We have also been able to hold our achievement in ELA at a high level since the introduction of the CCLS assessments, with 81% of students achieving a 3 or 4 last year, even with a 39% increase in the total number of students tested. Additionally, in 2012-13 we had no qualifying Students with Disabilities test whereas in 2013-14, 8 students tested. Our ELL students showed a 23% increase in attaining 3's and 4's, year over year and ELL students scored at almost identical rates of achievement as compared to students that qualify as economically disadvantaged (often these categories significantly overlap).

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

TALES values the importance of data in a variety of ways and recognizes that it enables us to focus on increasing student achievement. We are always striving for ways to improve the use of our data, and teaching staff how to interpret and plan with it.

Throughout the year, students are assessed regularly by teachers in all subject areas and in a number of ways. This includes but is not limited to observing conversation between peers, collecting conference notes during independent work, utilizing rubrics to grade an end-of-unit piece and using the Developmental Reading Assessment, Math and Phonics assessments three times yearly. The use of these assessments is closely related to the instructional focus of the school and its professional development plan. Each piece of data is collected in spreadsheets and highlighted for teachers to analyze individual, class, and grade level trends to determine student strengths and areas of need. This information enables our teachers to make decisions as to what gaps exist in student understandings and to make necessary adaptations for those who are excelling. Teachers are guided through this process by administration and are given ample opportunities to analyze the data and then to make adjustments to curriculum based on that information. Teachers are given time to work on making these adjustments and provided with materials to ensure the implementation of their ideas and research.

This enables teachers to explain to families the strengths and needs of their child at Parent Teacher Conferences and during open parent-engagement times each week, to make suggestions for work at home, and to build a strong relationship with families. Assessment information is also taken into consideration when creating family workshops by our parent coordinator and teachers, ensuring that parents know what will best assist them in encouraging their son or daughter's success.

Part VI School Support

1. School Climate/Culture

We believe that our school culture is that of a close-knit community of learners where we strive to develop a warm atmosphere for all stakeholders. It is important to us to provide a positive environment for the continued success of our students, families, and staff. Very often when people come to visit, they comment on how welcoming the school feels.

One way in which we do this is through using Responsive Classroom (RC) techniques throughout the school and setting standards for children and adults. This approach employs a common language of expectations and behavioral structures as well as a consistent way of talking to and with students. Teachers receive RC professional development at TALEs and any child or adult can walk into a classroom knowing what the expectations are right away. This work permeates into a variety of growth areas as students can often be seen learning how to solve problems, working cooperatively in the classroom, and on the playground while also building academic and social conversation together.

There is also an emphasis placed on ensuring teachers feel valued and supported as seen through our low turnover and high teacher satisfaction rates according to the NYC school survey and internal survey results. Some of the ways in which we accomplish this are through our belief that administrators should always help teachers improve their pedagogy and show staff members that they are also leaders. We often solicit ideas, needs, and concerns from staff, maintain an open door policy, assist teachers in meetings with challenging families, set up and participate in planning sessions, and establish a common understanding of and transparency in observations and evaluations. These are in addition to our leadership structures that are in place, including the School Leadership Team, teacher leaders, providing opportunities in areas including technology, health and wellness, data analysis, and green initiatives, all of which demonstrate a shared leadership throughout the school.

We also ensure the climate of constant learning is very clear to students and families. We believe that everyone has something that they are passionate about and can teach others. For example, parents have lead workshops on origami, parenting, and gardening. Likewise, Administrators look for opportunities to learn new methods of instruction, use technology, and share professional texts with teachers through the school. We operate as a collective unit where we can all learn from each other.

2. Engaging Families and Community

At TALEs, we believe in the importance of strong partnerships to assist the school in increasing student achievement.

First and foremost is the partnership between our families and the school. There are a variety of parental involvement strategies that we believe are a significant reason that over 95% of families attend Parent Teachers Conferences each year. Of particular importance is parent workshops lead by our teachers, administration, parent coordinator, and outside organizations. These workshops vary in topics including homework help, reading books together, using technology at home, playing math games, family health and nutrition, and Cool Culture, among many others. The school purchases Cool Culture passes for all Pre-K and Kindergarten families, which allows families to gain access to over 100 museums and city attractions. Additionally, we have begun an advisory group made up of parents of ELLs to listen to and address their specific needs. There are also monthly School Leadership Team meetings, and the Principal meets regularly with the Parent Coordinator and Parent Teacher Association board members. We also make sure that all communications are translated into Mandarin. Teachers also have blogs and websites for families and send home monthly curriculum letters to inform families on what is being taught in classrooms. There is also weekly time set aside for all teachers to meet with parents and we provide translation services when necessary in all meetings and workshops.

We also recognize the importance of engaging with the larger community to strengthen our partnership with families. Our partnerships include the Queens Library, Queens Botanical Gardens, NY Coalition for Healthy School foods, and Fitness and Nutrition for Kids (FAN4Kids). We also have partnerships with the Chinese American Parent Association (CAPA) and Modern Chinese, both of which run after-school programs within the school. The school works closely with these organizations so that they serve as extensions of the regular school day.

We have also built relationships to make medical care accessible to our families. Our partnership with Metro Health Plus assists families with finding medical insurance coverage. We have other relationships with doctors, dentists, and optometrists in the area who provide services to our families. In fact, one of our parents provides discounted dental screenings while another parents makes vision screenings accessible to our families. In keeping with our mission, our students' health is of paramount concern and we know that feeling healthy allows our students to perform optimally.

3. Professional Development

Our Professional Development Plan (PD) plan is developed each year around the idea of ongoing self-reflection and the changing needs of our students and teachers with strong ties to our school's instructional focus. This year, our focus is to refine assessment and feedback systems in order to impact both student and teacher understandings of students' strengths, needs, and ultimately, their achievement. For this purpose, weekly 80 minute after-school PD sessions are tied directly to assessment and lead by administration and/or teachers.

As a school, we collect copious amounts of data throughout the year including rubrics, observations, conference notes and a variety of other methods that serve as a metric to help us see how we are meeting students' academic needs. Teachers are regularly guided by administration in analyzing that data in teams to lift out trends particular to subgroups such as English Language Learners to paint pictures of our teaching.

This type of continuing exercise is powerful. One take-away for all our grade teams thus far has been that there have been some discrepancies in how individual teachers grade and as result, teacher teams decided to target norming grading. We spent time analyzing how we grade and work to better norm our practices. What resulted were thoughtful teacher and student-friendly rubrics that were the culmination of weeks of research. The impact of this reflective inquiry has been profound; teachers have revisited and revised their units of study to further ensure student achievement. Teachers have also observed that students have a better understanding of the expectations in various subject areas.

In addition, teachers regularly participate in PD with consultants with Thinking Maps, Math in the City and Special Education backgrounds during the school day. These sessions focus on the planning units of study, co-teaching lessons, and working with students on improving our teaching and raising student achievement. Additionally, out-of-school opportunities have included Reading Recovery, Teachers' College, author Sharon Taberski, and the 92nd Street Y Wonderplay Conference, to name a few.

Teachers are also encouraged to seek out PD opportunities to grow best practices. Teachers have attended Responsive Classroom, Thinking Maps: Path to Proficiency, among others, and have visited numerous other schools to learn new strategies. Within the school, we have also set up a culture where teachers conduct observations of their colleagues to borrow best practices in their own classrooms as another opportunity to grow their craft and develop professionally.

4. School Leadership

We are firm believers in a distributive model of leadership. This style recognizes that in order for a school to excel, it is crucial to capitalize on the strengths and unique contributions that staff members can bring to our school collectively. It is from these unique contributions and perspectives that we have been able to form a community that is self-reflective, and constantly seeking ways to grow and to improve. We believe

that everyone has the capacity to be a leader within an area of expertise and we not only encourage, but expect staff members to contribute new ideas to our school, with an understanding that respectful discourse and debate makes us stronger.

The organization of our resources is also of importance to school leadership. Resources are carefully calibrated to optimize student learning and achievement inside each classroom. We strategically operate with a small number of administrative staff so that we can fund additional classroom and intervention positions, enabling us to maintain class sizes lower than both district and city-wide averages (according to New York City Department of Education class size reports) and a student to teacher ratio of 15.7 to 1 across the school. We also focus much of our Title 1 funding on providing teachers with every resource and supply item necessary to be successful. No one wants for chart paper or markers and through over \$300,000 in City Council grant funding over the last 5 years, all teachers have Smartboards, desktop computers, document cameras and laptops. We believe it is our responsibility to enable teachers to focus on the hard work of educating students, and not to worry about where materials will come from.

We also find it of the utmost importance to lead by example, to be reflective and to take on new initiatives along with teachers. As founding members of the school and having taught elsewhere within NYC schools, we always keep in mind the challenges teachers and staff face and make decisions with that perspective in mind. We often join teachers in working with and learning from consultants in Thinking Maps and Math in the City, hold ourselves to the same deadlines as teachers, and maintain an open-door policy to hear teachers' opinions and suggestions for improving our school.

PART VIII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: <u>Math</u>	Test:
All Students Tested/Grade: <u>3</u>	Edition/Publication Year: <u>N/A</u>
Publisher:	

School Year	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010
Testing month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES*					
NYS Level 3 and above	84	86	96	100	0
NYS Level 4	53	45	22	45	0
Number of students tested	68	49	46	20	
Percent of total students tested	16	12	13	6	0
Number of students tested with alternative assessment					
% of students tested with alternative assessment	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/Disadvantaged Students					
NYS Level 3 and above	80	81	94	100	0
NYS Level 4	54	44	20	47	0
Number of students tested	56	36	35	15	0
2. Students receiving Special Education					
NYS Level 3 and above	25	0	60	100	0
NYS Level 4	25	0	60		0
Number of students tested	8	0	5	2	0
3. English Language Learner Students					
NYS Level 3 and above	85	62	85	100	0
NYS Level 4	60	31	0		0
Number of students tested	20	13	13	4	0
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
NYS Level 3 and above					
NYS Level 4					
Number of students tested					
5. African- American Students					
NYS Level 3 and above					
NYS Level 4					
Number of students tested					
6. Asian Students					
NYS Level 3 and above	87	89	76	55	0
NYS Level 4	59	45	24	45	0
Number of students tested	54	44	38	19	0

School Year	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010
7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students					
NYS Level 3 and above					
NYS Level 4					
Number of students tested					
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
NYS Level 3 and above					
NYS Level 4					
Number of students tested					
9. White Students					
NYS Level 3 and above					
NYS Level 4					
Number of students tested					
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
NYS Level 3 and above					
NYS Level 4					
Number of students tested					
11. Other 1: Other 1					
NYS Level 3 and above					
NYS Level 4					
Number of students tested					
12. Other 2: Other 2					
NYS Level 3 and above					
NYS Level 4					
Number of students tested					
13. Other 3: Other 3					
NYS Level 3 and above					
NYS Level 4					
Number of students tested					

NOTES: 2009-10 was the second year of the school being opened. Upon opening, we grew a grade each year and at that point we only went up to 2nd grade and as such we didn't have any state testing yet.

Additionally, our total number of Special Education students for the current school year is 10% of our student population and as such testing data is reported above, however this has not been the case in past years. For example in the 2010-11 school year our Special Education subgroup had only two students included and the NY State Report Card does not reflect whether those students were 3's or 4's which results in an empty box as to their specific testing level. This is also true for English Language Learners for the same school year.

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: <u>Reading/ELA</u>	Test:
All Students Tested/Grade: <u>3</u>	Edition/Publication Year: <u>N/A</u>
Publisher:	

School Year	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010
Testing month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES*					
NYS Level 3 and above	81	88	91	100	0
NYS Level 4	13	20	15	40	0
Number of students tested	68	49	46	20	
Percent of total students tested	16	12	13	6	0
Number of students tested with alternative assessment					
% of students tested with alternative assessment	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/Disadvantaged Students					
NYS Level 3 and above	82	83	91	100	0
NYS Level 4	11	17	11	40	0
Number of students tested	56	36	35	15	0
2. Students receiving Special Education					
NYS Level 3 and above	13	0	40	100	0
NYS Level 4	0	0	0		0
Number of students tested	8	0	5	2	0
3. English Language Learner Students					
NYS Level 3 and above	85	62	69	100	0
NYS Level 4	5	8	0		0
Number of students tested	20	13	13	4	0
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
NYS Level 3 and above					
NYS Level 4					
Number of students tested					
5. African- American Students					
NYS Level 3 and above					
NYS Level 4					
Number of students tested					
6. Asian Students					
NYS Level 3 and above	85	86	97	100	
NYS Level 4	17	18	16	40	
Number of students tested	54	44	38	19	
7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students					
NYS Level 3 and above					
NYS Level 4					

School Year	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010
Number of students tested					
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
NYS Level 3 and above					
NYS Level 4					
Number of students tested					
9. White Students					
NYS Level 3 and above					
NYS Level 4					
Number of students tested					
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
NYS Level 3 and above					
NYS Level 4					
Number of students tested					
11. Other 1: Other 1					
NYS Level 3 and above					
NYS Level 4					
Number of students tested					
12. Other 2: Other 2					
NYS Level 3 and above					
NYS Level 4					
Number of students tested					
13. Other 3: Other 3					
NYS Level 3 and above					
NYS Level 4					
Number of students tested					

NOTES: 2009-10 was the second year of the school being opened. Upon opening, we grew a grade each year and at that point we only went up to 2nd grade and as such we didn't have any state testing yet.

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