

U.S. Department of Education
2017 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 Mr. Michael Fiorello

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

Official School Name Berkeley Avenue Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 47 Berkeley Avenue

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

City Westwood State NJ Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 07675-2401

County Bergen County

Telephone (201) 664-7760 Fax (201) 664-1168

Web site/URL http://www.wwrsd.org/Domain/399 E-mail michael.fiorello@wwrsd.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.

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Dr. Raymond Gonzalez E-mail ray.gonzalez@wwrsd.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Westwood Regional School District Tel. (201) 664-0880

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. Darlene Mandeville
(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. 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 and all subgroups, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2017 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.
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 2011 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: 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, or 2016.
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 has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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.
12. 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 (2016-2017) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 4 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 6 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, 2016 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	21	29	50
1	30	27	57
2	27	18	45
3	20	23	43
4	28	26	54
5	24	23	47
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	150	146	296

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 12 % Asian
 - 6 % Black or African American
 - 21 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 54 % White
 - 6 % 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 2015 – 2016 school year: 8%

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, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	12
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	12
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	24
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	290
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.083
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	8

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 12 %
35 Total number ELL

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

Albanian, Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, Hindi, Korean, Malayalam, Tagalog, Spanish, Polish, Russian, and Slovak

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 22 %
Total number students who qualify: 65
8. Students receiving special education services: 8 %
25 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.

- 0 Autism
- 0 Deafness
- 0 Deaf-Blindness
- 0 Emotional Disturbance
- 0 Hearing Impairment
- 0 Mental Retardation
- 0 Multiple Disabilities
- 0 Orthopedic Impairment
- 8 Other Health Impaired
- 10 Specific Learning Disability
- 7 Speech or Language Impairment
- 0 Traumatic Brain Injury
- 0 Visual Impairment Including Blindness
- 0 Developmentally Delayed

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 8
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects	14
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	10
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	11
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 21:1
12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

Required Information	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	96%	96%	97%
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 2016.

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.
Berkeley empowers all students to become lifelong learners, reaching their highest potential to become productive global citizens. Our diversity drives our dedication to all 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

Located in suburban Bergen County, Berkeley School was built in 1929 and enjoyed several upgrades and additions and now educates all kindergarten through fifth grade students. Before 2010, Berkeley educated kindergarten through fourth grade.

Berkeley community is a microcosm of society. Families and students come from various countries and all socioeconomic backgrounds. Twelve different languages are spoken within children's homes, about 9% ELLs, 22% Economically Challenged and 12% receiving special education services. About 40% of children are exposed to school for the first time and about 5-8% of children are exposed to English for the first time. Our community embraces our diversity as it presents authentic opportunities to learn and grow from one another.

Berkeley prides itself on the implementation of differentiation at all grade levels, as children learn at different rates and modalities. Classrooms feature three levels of independent work from below, on and above grade level, depending on students' ability and assessment data. ESSA funding allows Berkeley to benefit from an additional 0.5 basic skills teacher who provides in class support and small group remediation according to district criteria. These teachers preview information for students and also strive to fill academic gaps in their learning. Use of technology and online resources such as Lexia Core 5, Raz-Kids, and IXL math within these groups also assists in meeting expectations and performing at or above grade level when exiting the program. Title III funding is used for immigrant children to attend an after school club to assist with adjusting to American traditions, customs, history, and academic assistance. At risk children benefit from ESSA funded homework and breakfast clubs. Within these before and after school clubs, teachers challenge and remediate learning for children. Children complete projects, homework, and receive individualized academic support according to academic levels and performance. Co-teaching and in class support services, such as physical and occupational therapies, speech and language therapy, and social emotional support for children with special needs keeps children within their least restrictive learning environment. Berkeley's two full-time ELL teachers support children's language acquisition to succeed within the general education classroom. Teachers strive to help children meet and/or exceed language proficiency levels through small group and co-teaching services.

Our media specialist provides STEAM activities in our newly designed technology lounge. Examples include 'Legos', 'Squishy Circuits', and 'Rokenboks' which promote critical thinking and creativity. Children use knowledge and the scientific method to participate in our Science Fair. Our enrichment services reach all classrooms weekly to stimulate critical thinking and special projects that infuse all learning standards. Children in grades 4 and 5 are provided an opportunity to qualify for formal gifted and talented education and participate in authentic learning such as our school store and fundraising committee to give back to our school. Teachers offer supplemental academic support sessions two-three times each week before and after school and during recess for all children to benefit from remediation or enrichment.

Lunch dates, friendship circles and Principal Brag Boards encourage children to feel empowered and appreciated. Use of our mindfulness initiative from Educate2B training, promotes children to regulate their emotions to meet academic and personal goals through movement and breathing exercises. Our school wide "Shining Stars" highlights 7 characteristics of productive citizens as children earn recognition each day. Daily morning announcements include inspirational or inquisitive quotes to set the stage for learning and making appropriate decisions.

Wellness activities such as Jump Rope for Heart, Field Day, Mileage clubs and daily recess increase healthy decision making. 'Eat a Rainbow', Summer Safety, Seizure Awareness, Sun Safety, Allergy Awareness (Be a PAL), and Dental Health, promote healthy and productive lifestyles in school and at home. Students utilize our outdoor nature habitat and playground to facilitate authentic learning. During physical education classes, children learn how to work collaboratively as a team to problem solve.

Social development through peer models and buddies is evidenced each day. Kindergartners are paired with fifth graders inside the classroom, during lunch and recess to help our youngest learners make good

decisions and benefit from positive role models. Additional peer support leaders include reading partners at each grade level. Buddies help children understand the relationship between reading and how we make connections from the text we read. Our Second Step program provides children in grades 3-5 formal weekly lessons to support and cultivate healthy and positive student relationships. Guidance services provide classrooms and identified groups of children with specific targeted assistance (blended families, study skills/habits, stress relief, and overall mental health awareness.) Our Theater Arts Group allows our students to express themselves in a variety of ways.

Our diversity is celebrated in a variety of ways, including our belief, 'Everyone Smiles in the Same Language', Multi Cultural Read Alouds, International Night, ELL Parent Advisory Committee, monthly ELL parent meetings, ESSA parent meetings, annual Back to School Barbecue, monthly spirit assemblies from each grade level, Random Acts of Kindness, and promoting respect for everyone infused in all daily activities and lessons. This infusion includes authentic literature, role playing, discussions, and modeling from staff and students.

Berkeley's staff and students create a colorful fabric that when weaved together, provides a warm, tightly knit community that learns together.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Berkeley participates in a balanced literacy approach to language arts to acquire all Student Learning Standards. A multi-sensory approach (Orton Gillingham) used within kindergarten to second grade helps all learners acquire the foundations of reading. Curriculum includes whole group reading and text study, as well as student differentiated learning based on individual reading levels. Students are grouped into guided reading and strategy groups driven by assessment data combined with word study, shared reading and writing, and read-alouds. Children gain comprehension of literacy concepts through partner work, conferring, and whole group discussions. Cross content standards are addressed and acquired by infusing authentic literature into instruction through reading in the content areas, and analyzing text through novels such as *Number the Stars*, *Me on the Map*, and *Class President*.

Our mathematics program incorporates all Common Core Standards, digital learning and problem solving. Our program helps students develop an understanding of math concepts through problem based interactive learning, visual learning bridges, and visual learning animations. Use of centers, manipulatives, and interactive technology allow children to enhance critical thinking skills, and reason quantitatively and abstractly through problem based learning and real life experiences. Students simulate school stores and gather grade level and school wide surveys to display and analyze data in authentic ways. Important math foundational skills are reinforced with explicit targeted instruction to ensure student understanding.

In preparation for the New Generation Science Standards, children enjoy hands on experiments and real life experiences. These experiences enhance student based learning while using our environment to further investigate the world around us. Teachers continue to ‘flip the classroom’ to encourage self discovery, inquiry and learning. The science program engages all students with meaningful, active learning experiences and prepares all students to succeed with the NGSS performance expectations. It integrates robust reading and literacy strategies to support ELA standards and utilizes technology to deliver memorable learning experiences.

Extending the classroom provides opportunities for our diverse population to grow their schema and engage in new experiences that may not be available to them. Children visit planetariums, aquariums, zoos, and mines to understand the world around them and beyond. The trips offer exploration and research to understand and learn habitats, interactions between living organisms and the environment. At our Science Fair, children use the scientific method to create and report their results of research and concepts.

Our Social Studies instruction provides children with the knowledge, skills, and perspectives needed to become productive and informed citizens. The program allows students an increased depth of understanding of our global society through a variety of periodicals, media, internet research and current events, including our town of Westwood. For example, a third grade unit on Economics provides evidence of how teachers acknowledge both the P-4 New Jersey Students Learning Standards for Social Studies and the National Standards for Financial Literacy in their planning. Students engage in interactive lessons where they evaluated products and decided whether the products were considered needs or wants. Components of the activity were differentiated so that all students would be able to acquire foundational skills.

Students are exposed to civil awareness through a variety of ways, including community walks to engage how municipalities work and local government procedures. Understanding the democratic process through research and current events, including the 2016 Election, helped children understand democracy. Student peer leaders are used to organize a school wide vote to elect a theme day to show different viewpoints and convictions. Other ways our community is infused into instruction is through local clothing and food drives to increase children's understanding of being part of a community and helping others.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

We have three full time Visual and Performing Arts teachers: two music teachers and one visual arts teacher. Arts education goes beyond playing an instrument or drawing, as a child learning visual arts has to tap into multiple skill sets. All students in grades K-5 receive 40 minutes of instruction in both art and music each week. Elective courses in band and choir are offered beginning with band in fourth grade (40 children) and choir in fifth grade (30 children). Students in band and choir participate in both small group lessons and a weekly band rehearsal. Berkeley musicians have performed at other school and community events such as the annual Open House and Hackensack University Medical Center.

In the Arts, critique is an important part of the curriculum. Students learn steps of critiquing any piece of art, starting with descriptive writing and analysis, interpretation and evaluation. Connections are also made with social studies, as students are exposed to the lives of famous artists from various time periods and cultures. Our art department has begun to emphasize the Choice-Based Art Education/Teaching for Artistic Behavior (TAB) model, which encourages student-directed learning in the arts. Students practice creating their own art problems to solve, which are connected to other subjects or personal interests. Berkeley students participate each year in an art competition for charity, called WWRSD has 'heART', and an annual school art show. Winners have their artwork included in a gallery show at local businesses and at the Westwood Art Gallery. Proceeds are donated to improve the healthcare experience of pediatric patients.

Our physical education program consists of two 40 minute sessions per week for all students. The program focuses on fitness, health and wellness, character development, social skills, and the integration of core content area objectives. The teachers' daily lessons focus on the students setting personal fitness goals and working towards them for the duration of the school year. The integration of core content area objectives are routinely incorporated into physical education lessons. Activities where the students are tasked with retrieving various objects have evolved into sorting and counting activities for younger grades. Older grades may be asked to solve a math equation (addition/subtraction, multiplication/division) prior to beginning a game. Emotional health is a large part of wellness. This complements social skills and character development, as several lessons and units focus on problem solving activities, teamwork, mindfulness and conflict resolution.

The World Language curriculum is designed to enhance communication in Spanish for all K-5 students once per week for 40 minutes. Lesson plans include activities which focus on all three modes of communication: interpretive, interpersonal and presentational. Technology integrated lessons allow students to develop essential technological skills while learning Spanish. Teachers incorporate visual aids, listening activities and kinesthetic exercises into their lessons to help enhance learning and understanding of Spanish. Students frequently work collaboratively to practice communicating and utilizing the concepts effectively.

Emphasizing communication ability, students are also exposed to various cultural lessons which help students appreciate the differences that exist among varied cultures. These lessons produce an understanding of country origins, traditions and customs. These cultural lessons afford students the opportunity to learn tolerance and acceptance of different cultures as well as enhancing cognitive skills.

Foreign Language teachers foster learning environments that instill a love of foreign language learning among all students. The teaching and learning of culture and communication in the target language produce students who are well versed in speaking foreign languages and appreciating varied cultures.

Technology is infused throughout all of Berkeley's K-5 curriculum and classrooms. Children use interactive technology to individually acquire academic content while applying digital citizenship standards. Instruction emphasizes Google Classroom, G-Suite, and use of staff created Google Sites to provide information for parents and students. Technology is used to facilitate academic support and enrich instruction via 200 Chromebooks and over 20 Interactive Whiteboards. Staff sites have become a platform used as a teaching tool to help increase student directed learning and projects. Through weekly Media classes for 40 minutes, STEAM activities are created to increase critical thinking and problem solving activities in real world application.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

Due to our diverse student population and variety of achievement levels, differentiated instructional strategies are essential at every grade level. Our instructional approach begins as whole group and then small groups are developed according to ability, whether below, on or above grade level. Below grade level students are provided additional scaffolding supports through explicit targeted instruction. For example, teachers provide audio text, use visuals, pre-teach vocabulary and utilize graphic organizers to illustrate concepts. Above grade level students are given opportunities to expand on learning outcomes and self-paced critical thinking researched based projects, utilizing technology resources and real world applications. Flipped classroom activities and Google Classroom allow children and teachers to stay connected throughout learning. Teachers employ a variety of resources, including Google G Suite of Applications to enhance learning beyond the classroom.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Berkeley School's culture and climate inspires children's love of learning; students are challenged to "Reach for the Stars" each day. Teachers create classroom and individual incentives for quality work and behavior. Students choose individual incentives to help promote intrinsic motivation towards success. Teachers celebrate students during lunch dates and other times to help foster positive relationships.

Our monthly spirit assemblies showcase one grade level's focus on skills learned and challenges students to make real world connections. Writing celebrations, peer pals, leaders, and band students of the month creates a culture of achievement. These activities promote quality student work and performance. Events like Read for the Record, visiting authors, Read Across America, and Hour of Code help recognize and celebrate our love for learning and knowledge, which translates to increased student achievement.

Our Shining Stars promote 7 character traits; children are awarded stars that are displayed throughout the school. Student leaders work with kindergartners and first graders during lunch and recess to foster positive relationships and provide role models to our youngest community members. Mindfulness techniques encourage children to learn breathing and movement techniques that can be integrated into their everyday lives. Our teacher polls show that mindfulness techniques help manage stress while also making the classroom environment more productive for learning. Teachers participate in mindfulness activities after school weekly. They report an increase in stress management techniques which maximizes instructional effectiveness.

Teachers, aides, and administration feel valued throughout the entire year. School leadership fosters an 'open door' policy where all views and ideas are respected. Leadership takes time to acknowledge daily successes, birthdays, and outstanding accomplishments. Daily walkthroughs create a warm and familiar atmosphere for staff and students. School culture reaffirms that collaboration is emphasized and risk taking is encouraged; innovative thinking is rewarded and celebrated.

Teachers have freedom to explore and try new approaches with support and guidance from leadership. Shared leadership allows for multiple stakeholders to contribute their expertise and knowledge. For example, teachers trained in mindfulness created a Google Site as a resource for all and an area to share all ideas and programming.

Social gatherings outside of school each month help support individual and group relationships, focusing on other aspects of professional and personal lives. Monthly breakfasts allow time for teachers to socialize and brainstorm fresh ideas in a comfortable environment. Monthly teacher spotlights are publicized via online Backpack Notes to parents. Weekly online communication to parents ensures understanding of academic and emotional programming.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Collaboration with families and community are vital to our school's success. Positive and productive relationships are fostered through open communication and involvement. Monthly Parent Student Organization (PSO) meetings allow stakeholders and parents to work together to supplement funding for school events that target student achievement. The PSO arranges author visits to motivate and encourage student reading and writing. They champion hands on science workshops contributing to student participation in our annual Science Fair. The Fair promotes critical thinking and problem solving. Our parents also initiated a local community partnership by inviting Hackensack University Medical Center to provide an interactive program that reinforced healthy living choices and activities to encourage overall wellness.

Parents have extensive involvement opportunities to support their child's education. Programming for parents of ELL students include our Latino Literacy and Computer Literacy Programs, monthly parent

meetings, and guided-content workshops. ESSA/Title I parent meetings support involvement in their student's academics. ESSA/Title I funds enabled a psychologist from our local community to provide "The Parenting Recipe" workshop to support their child's academic and emotional needs from childhood to adolescence. Parent participation in our School Safety Team encourages feedback regarding our culture and climate. Parents volunteer weekly in our newly renovated technology lounge to assist students' work on STEAM activities.

Parents are engaged in their child's academic experience through a variety of activities. Classroom writing celebrations, student created projects, mystery readers from the community, and holiday and cultural traditions allow students to showcase their learning. Engagement of the whole family encourages students to be vested in their education.

Families are kept informed in a variety of ways, including weekly newsletters, student-parent conferences, formal progress reports, and quarterly report cards. Technology enables teacher and administrator websites to provide consistently updated information or resources. For example, weekly administrative newsletters are posted online using Smore. Working with parents and community members such as the mayor and council members enabled Berkeley to apply for a Safe Routes to Schools grant to increase children walking to school. This promotes healthy lifestyles and physical engagement. Research shows healthy children are more capable of optimum progress and growth.

Other strategies that foster positive and productive relationships with our community and parents is having designated staff that can communicate with a variety of families. School communication and outreach are translated for our Spanish speaking families. Our bilingual secretary, custodian, and teachers help parents feel comfortable participating and being involved in their child's school experience from the main office to classrooms. Staff can communicate in Spanish, Tagalog, Greek, Italian, Armenian, Circassian, and Arabic. If a family speaks another language, our staff will seek out available resources or local community members to bridge the language gap.

3. Professional Development:

Berkeley excels from ongoing professional development for all staff, thus building our capacity with the primary goal to increase student achievement. Teacher led workshops have increased infusion of appropriate educational technology, including topics such as Google Add Ons, Podcasting, Mystery Skype, and Flipped Classrooms. Teachers have become empowered leaders to facilitate professional learning experiences. Our School Safety Team and Intervention and Referral Services teams participate in professional development. We serve our entire elementary population and create intervention procedures. Our culture and climate increases positive relationships and behavior as well as increases student achievement with academic or behavioral goals, data collection and analysis.

Outside facilitators have included Standard Solutions to help align standards for K-2 writing practices. Grades 3-5 received quality literary analysis and prepared students for the research simulation task within standardized testing. This training enabled teachers to create rubrics to evaluate writing tasks and increase quality of student writing. Grade level meetings analyzed PARCC evidence statements. Identification and planning for lower performing students allowed for student growth within Language Arts and Mathematics.

Partnering with Montclair University, elementary teachers learned how to incorporate a variety of co-teaching models into daily instruction to increase student achievement of all learners. Since this ongoing professional development, increased use of all models has been observed. Montclair University also provided elementary teachers differentiated activities for K-5 to enable appropriate groupings and instruction for all learners. These consultants visit classrooms throughout the year to model, assess, and create instructional plans. This ensures all students benefit from appropriate co-teaching models within all classrooms.

Ten teachers and the building principal from Berkeley School received formal professional training in mindfulness. This team works with all staff to increase the use of mindfulness techniques to help children regulate their emotions, making them more available for learning. The team also created a live Google Site

as a resource and teaching tool for all to utilize and collaborate.

Our ESL program is a sheltered instruction program. All teachers were provided with English Language Learner teaching strategies during professional development. Training was led by assistant professor, Dr. Catherine Michener, from Rowan University. In addition, ESL certified staff provided teachers with training for in-class modifications necessary to support content certified teachers.

Berkeley's professional development is driven to best accommodate our student population. Training and strategies learned encourages the support of our economically and culturally diverse community. Our professional efforts ensure increased student achievement for all children.

4. School Leadership:

The leadership philosophy at Berkeley is based on respect, trust, and shared responsibility. Our culture promotes respectful leaders. Leaders are not assigned by the principal but instead individuals have taken a leadership role and demonstrated success inside and outside the classroom. This shared philosophy facilitates colleagues to bestow experiences and knowledge in a collaborative environment.

Each content area has at least one leader to strategize and disseminate information to either K-2 or grades 3-5. These individuals collaborate and plan effective units/lessons with their grade level partners and supplemental instruction. Each month, the principal checks progress and helps create ideas or plans for future collaborations. Weekly faculty meetings are used to increase these positive and productive relationships. Professional Learning Communities also align with peer driven instructional leadership, encouraging multi-leveled groupings and research initiatives. Topics have included mindfulness, language development for ELLs, problem solving/critical thinking infusion in all content areas and how visual and performing arts helps promote academic achievement.

Additional school leaders include special education, basic skills, and ESL. One teacher from each area has shown expertise in the field and is used as a resource and contact person to collaborate and help disseminate valuable information. These leaders also help staff to focus on achievement goals and offer modifications and interventions to ensure every student succeeds.

Our School Improvement Panel (ScIP) organizes and creates areas of focus to assist in the planning of professional development. The panel solicits ideas and promotes risk taking by teachers. An example would be increased grade level articulation meetings to create more effective curriculum pacing.

The school's academic master schedule is designed to promote grade level collaboration. Each grade level has at least one common preparatory time each week. These professional times are used for planning and the analyzing of achievement of all students. Topics during the year include literary analysis tasks, problem solving strategies in all content areas, supporting fluency strategies, and ways to plan for student directed instruction.

The principal consistently trusts and respects teachers and staff. Everyone feels comfortable taking risks and appreciates the 'freedom' in trying new approaches and strategies to increase all student achievement. An open-door policy fosters positive relationships. This allows for fluid conversations to strengthen teacher involvement with academic achievement. Guided questions facilitate thoughtful reflection, which enables staff to feel empowered and ignites their desire to expand their craft. These leadership decisions are directly connected to student centered initiatives which result in outstanding student achievement.

The principal ensures each and every person is valued and encouraged to learn and grow academically, professionally and emotionally.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

All school decisions start with our understanding of each and every student. Our goal is to educate each child while providing a level playing field. We understand and embrace our diverse population and provide every opportunity to meet children at their emotional and academic level. Plans and interventions are constructed for success.

Berkeley's outstanding achievement derives from every staff member's commitment to children. An essential objective is for all teachers to level the playing field. Since students come from a variety of academic experiences and socioeconomic backgrounds, instruction is tiered to encompass all learners. Children benefit from basic skills to enrichment instruction. We use summative and formative assessments, beginning before stepping into kindergarten to understand the needs of every student. Children's academic success is measured with the assistance of daily interventions through basic skills, ELL instruction, Gifted/Talented enrichment, and strategic use of differentiated instruction in classrooms. Flexible groupings of students occur as needed.

Berkeley invites at risk children to twice weekly homework clubs and daily breakfast clubs, where certified teachers assist with homework, remediate skills, and promote a love of learning. These groups and teachers have created a nonthreatening and secure time and place for children to ask and receive assistance needed to support everyday learning. This outreach addresses the need for a leveled playing field.

All teaching staff offer extra help for all students one to three times per week. These sessions are offered before or after school, or through working lunches. Students receive individualized assistance in a variety of skills such as Language Arts, Mathematics, Band, Chorus, and Assorted Sports. Parents understand and appreciate the extra help and adjust transportation and supervision to fully take advantage of these opportunities.

As you walk the halls, any staff member (whether teacher, custodian, aide, or secretary) will unquestionably assist a teacher or student. This could entail helping a child to read when in centers, practice solving difficult math problems, or posing questions to reflect and extend their thinking. Acting as a cohesive family unit has not only proven successful, but is adopted as 'The Berkeley Way'. You won't hear, "Do you need help?", but rather, "What can I do to help?"

Berkeley's commitment to its students and families continues to nurture and support all learners. Children, parents, and staff have been overheard saying, "This is Berkeley...it's what we do here."