

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2017 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program**

---

[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mr. Lawford M Cunningham

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

Official School Name ICAHN Charter School 5

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1500 Pelham Parkway South

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

City Bronx                      State NY                      Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 10461-1100

County Bronx

Telephone (718) 828-0034                      Fax (718) 828-0664

Web site/URL http://www.icahncharterschool5.org    E-mail lcunningham@ccics.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\*Mr. Jeff Litt                      E-mail jlitt@ccics.org  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name ICAHN Charter School District 5                      Tel. (718) 828-0034

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. Gail Icahn  
(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):
- 1 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 0 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 0 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 1 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	20	20	40
1	23	13	36
2	24	17	41
3	21	17	38
4	14	22	36
5	15	19	34
6	14	18	32
7	10	18	28
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	141	144	285

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 4 % Asian
  - 57 % Black or African American
  - 30 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 6 % White
  - 3 % 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: 7%

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	7
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	10
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	17
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	252
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.067
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	7

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 0 %  
2 Total number ELL

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 69 %  
Total number students who qualify: 221

8. Students receiving special education services: 6 %  
19 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
- 7 Multiple Disabilities
- 0 Orthopedic Impairment
- 0 Other Health Impaired
- 0 Specific Learning Disability
- 11 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: 6
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects	16
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	9
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	3
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 18:1
12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

<b>Required Information</b>	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012
Daily student attendance	95%	96%	94%	95%	93%
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.

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
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.

Icahn Charter School 5, using the Core Knowledge curriculum, developed by E.D. Hirsch, will provide students in grades K-8 with a rigorous academic program offered in an extended day/year setting. Students

will graduate armed with the skills and knowledge to participate successfully in the most rigorous academic environments, and will have a sense of personal and community responsibility.

**16. For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

Students are admitted to Icahn Charter 5 based on an open lottery system.

## **PART III – SUMMARY**

---

Located in the Northeast section of the Bronx in Community School District 11, Icahn Charter School 5, is a replication model of the flagship school Icahn Charter School 1, which follows the Core Knowledge curriculum created by Dr. E.D. Hirsch. Icahn Charter School 5 opened its doors in September of 2011, servicing students in grades kindergarten through second grade. One grade level has been added each subsequent year and we now serve students in kindergarten through seventh grade. As per our mission statement, we offer an extended school day and year. We also have two classes per grade. The racial/ethnic make-up consists mostly of African American students (57%) and Hispanic students (30%).

When lines of communication are kept open, students generally succeed. Our school community is characterized by high student engagement, wherein students want to attend school, strive to do their very best, participate actively in the learning process, and are held accountable for their work. Parents, administration, and teachers play an active role in a student's academic success. Our established community provides support, not only to students, but to classroom teachers as well. This is done through monthly professional development opportunities. Each year, our network leaders schedule either half day or full day sessions to facilitate professional training where our Core Knowledge curriculum is emphasized and aligned to the Common Core curriculum, while introducing innovative and evidenced-based practices of teaching.

One of the major components that make Icahn Charter School a standout school amongst its counterparts is the ratio of students to teacher (18:1). This controlled student to teacher ratio enables teachers to recognize and address students' strengths and areas needing improvement. Smaller classroom sizes allow teachers to more effectively differentiate their instruction, create smaller balanced literacy groups, and teach to the needs of specific students.

The chain of command at Icahn 5 begins with the principal, and is followed by the staff developer, and the school counselor. The principal's vision, which is trickled down amongst the staff, is to provide a thorough academic program, delivered through a challenging learning environment. The staff developer works with teachers concerning lesson plan enhancement and providing a clear model through demonstration lessons. The school counselor plays an intricate role within the school community. She works with students in multiple areas, including personal and social development, as well academic achievement.

In support of our school's mission, we acknowledge that all students can in fact learn. We provide high quality instruction in all classes. Our Targeted Assistance teachers work with students who are below grade level in both ELA and Math. In addition, we provide other intervention programs, such as, after school tutoring and Saturday Academy. Our belief in the philosophy that all students can learn is what motivates us to provide ample opportunities for professional development for our teachers. If the teachers are fully prepared to teach, our students will be better prepared to learn. All teachers in Icahn 5 are formally observed two or four times a year. Teachers who have been teaching in an Icahn school for three years or less will have a minimum of two formal observations in the fall and two formal observations in the spring. Teachers who have been teaching in the Icahn network for more than three years will be observed once in the fall and once in the spring.

Students are admitted based on an open lottery system. The application period runs from December of each year through April of the following year. Currently, we are accepting applications for students entering kindergarten - 7th grade. The lottery takes place in the middle of April each year. After the total number of slots available is chosen by lottery, the students who are not selected are placed on a waiting list, in the order in which the names were drawn. Lastly, Icahn Charter School 5 has a sibling rule. A sibling of an existing student is granted first preference of enrollment.

Any child within New York City who is entering a grade between Kindergarten and 7th grade may attend Icahn 5. However, first preference is given to those students who live in Community School District 11. We are a uniformed school. Boys are required to wear a white shirt and navy pants, while girls are required to wear a white blouse and navy blue skirts. Icahn 5 is a public charter school; therefore there is no tuition charge.

The current superintendent, who once headed the flagship school, Icahn Charter School 1, as the principal, truly believes that all students can learn. Through his vision, Icahn 5's faculty feels the same way. This shows through passion, dedication, and the innovative and engaging lessons being taught by our teachers on a daily basis. When there is belief, there is hope. Icahn 5 staff members have mastered the idea of believing.

---

## **PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

---

### **1. Core Curriculum:**

Core Knowledge is the heart of Icahn Charter School 5's curriculum, based on the principle that knowledge builds on knowledge. For our students, the curriculum provides a broad foundation of knowledge while providing deep vocabulary skills needed for reading comprehension. For teachers, Core Knowledge promotes teamwork and allows for a network wide focus of all seven schools in the district. Additionally, the Core Knowledge curriculum enhances accountability and parental involvement. Parents are provided with a clear outline of the expectations for their child with specific books, such as, "What your Fourth Grader Needs to Know" by E.D. Hirsch, providing this framework. Other supports include, the Core Knowledge teacher handbook and text resources. Lastly, a monthly syllabus, for each grade, kindergarten through seventh, is distributed to parents, with topics being taught that month per subject.

The English Language Arts program, on a weekly basis, provides a comprehensive interdisciplinary approach that builds on vocabulary skills, phonics, and processing answering essential questions. Kindergarten to 5th grade students are provided with varied interesting literary and informational texts via our mainstay reading program, "McGraw-Hill Wonders". As students engage with the essential question of the week, they become more involved with the texts, working with peers, and more importantly, develop better writing skills. "McGraw-Hill Wonders" structures each grade with "below level, on level, and above reading level" distinctions to promote balanced literacy to meet the needs of each student in the classroom. "Collections" is an additional English Language Arts reading program for grades 6-12, which provide our current 6th and 7th graders with active and engaging readings through nonfiction, fiction, and informational digital and/or print texts. The emphasis of "Collections" is "Close Reading", a focusing strategy taught to students to facilitate in specific thinking jobs by genre. For example, a thinking job for poetry is to identify the literal and deeper meaning of the text. When students are aware of the genre, they are able to use the thinking job strategy to discern what must be done as they are reading the texts.

The math curriculum consists of "EnVision Math 2.0", an all-inclusive program for kindergarten through eighth grade that offers teachers the flexibility of print, digital, and blended instruction. By using these forms of delivery, students' engagement and interest is enhanced and maintained throughout the lesson. In support of EnVision, Eureka modules, also known as "EngageNY" are used. "EngageNY" is geared towards providing students with extensive problem solving questions, divided into different strands per module. In grade 3, for example, Module 2 is: Place Value and Problem Solving with Units of Measure; Module 3 is: Multiplication and Division with Units of 0,1,6-9, and Multiples of 10. Each module has a time constraint for completion, affording teachers a focused point for each.

Science, an exciting subject for all grades, is provided to our kindergarten through 7th grade students, with the New York State Exam given to the 4th grade students. Students are given the opportunity to discover the universe's happenings and learn how things evolve in the world. Teachers deliver instruction through both hands-on projects and bookwork with the "McGraw-Hill New York Science" text. This text provides our students with wide and varied topics from chemistry, to the human body, evolution, and electricity. Icahn Charter School 5 provides its 4th grade students with a unique opportunity to visit Camp Wilbur Herrlich in Patterson, New York, for a three-day environmental study program. At Camp Herrlich, our students are exposed to enjoyable and safe environmental education programs, such as, The Arts and the Environment: Landscape Drawing, Earth Science; Alternative Energy; Ecology; Insects and Pond Ecology; and, Survival Skills. Overall, Camp Herrlich is a wonderful and exciting experience that is looked forward to by the younger students and remembered with fondness by our older students. In the summer months, five students are awarded the opportunity to spend a week to two weeks at Camp Herrlich.

Core subjects at Icahn 5 are History and Geography, each with different levels. Distinct teachers are responsible for educating our students in subsets: K-2 topics include Continents, Ancient Egypt, and Immigration and Citizenship; 3-5 topics include Early American, African Kingdoms, and Major concepts in the age of Exploration. Ancient Greece, the Roaring Twenties in America, Isolationism, and the "New Negro" Movement are topics covered in our 6th to 7th grade curriculum.

## 2. Other Curriculum Areas:

While Icahn Charter School 5 is an academically rigorous school, we acknowledge the need for diverse methods of instruction in varied areas of learning. Visual Arts is an important part of the core knowledge curriculum. LEAP (Learning through the Extended Arts Program), plays a huge role by meeting the requirements established by the Common Core Curriculum in this area. LEAP artists provide students, in grades kindergarten through seventh grade, with hands-on fun, and innovative activities geared towards the arts. The artists, who are teachers themselves, specialize in areas, such as music, dance, theater, visual art, and film. All artists work alongside the classroom teacher to incorporate the Core Knowledge curriculum into their art form to engage and educate our students. One of the key components of the LEAP program is that it can be tailored to any specific age group or student population. Our population of students ranges from Early Childhood (K-2), Elementary school (3-5), and middle school (6-8) with diverse backgrounds. Since the inclusion of the LEAP program into our school, our students have created murals, playwriting, participated in hip hop/urban dance classes, African dance, and ballet. LEAP also has an element specifically tailored to students in kindergarten through 2nd grade called the ALLL (Active Learning Leads to Literacy) program. The artist for this program works with each grade one to two times a week usually on Mondays and/or Wednesdays. The artist visits our students for a total of 40 sessions. The ALLL program uses drama and storytelling to improve on literacy skills with the help of the classroom teachers. One of the key reasons of the artists from this program succeeding is due to the active involvement of our teachers. Our teachers play a role in what the artists are doing in the classroom.

Art takes on many forms and one such form is dance. Ballroom Basix is a dance program committed to bringing a sense of fitness skills to our students in grade seven. Dances include, merengue, tango, swing, foxtrot, waltz, and salsa. Students engage in these dances and learn a sense of responsibility and accountability, as well as strengthen their mobility. As these are not individual forms of dance, but ones of two or more, students are learning how to work as a team while as well as being a supportive team member. Similar to LEAP, active involvement of staff is imminent for the program to have value to our students.

Each month, Icahn 5 distributes breakfast and lunch menus to our students, which detail their daily menus for the week. Menu choices range from Chicken Delights Mondays, Burger Bash Tuesdays, and Culinary Wednesdays. Our students have the choice of healthy foods, such as, spinach and cheese ravioli, BBQ roasted chicken, 100% New York beef cheeseburger, and much more. As eating healthy promotes a greater learning environment, we make sure to offer a selection of choices that please the palette.

Icahn 5's students are engaged in structured physical fitness programs facilitated by the physical education teacher two to three times a week. Team-based games are geared towards fitness, with warm up activities and then meeting the core physical objective of that week. Once a week, he teaches our students certain types of foods they should be eating daily. Icahn 5 also has a basketball clinic for students where they are taught the fundamentals of the game and compete at the end of the year with the other schools in our gymnasium. Our aim is to participate in The Charter School Athletic Association (CSAA) in the near future. This league provides the opportunity for our students to compete against other charter school students.

The Spanish Foreign Language class taught to our 7th grade classes by a licensed Spanish teacher, using the McGraw Hill Education's textbook, "Asi se dice", introduces our students to a new language that excites them. At this stage, students are learning how to identify foods and discuss meals, describe their houses or apartments, and compare eating habits in different Latin American countries.

Technology also plays a huge part within our curriculum, each classroom is equipped with SmartBoards, document cameras, desktop computers, and a cart consisting of Chrome book tablets for each student in grades two through seventh. Grades kindergarten and 1st have carts with Ipads and laptop computers. Students have monitored access to the internet and are conducting multimedia research, getting more involved with Project Based Learning (PBL) activities, and using Google classroom for real time feedback from the teacher as they type their assignments.

### **3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:**

Icahn Charter School 5 has varied sections of instructional practices, methods, intervention programs, and assessments to meet the needs of our diverse population. As the principal of the school, and a prior teacher within the organization, I have first hand knowledge of the many programs we offer to students. I have witnessed the continued impact these programs have on our students during their Icahn years and beyond.

One of our most effective intervention programs is our Saturday Academy program, which is offered to students from grades 3 through 8 who we (classroom teachers, the school counselor, and staff developer) have determined could use the extra assistance in English Language Arts (ELA) and/or math. Students are also placed in our Saturday program based on teacher recommendation, ITBS (Iowa Test of Basic Skills) results, results from State examinations, and if their academic performance on weekly exams, both math and ELA, indicate areas of growth that need to be strengthened for that student. Saturday Academy runs from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm from the beginning of November until the end of April, totaling nineteen Saturdays. Our dedicated classroom teachers are the individuals responsible for providing the extra instructional support to our students on Saturdays. The principal or the Staff Developer supervise the program, ensuring positive attendance and the active participation of our students, as well as, offering any support teachers may require. A pacing calendar is created at the network level. The pacing calendar allows for teachers to have a frame of reference regarding what they should be teaching on that specific Saturday. Given the uniqueness of each school, teachers are permitted to fine-tune the schedule and curriculum, if necessary, based on the needs of their students. ELA and math exams are usually administered in March and May respectively.

Targeted Assistance is an in-school intervention program we have at Icahn 5. Targeted Assistance is the heart and soul of our school's academic safety net programs. The program is geared towards students who are below grade level in ELA and/or math. Targeted Assistance groups generally consist of 5 to 6 students working with a licensed teacher to target their needs for a 45 minute period five days a week. Targeted Assistance could be delivered through a push in or a pull out model, depending on the needs of the students, as well as, the goals for that day. Students are selected based on their ITBS results and teacher recommendation. Specific ELA and math books are provided to teachers. These books are an extension of our mainstay books used by the classroom teachers. The purpose of these books is to quickly accelerate students back to grade level standards.

In addition, after school tutoring is another academic safety net used. Students are selected based on their performance in the classroom, the results of their daily homework, and weekly exams. Tutoring is conducted 3 days a week from 4:00 pm to 5:00 pm. Separate instructional materials are provided to teachers.

Icahn 5 uses a computer assisted program called I-Ready to assist students in reaching grade level in ELA and Math. I-Ready measures students' growth in both math and ELA for students in grades K-8. I-Ready provides rigorous, customized instruction to our students at their level of expertise. The program is aligned to the common core standards and students are allotted time on their daily schedule to log on. The program monitors: standards mastery, how students are performing on the most recently assessed grade level standards, progress towards mastery of their grade level standards, and the different subgroups that are performing on grade level standards. In addition to I-Ready, K-2 students use mClass: Dibels, a literacy program geared towards monitoring literacy skills that students need in order to become proficient readers.

## PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

---

### **1. School Climate/Culture:**

Icahn Charter School 5 believes in celebrating successes, big or small, as an important feature to encourage and engage our students. Each month, students are awarded in writing, reading, math, science, social studies, homework, most improved, and Student of the Month to celebrate academic success. Classwork is prominently displayed on bulletin boards with an open invitation to parents to come view them. Teachers and staff routinely send home positive notes or call parents to discuss the successes of their child. Building positive relationships between the student, staff, and parents is not only a goal, but also integral in assuring the success of the student. As a school community, we have set the bar high in regards to student achievement and we fully believe that our expectations are attainable with each accomplishment celebrated. Class trips are an important element to setting a positive climate, all aligned with our core curriculum, parents and students take an active role in participating in these outings, which are often creative and exciting.

Components critical to a positive school climate rely on the academic, social, and emotional support offered in order to promote growth in our students. Academic supports include: Targeted Assistance, Saturday Academy, after school tutoring, and small group instructions in math and ELA. Socially, our students are engaged in many in-school and after-school activities, such as chess, arts and crafts, basketball clinics, movie spin club, and theater arts, including singing. The school counselor provides students with proper techniques regarding self-control, coping skills and emotional well being. Workshops, classroom lessons, plays, and role-playing activities are different techniques used by the counselor to engage our students. In addition, the counselor invites contracted vendors to our school for assemblies on topics, such as bullying, how to maintain meaningful friendships amongst students, and strategies to maintain strong emotional connections.

The principal encourages an open door policy, where teachers can feel “safe” to share their thoughts and provide their own input on matters involving their students and the school. The principal and the staff developer lead by a “show, don’t just tell” approach. As the principal, I ensure that staff’s efforts are acknowledged by celebrating their successes as well. One example is presenting “Principal Awards” on a monthly basis to teachers with perfect attendance. Encouraging and expecting the best from my teachers is an important tool used by me as they then encourage and expect more from our students.

### **2. Engaging Families and Community:**

Our Icahn 5 community prides itself in our strong relationships between the school, family, and community. Our core belief is that in order for each of our students to thrive, academically and in life, each person in that child’s life must be equally invested in their success. New members are informed of current school policies and expectations through an Open House including the review of a comprehensive introductory packet, tour, and recommendations for creating an appropriate learning environment at home and successful transition in school.

With the assistance of the staff developer, school counselor, teachers and other staff members, parents are invited to workshops and events keeping them informed about decisions that will impact student learning, throughout the school year. They have included, but are not limited to, topics such as, The Core Knowledge Curriculum, and Common Core State Standards, and our Target Assistance Program. Parents are also invited to Family Literacy and math events. During these events both parents and students join in the fun of working together to solve mathematical equations or engage in fun reads which leads to an interactive activity.

Parents are invited to use the different modalities available at Icahn 5, facilitating communication and embracing our diverse population. Frequent school newsletters, classroom eChalk websites, and an open door school policy allowing for frequent visits for celebratory and academic purposes, engender a continual alliance between school, family, and community. Parents and teachers communicate frequently throughout

the school year, both informally and formally, including two formal parent teacher conferences and six narrative progress reports. Families volunteer to chaperone school trips, including a three-day environmental study program that allows for outdoor learning at Camp Herrlich. The active involvement of the community is fostered through relationships and inter-visitations with local high schools, colleges and universities, as well as the NYFD and NYPD Youth Division to promote character education, cyber safety, and heightening parental awareness.

Open collaboration between the middle and elementary school is a common sight at Icahn 5, with the older students engaging their younger counterparts in educational activities. Middle school students volunteer as Library Assistants, responsible for the circulation and retrieval of books and periodicals for all students. Students and families participate in philanthropic activities, such as, City Harvest Food Drive; Icahn 5 donated over 1,500 pounds of food to New York City shelters, and Operation Christmas Child, with donations procured by our Community Service Club. The Icahn 5 family also collaborated with Hashtag Lunch bag to provide much needed meals to Bronx residents in need.

### **3. Professional Development:**

At Icahn Charter School 5, on-going professional development ensures that all teachers, new and experienced, continue to strengthen their skills in lesson planning, classroom management, incorporating technology, and differentiated and individual instruction. A focal point of our professional development is the ever-evolving needs and challenges of our students. In this rigorous and fast-paced curriculum, workshops are created and geared to meet those needs. The staff developer, who is a master teacher, along with the principal, meet regularly, with outside consultants, to curate an all-encompassing program, where the needs of the staff are met, at their level of experience.

For our teachers to be as effective as possible, we offer them continuous opportunities to expand their knowledge and implement the best educational practices. We strive for our teachers to help students learn at the highest levels. Professional development workshops have included, but are not limited to, teacher-to-teacher mentorships, demonstration lessons and observations with feedback, team-teaching, staff/grade meetings, and collaborative planning. Teacher-to-teacher mentorships and inter-visitations have been established to allow opportunities for collaboration and implementation of best teaching practices throughout the school. Demonstration lessons and observations are effective tools used to improve teacher delivery, increase student engagement, and offer support and feedback in order to increase their performance in the classroom. We also offer to our teachers menu driven professional development opportunities to better address the needs of our students.

Developments of many of these workshops rely heavily on data collected via observations, assessments, teacher input, and innovative teaching practices. Applications of learned methodology are then evaluated to ensure effectiveness and cohesiveness with current curriculum standards. Consultants are an additional resource used to incorporate workshops that support the academic programs in place in the classroom, including but not limited to, DIBELS, 100-Book Challenge, Wonders, Collections, I-Ready, Eureka Math, Envisions, and Writing Matters. Throughout the school year additional support is offered to teachers by way of “lunch-n-learns.” Here teachers are afforded continuing education on effective and innovative practices that assess and improve upon the established curriculum. Lunch-n-learns could be conducted by the staff developer, principal, or by a contracted outside consultant.

Teachers are encouraged to create, establish and facilitate immersive professional development workshops in order to disseminate learned and successful practices, such as Novel Studies, Behavioral Management, Parent Communication, Google Classroom, and Skedula. These peer-to-peer workshops afford teacher input and opportunities of growth within the Icahn 5 teaching criteria.

We are committed to challenging our teachers in a way that inspires and excites their love of teaching within the classroom. Whether one-on-one mentorships, collaboration with others, or formal training, professional development will continue to drive instruction in the classroom at Icahn Charter School 5.

#### **4. School Leadership:**

Icahn Charter School 5's drive is to provide a framework with a thorough academic program buoyed by a challenging learning environment, which supports the student, families and staff in a holistic style. A strong succession of school leadership is an integral part in maintaining this framework. The principal, the primary stakeholder, sets the quality of atmosphere so that all stakeholders are offered a thorough, compassionate, safe, and supportive environment. This is then modeled to the students with the intent that students' self-esteem, acceptance, and respect are adopted and then shared with other students and staff.

The Staff Developer, second in the line of succession, serves as the liaison between teachers and the principal. The Staff Developer, a master teacher herself, gathers lesson plan materials; assists with bulletin board displays, and most importantly demonstrates lessons to enhance teacher growth, as well as, providing insight into alternative strategies of educating our students. In addition, the Staff Developer creates and facilitates curriculum driven workshops to parents and teachers, to augment the core education program.

The principal and the staff developer work closely to enhance the curriculum's scope and sequence. By differentiating teachers' instruction, assisting in the creation of noteworthy packets and revamping teachers' lesson plans based on student needs, the staff developer and principal assure that instruction is accessible, engaging and most importantly effective.

Student handbooks, parent handbooks, and faculty handbooks are a few documents we have in place to ensure policies and rules are readily available and easily implemented. These manuals include policies regarding student discipline, student education plan, parental involvement, Fire Drills, procedures for short term and long-term suspensions, procedures for expulsion, disciplinary procedures for students with disabilities, lockdowns and more. Safety is the most basic and paramount component necessary to the success of our school. The principal and the staff developer work vigilantly to make certain that these rules are being followed by actively patrolling the hallways, facilitating faculty meetings, and creating school wide initiatives that will promote a safe school community.

Positive relationships take time and practice to cultivate in order to attain positive relationships, including trust and on-going communication amongst all stakeholders. As a result, we encourage parents to take part in our workshops, math and literacy events, celebratory ceremonies and assemblies. Another way we maintain and keep a positive relationship amongst parents is through the distribution of newsletters. These newsletters highlight the happenings within our school each month.

## **Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

---

Icahn Charter School 5 makes available many support systems to increase student success, such as Targeted Assistance, Saturday Academy, tutoring, and Child Study Team (CST) meetings.

While all systems are important, CST meetings provide a unique opportunity to individualize interventions and communicate any academic and social-emotional concerns to parents by joining all stakeholders. Stakeholders, include the school counselor, the staff developer, the classroom teacher, the principal, and in several cases outside service providers in contact with the student.

The school counselor facilitates the meeting, takes minutes, and offers interventions to support the student that will strengthen a student's autonomy without compromising social-emotional health. The Staff Developer works with both teachers and students. As a master teacher, her expertise is invaluable in modifying lessons to further encourage student commitment, and recommending and implementing individualized interventions contingent on student need. The classroom teacher, an essential party to the meeting, provides invaluable insight in regards to the student's academic progress, patterned behaviors, interventions in place and concerns, as they "live" with the student. The principal acts as a judge at the meeting. He judges what is being said and makes an impartial decision on which interventions are applicable and plausible within the boundaries of our school for the student. Outside service providers may include an occupational therapist, physical therapist, speech teacher, and/or a Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETSS) who offer support and insight on concerns that may affect academic success for the student.

All stakeholders, with the exception of the parents and/or guardians, meet to analyze the student's multifaceted portfolio. Academic concerns, learning strengths, current interventions, and outside concerns affecting academic success are identified and future interventions ascertained. The parents/guardians are then invited to a conference with the Child Study Team soon after. Meetings, lasting thirty to forty-five minutes, allow parents to weigh in on their child's scholastic life as well as provide necessary information about personal aspects of their child. Parents know their child best, and the open flow of information provides useful information of techniques that can be interchangeable from school to home. Lastly, there is a follow up date, usually a month after the parent meeting, to discuss if the interventions put in place are indeed working.

A child study meeting is important to the success of the child, the teachers, parents, and the school. These meetings lends itself to the phrase, "it takes a village to raise a child".