

U.S. Department of Education
2016 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[] Public or [X] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mr. Vlad Gorny

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

Official School Name Big Apple Academy

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 2937 86th Street

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

City Brooklyn State NY Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 11223-4603

County Kings

Telephone (718) 333-0300 Fax (718) 333-1311

Web site/URL http://www.bigappleacademy.com E-mail vladgor@me.com

Facebook Page

https://www.facebook.com/Big-

Apple-Academy-

Twitter Handle 101732006542973/?ref=hl Google+ _____

YouTube/URL _____ Blog _____ Other Social Media Link _____

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* _____ E-mail _____

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

District Name _____ Tel. _____

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board

President/Chairperson Mrs. Alla Zaborskaya

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

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

Date _____

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

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

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

Part I – Eligibility Certification

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

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The public school has met their state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) using the most recent accountability results available for the year prior to nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, a public school must meet the state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) for the year in which they are nominated (2015-2016) and be certified by the state representative. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2010 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, or 2015.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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

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

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

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

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

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	80	69	149
1	78	53	131
2	68	54	122
3	70	56	126
4	66	44	110
5	51	37	88
6	40	37	77
7	29	35	64
8	36	30	66
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	518	415	933

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 0 % Asian
 - 0 % Black or African American
 - 0 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 100 % White
 - 0 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2014 – 2015 school year: 6%

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	25
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	33
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	58
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	935
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.062
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	6

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

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Ukrainian, Uzbek, Russian, Belorussian, Hungarian, Polish

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 61%
 Total number students who qualify: 570

8. Students receiving special education services: 0 %
0 Total number of students served

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

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <u>0</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>0</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>0</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Mental Retardation | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |
| <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities | <u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 22
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	8
Classroom teachers	42
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	50
Paraprofessionals	24
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 19:1

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

Required Information	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011
Daily student attendance	93%	95%	89%	93%	91%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

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

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

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

Yes No

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

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

The school's mission is to enrich the intellectual lives of students through rigorous curricula and promotion of self-discipline to succeed in academia and beyond.

PART III – SUMMARY

When the Big Apple Academy (BAA) first opened its doors in 1992, it began a journey that its founders could hardly have foreseen. Unique in its philosophy and organization, it has grown on its merits into more than just another successful school; it has assumed the role of a dynamic, multicultural hub that children of diverse backgrounds from all five boroughs and beyond rely on and call their second home. In accommodating the needs of these children from various communities in the tri-state area while meeting the prerequisite standards set by the New York State Board of Education, the Big Apple Academy has evolved and expanded to become the exceptional K-8 educational institution it is today. The BAA assumes the role of a cultural center where the bilingual nature of the community planted its seeds in children's minds. The school serves a diverse student body, which is unique in its demographic and ethnic background; it includes Ukrainians, Poles, Uzbeks, Russians, Kazakhs, and Tajiks. For many students, the Big Apple Academy functions as a social bridge between their English and non-English speaking worlds. While the majority of our students are either first or second generation Americans, the school has also provided a haven for recent arrivals, giving students of Eastern European immigrant families the opportunity to integrate into regular classes in which our educators differentiate teaching instruction to serve the bilingual students effectively. Whether developing the students' knowledge of a second language, or strengthening their knowledge of English, Math, Science, History, and Technology, the Big Apple Academy prepares its students to assimilate and prepare for their future academic and social challenges.

students classes on social awareness, social skills development, and effective communication. These programs expose our students to many issues that they may confront daily. Peer pressure, bullying, sexual harassment, discrimination, and other social problems are discussed along with strategies for effective resolutions. The Etiquette Program is implemented in order to help our students acquire social skills and manners, thereby focusing on their personal growth in non-academic areas of life.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

At the Big Apple Academy, the curricula and the methods of instruction differ significantly from the curricula and instruction methods of most schools. Even though New York State Department of Education learning standards serve as a basis for our school's programs, the difference in our approach is visible in the methodologies we employ and in the way our programs are structured.

In mathematics, our curriculum is accelerated, and our students are typically one year ahead of curricular requirements in the standards adopted by NYC schools. The Mathematics Program bases a part of its success on the continuous development of inductive and deductive reasoning, which our school lays the foundation for in primary grades. In middle school, the Mathematics Program divides into two curricular tracks, namely, Algebra and Geometry, which are taught independently but simultaneously. This division allows students to prepare for the Algebra and Geometry Regents Examinations, which are administered in the eighth grade.

Our English Department is likewise distinctive. Together with a curriculum development team, we designed its elementary and middle school reading and writing programs to combine aspects of vertical (cross-grade-level) and horizontal (cross-curricular) alignments. The program begins in kindergarten, develops further in upper elementary grades, and culminates in middle school. While the program emphasizes the development of coherence in writing, it also incorporates the development and use of critical research methods and writing skills, both of which are employed with successful classroom practices.

The English curriculum also meets the challenge of addressing the needs of our many bilingual Russian speakers and English Language Learners. The goal of the curriculum is to transform ELL students into language proficient readers through scaffolding practices as well as closely guided instruction. In kindergarten, the English program focuses on phonics and phonemic acquisition in order to lay the foundation for the development of oral proficiency, emergent literacy, and early elementary vocabulary and reading skills. Students entering grades 1 through 5 are taught reading for learning. The students explore thematic units which emphasize reading fluency, higher order thinking skills, analysis, evaluation, and grammar. Teachers closely monitor the progress of under-performing students and develop weekly instructional support blocks to specifically target their needs. For advanced students, teachers offer membership in Academic Olympics teams, which are differentiated by grade level. In middle school, the curriculum maintains the same structural framework. The middle school reading and writing programs are aligned so that the reading and writing assignments correlate and overlap. Instructional methodologies include encouragement of reader response with emphasis on developing conceptual vocabulary related to an understanding of genres, key literary elements, and the structural analysis of different types of writing. Students are instructed to build and maintain writing portfolios that contain written work of various types that reflects students' progress in both expository and creative writing. Integration with other subject areas builds further explorations in learning.

The Science curriculum at the Big Apple Academy emphasizes conceptual thinking and scientific research which is embedded into the curriculum. The program is introduced in the primary grades and flourishes in middle school when students investigate clusters of physical science. Laboratory classes are allocated for students in third grade and beyond on a weekly basis, thus creating opportunities for learning through observation and experimentation. The eighth grade curriculum concentrates on elements of Biology. The laboratory component at this level bridges theory with practice. These approaches equip students to face the challenges of the Living Environment Regents Exam which is administered at the closure of the course in the eighth grade.

Our Social Studies Program represents a unique approach in building students' historical, social, and global awareness. The program's structure distinguishes four separate blocks of studies: History, Geography, Sociology, and Civics, providing for clustered accumulation of knowledge. At the primary grade level, the curriculum is based on building students' understanding of themselves, their interactions with the

environment, recognition of personal and group responsibilities, and contributions into complex societal processes. The upper level programs enrich students with a solid knowledge of the United States history, recognition of democratic and constitutional principles, and understanding of multicultural practices established in society. In grade seven, students begin their two year United States History and Geography Regents coursework, which culminates in the eighth grade.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Our school pays particular attention to raising its students as well rounded and cultured community citizens. Therefore, our programs include vigorous curricula components in the fields of arts and music. Our arts and music instructors expand students' knowledge into the world of art, poetry, drama, music, and dance. We are proud of our Russian Drama performances. Lermontov and Pushkin, Babel and Yesenin come alive through the verses delivered by our young actors. Every year, students stage at least two major performances that generate excitement and bring together the entire school community to embrace Performing Arts. We know that exposing students to art at an early age facilitates the development of their creativity. The school bulletin boards are decorated with the exhibits produced by our local artists. Photographs of dance performances, poetry and literary reviews, collages and portraits, are all examples of children's creativity that bring aesthetic notes into the intellectual atmosphere at the Big Apple Academy.

At the school, the effectiveness of the physical education program is highlighted by assisting students to gain competence in a variety of vigorous athletic activities as well as to help them develop advanced motor skills, confidence and competitive spirit. Since the school provides all necessary sports facilities, our students in grades K-8 participate in a myriad of Physical Education classes on a weekly basis, including gymnastics, basketball, and swimming. In addition, the school hosts Annual Sports and Swimming Olympics for all grade levels. These always provide a great deal of excitement as well as bolster the competitive athletic spirit of our students.

Our Health Education classes, incorporated into the Science curriculum, shape the physical, emotional, and social facets of our students' health. Each month, students research a set of health related topics integrated within specific themes such as environmental health, nutrition, personal health, sexual education, substance abuse, healthy relationships, etc. The school also sponsors presentations for grades 6-8 inviting guest speakers and professionals in the field of health education. These workshops are highly effective in promoting students' self-awareness in terms of their physical and emotional health.

The school is "in compliance with the program's foreign language requirements". One of the most important components of our school curriculum is the study of the Russian language and literature, beginning in the elementary school and continuing in middle school. At the culmination of the program, students acquire full proficiency in both English and Russian. The uniqueness of our foreign language program is in its deployment. All students begin the study of Russian Language in the first grade, with a single instructional block of Russian Language Development per week, and it culminates in middle school when students receive three instructional blocks in reading, grammar, writing, and literature. Thus, our students receive Russian language instruction consecutively for eight years. In the first and second grades, the program focuses upon oral language through activities that emphasize effective listening and reception, acquisition, use of expressive language, and vocabulary development.

In grades three to five, the program doubles in length of time, highlighting two crucial program segments, reading and writing, in which students receive individual and group instruction in both for 80 minutes per week. Students go from a developmental understanding of letters and sounds, to broader syntactic reading patterns, Russian language mechanics, and communicative writing. At this stage, students are also introduced to literature and poetry which gives them the ability to differentiate between the syntactical structures of English and Russian, allowing them to appreciate the semantic subtleties and idioms of the Russian language.

In middle school, the program emphasizes achieving linguistic mastery, reading fluency, and writing efficiency. In the sixth grade, the program triples in duration to ensure exposure to systematic linguistic activities. Students learn practical techniques that allow them to experiment and translate various types of

text from one language to another. Two-way translation activities introduced in seventh and eighth grades provide practice in all language skill areas. Formal assessment of student knowledge includes oral and written assessments in reading and listening comprehension as well as language mechanics.

Our Computer Technology Program provides for interdisciplinary connections and facilitates teaching and learning. It begins in Kindergarten with a 40 minute instructional block and reaches 120 minutes of instruction in upper elementary and middle school. In primary grades, the program supports the acquisition of early literacy skills; students utilize software that reinforces phonetic awareness, vocabulary development, reading comprehension, spelling, and development of listening skills. In middle school, the technology aspect is deeply embedded into Science, Social Studies and other core areas. Students complete interdisciplinary technology projects that involve both languages, English and Russian. In the computer laboratories, students utilize mass media, video, and audio resources.

3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

Big Apple Academy serves an academically diverse student body; gifted and talented, high functioning, average, and low performing pupils are educated in the same settings. The bilingual nature of our students greatly contributes to such diversity and poses a great variety of challenges in lesson planning, differentiation of instruction, structuring of the environment, and assessments of the learning outcome. Our teaching methods are designed to address the specific traits and characteristics of all student subgroups. However, all departments share the fundamental methodology which is represented by the LPMSP (Lecture, Presentation, Modeling, Scaffolding, Practice) Sequence. This instructional structure includes a mini-lecture, topic presentation, clarifications, individual practice, and collaborative work. The educational technology is deeply interwoven into the instructional component of all academic programs. Audio and media resources, Smart Boards, and educational software are extensively used in all classrooms supporting academic curricula. Students are engaged in self-exploration of lesson content during lessons through video resources and various elements of graphics provided by the teachers.

As we promote the informed data-driven instruction, we assess students' needs and implement the methodology necessary for an ongoing accumulation of knowledge. Re-teaching and enrichment activities are conducted at a unit's closure to support a high level of learning; homogeneous and heterogeneous student grouping is widely used to solidify academic concepts and master new skills. Additional instructional support is provided to English Language Learners and low-performing students on a weekly basis. Remediation programs for these categories of learners are embedded into students' daily schedules and organized in a form of interactive teams grouped for specific academic purposes. Students who score lower than 70% in various ELA areas are required to participate in Reading, Writing, and Speech Teams guided by our English teachers. The team guides utilize interactive teaching and text-based computer applications to help learners master crucial literacy skills. Students have an opportunity to improve their reading, spelling, and grammar by working with literacy software. This contributes to the process of text organization, self-editing, and proofreading. Word processors are often used for individual and group projects. In enriching the learning process for our advanced students, Olympic Teams within the core subject areas of English, Math, Science, and Social Studies have been created for the purposes of further challenging this particular student body. The curricula developed for these subgroups provide enrichment of learned materials as well as progress in the previously mentioned areas of study.

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

In recognizing the multiple roles of assessment, we evaluate students, determine academic interventions, and modify the curricula to have students reach optimal states of knowledge acquisition. The general school assessment program consists of several components: entrance/placement examinations (ESA), summative and formative assessments (Content-based), departmental diagnostic, annual standardized testing, and student portfolio assessment.

Emphasis is placed on the implementation of the formative and summative assessments. Formative assessments are used to improve course content and teaching methodology. Academic departments sustain the assessment practices by providing teachers with a Departmental Assessment Plan and by allocating time

for data analysis. Assessment-centered meetings are held bi-weekly to provide for a review of student records. This allows us to address any lack of understanding. Further planning draws upon the assessment information and structures learning activities to target specific skills, which further outlines the remediation program and additional instructional support in core subjects.

The Writing Assessment Team (WR) consists of teachers who meet monthly for the review of students' portfolios. Each student maintains two types of writing portfolios: working and showcase. The working portfolio contains all written products produced during the academic semester while the showcase includes only the best examples of writing. The students are involved in portfolio development since this process provides an opportunity for self-evaluation and self-improvement. During PTA meetings, portfolios are presented to parents to highlight students' accomplishments and areas of weakness. Summative assessment reviews are conducted by the chairpersons at the end of every quarter when student performance data is desegregated and reviewed across subject areas. This analysis includes the departmental evaluation tests that measure students' progress during a specific academic term. Performance information is shared with parents. The communication with parents occurs on a daily basis. All students carry personalized grade journals which reflect daily and weekly assessment results.

1. School Climate/Culture:

The Big Apple Academy has embraced an invaluable educational philosophy--each student is a unique individual who enriches our school community in his/her own way. To accommodate our students' academic differences, our educators engage different motivational strategies, which ultimately produce a positive academic environment ensuring our pupils' academic, social and emotional growth. Excellent students are enlisted in the Principal's Honor Roll. Twice a year these children are honored with Principal's letters, in which the school administration expresses its gratitude to the parents for the continuous support provided to their successful children. These high achievers are invited to attend the "Breakfast with the Principal Ceremony", during which each child is personally greeted by the Principal and awarded with memorable souvenirs.

Different motivational techniques are applied to struggling students. They are monitored by our homeroom teachers, and even the most subtle improvements are celebrated by their instructors. Every step toward academic success is accentuated and acknowledged. Personal notes, praising a child's efforts and determination are entered in the students' journals ensuring that these students will be able to share their achievements with their families and friends. Twice a year, our teachers recognize the students' commitment to achieving personal growth. This recognition comes as very welcome rewards to those students who otherwise do not demonstrate high performance, although they do work very hard on acquiring personal academic growth.

At the Big Apple Academy, the school administration pays particular attention to ensuring an amicable social climate, in which every child feels welcomed and appreciated; It is essential to establish an atmosphere of trust, tolerance, and friendship between students. To reinforce positive social interaction among students, our pupils are encouraged to participate in the Building Buddies Program. Within this program, the high achieving students are honored with the Student Mentor status that allows them to assist less academically successful learners, English Language Learners, or students with disabilities.

Our teachers enjoy a collaborative climate within the school. Every new addition to the faculty is a welcome asset to our educational community. The new hires attend lessons of the more experienced colleagues. The teaching tools are generously shared between coworkers as well as expertise, personal experiences and observations. To celebrate our teachers' professional contributions into our students' growth, our educators are acknowledged with certificates individually issued to each instructor and signed by the members of the school administration. The school administration sponsors professional development courses and classes which cultivate professional growth of our teachers.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

The Big Apple Academy places an extraordinary emphasis on engaging families. The family's odyssey through the school commences before our students begin Kindergarten with a personal meeting with a counselor. All families are invited to Open House events at the beginning of the school year and are presented with the opportunity to speak to Big Apple Academy graduates who share their experiences and challenges, as well as offer tangible advice based upon their own learning and school-involvement experiences. Parents also meet with teachers, school administrators, and explore the school facilities. Our classroom teachers conduct family surveys for all new students to ascertain the children's home environment, family language, parental occupations, students' personal interests, and learning needs.

Additional outreach to parents is conducted through the "Big Apple Academic Highlights", a quarterly newsletter, that informs parents about all academic activities and events. Each academic department provides its own "Connect to Home" brochures which highlight resources parents may use to improve their children's study skills, expand academic vocabulary, and solidify knowledge. At the end of every academic term, parents participate in departmental surveys that include core academic areas: Math, English, Social Studies and Science; they rate the components of the programs and reflect on the quality of instruction,

consistency, and the depth of knowledge their children acquired in these disciplines.

Our major goals are to keep parents informed and to sustain an ongoing reciprocal communication to improve learning. To accomplish this, we developed the Student Individual Journal, required for each student. The journal is a unique tool that serves a variety of purposes; it contains students' weekly schedules, homework assignments, grades and teachers' comments that students receive throughout the week. In having access to such information, parents are given an opportunity to control the completion and quality of homework assignments. Parents must sign the journals on a weekly basis, thus indicating that they reviewed their children's weekly performance.

The Parent Association is involved in supporting the school mission by facilitating learning through school-wide presentations with varying topics depending on the occupation of the presenters and the curricula needs. Members of the U.S. Military, the Police Department and the Fire Department regularly conduct presentations through which students learn about aspects of their world outside the classroom. The school also partners with the faculty of Brooklyn College who facilitate the History Debate Club by presenting their knowledge of the U.S. Government and Constitution.

3. Professional Development:

Big Apple Academy's professional development (PD) experiences are crafted to meet the evolving needs of teachers and the students they teach. Successful professional development occurs over time, drives from a range of educational experiences, and implies an exposure to the best available teaching practices. Therefore, we strive to involve a variety of field experts suggested by NYCDOE to ensure ongoing teachers' development. We organize PD Workshops that encompass all professional areas: state standards, assessment tools, and literacy components. In addition, teachers hold memberships with professional associations such as the National Councils of Teachers of Mathematics and English. Teachers are encouraged to attend conferences and seminars made available by these organizations. Furthermore, our Mentoring Team shares successful instructional approaches with the faculty. We implemented a job-oriented, site-based, and data-driven professional development model that reflects the program's goals, supports teaching instruction, and allows teachers to achieve pedagogical efficiency.

We strive to differentiate and departmentalize the PD process by providing our teachers with specific, content-based materials for inquiry-based learning and cooperative grouping. The leadership team analyzes lesson observation data and school assessment results to ascertain specific areas for teacher's professional growth. In addition, teachers submit a departmental form that includes self-evaluations and outlines their professional needs. In accordance with departmental requirements, teachers complete one peer observation per month. By the end of the observation cycle, teachers share the most effective practices, reflecting on lesson structure and assessment techniques.

All elements of our PD program focus on learning outcomes. Therefore, we encourage teachers to develop a deep understanding of the learning standards and analyze past and current PD outcomes to determine strengths and needs. Among the most significant avenues for professional development are regular Triple S (Struggling Student Support) seminars conducted at the end of each academic quarter. The teachers review the school wide assessment data, complete Teacher Effectiveness Forms (TIF), collect information about students performing below the school standards, and outline improvement strategies.

The administration provides teachers with a range of instructional and technological support to differentiate teaching instruction and satisfy the needs of struggling learners. Teachers receive annual training in implementation of educational technology. Smart Boards, educational software, as well as audio and video resources are implemented across the grade levels and encompass major subject areas. As we continuously educate teachers, we expect them to bring the acquired knowledge into their classrooms.

4. School Leadership:

Our leadership philosophy is based on the concept that the administrative school unit should serve as a continuous source of inspiration, encouragement, and motivation for teachers, faculty members, students,

and parents. At the core of our beliefs is the idea that knowledge acquisition is optimal only when teaching instruction and the learning environment are specifically crafted to meet diverse learners' needs and allow students to master skills vital for perpetual intellectual growth. Therefore, the school administration of the Big Apple Academy clearly communicates academic goals and expectations to its faculty, continuously supports instructional development, analyzes teachers' needs, and encourages innovative teaching approaches. The leadership team comprised of the principal, the assistant principal of curriculum and instruction and five department chairpersons, meet bi-weekly to ensure effective school planning, scheduling, and decision-making.

The principal acts as an instructional leader who believes that the description of a qualitative school has to begin and end with the word "academics" even though there are certainly many other components, such as students' achievements, school management, ethical values, students' motivation, and teachers' accountability. Being a democratic leader by nature, the principal regularly schedules "Lessons with the Principal," held for every class at least once every term, and in which he acknowledges students' performance and speaks to students about setting and achieving their long term goals. In addition, the principal holds regular office hours for students where students may address their own concerns about their academic progress and initiatives in school involvement. The principal actively involves the administrative team and teachers into all decision-making processes, seeks all possible enhancement avenues, and consistently monitors the effectiveness of all academic programs.

However, the principal is not the only one who supervises the instruction and ensures curriculum fulfillment. Our chairpersons work directly with pedagogical teams, develop, and diversify learning curricula, create departmental standards, observe actual teaching, monitor assessment results, and evaluate teachers' performance. At the end of every marking period, each department chair measures the efficiency of teaching and learning in a specific subject area. The chairperson reviews the sequencing of academic units, teachers' pace calendars, school-based assessment results, and student record (Quarterly Reviews QR). Based upon their careful evaluations, the chairpersons submit Departmental Quality Reports (DQP) to the Assistant Principal. These pre-planned program evaluations allow administrators to monitor students' academic progress, ascertain instructional needs, diagnose potential problems, and determine the trajectory for further departmental development.

PART VI * INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCESS

By employing a research driven approach, our English teachers had embraced a powerful correlation between vocabulary acquisition and overall literacy development. For the past two years, the ATB (At the Bell), our signature Vocabulary Acquisition Program, has become one of the most successful innovations, which has significantly improved students' performance in English Language Arts and across the curricula.

PART VII - NON-PUBLIC SCHOOL INFORMATION

1. Non-public school association(s): Jewish

Identify the religious or independent associations, if any, to which the school belongs. Select the primary association first.

2. Does the school have nonprofit, tax-exempt (501(c)(3)) status? Yes No

3. What is the educational cost per student? \$0
(School budget divided by enrollment)

4. What is the average financial aid per student? \$0

5. What percentage of the annual budget is devoted to scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction? 0%

6. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction? 0%

PART VIII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS FOR NORM-REFERENCED TESTS

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: <u>Math</u>	Test: <u>NA</u>
Grade: <u>3</u>	Edition/Publication Year: <u>N/A</u>
Publisher: <u>na</u>	Scores are reported here as:

School Year	2014-2015
Testing month	Jan
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
Percent of total students tested	
Number of students alternatively assessed	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. Other 1	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
2. Other 2	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
3. Other 3	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

NOTES: Please note that the CAPE professionals advised us to submit our assessment data in hard copy format. Our school administers only New York State Test.