

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

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Ms. Rachel King

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

Official School Name Leadership Prep Ocean Hill Charter School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 51 Christopher Avenue

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

City Brooklyn                      State NY                      Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 11212-8014

County Kings

Telephone (718) 250-5767                      Fax (212) 881-9666

Web site/URL <http://leadershipprepoceanhill.uncommonschools.org/>                      E-mail rking@leadershipprep.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\*Ms. Tara Marlovits                      E-mail tmarlovits@uncommonschools.org  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Uncommon School District NYC                      Tel. (781) 690-1438

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 Mr. Linton Mann III  
(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**

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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

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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):
- 916 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 285 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 532 High schools
  - 65 K-12 schools
- 1798 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
<b>PreK</b>	0	0	0
<b>K</b>	42	43	85
<b>1</b>	36	47	83
<b>2</b>	38	51	89
<b>3</b>	46	40	86
<b>4</b>	44	43	87
<b>5</b>	39	47	86
<b>6</b>	45	44	89
<b>7</b>	42	38	80
<b>8</b>	34	40	74
<b>9</b>	0	0	0
<b>10</b>	0	0	0
<b>11</b>	0	0	0
<b>12 or higher</b>	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	366	393	759

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 0 % Asian
  - 86 % Black or African American
  - 11 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 0 % White
  - 2 % 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: 5%

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	19
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	15
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	34
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	701
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.049
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	5

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

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

Araucanian, Afrikaans, Arabic, Bengali, Bambara, Chinese (any), Ewe, Haitian Creole, French, Fulani, Ga, Greek, Ibo, Mandinka (Mandingo), Nahuatl, Niger-Congo, Spanish, Soninke, Yoruban

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 82 %  
Total number students who qualify: 622
8. Students receiving special education services: 10 %  
75 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.

- 2 Autism
- 0 Deafness
- 0 Deaf-Blindness
- 0 Emotional Disturbance
- 0 Hearing Impairment
- 0 Mental Retardation
- 0 Multiple Disabilities
- 0 Orthopedic Impairment
- 5 Other Health Impaired
- 24 Specific Learning Disability
- 44 Speech or Language Impairment
- 1 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: 2
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	16
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects	56
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	14
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	0
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	3

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%	94%	94%	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.

<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 X

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.

Leadership Prep Ocean Hill seeks to redefine the expectations for the quality of education possible at an urban public school by providing an exemplary education to the community of Brownsville, New York.

LPOH seeks to prepare all of its students to get to and through college and to become intelligent and thoughtful contributors to society.

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

Leadership Prep Ocean Hill (LPOH) works with the Uncommon Schools network to recruit students. Uncommon Schools NYC follows all applicable state and federal laws in admitting students. Families interested in enrolling a child at LPOH are required to submit a completed application form. The applications are made available in person at LPOH schools, online at the Uncommon Schools website and schools' websites, and can be mailed home upon a family's request. Application forms are provided in both Spanish and English. There are no fees associated with the filing of an application, nor are there any tuition charges for attending LPOH. Students are selected randomly via a lottery, which occurs every year in April. This lottery is publicly held and is overseen by a disinterested independent organization.

LPOH seeks to serve a population that is representative of the surrounding community, so preferences are applied via weighting, or the number of cards each child receives in the lottery. Students who live in the surrounding district are given one additional card in the lottery. Students who qualify for the free and reduced price lunch program are given three additional cards. Students who reside in a New York City Housing Authority public housing development and/or are enrolled in SNAP or TANF receive one additional card. Students can receive a maximum of five additional cards, or six cards total. Only kindergarten and 5th grade students are admitted via lottery; however, the school may, at its discretion, admit new students into grades 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, and 7 from the school's waiting list. LPOH has a policy of backfilling, or filling all empty seats by admitting students on the waiting list as seats open.

## **PART III – SUMMARY**

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Leadership Prep Ocean Hill Charter School (LPOH) was founded in New York State school district 23 in Brownsville, Brooklyn, in August 2010, as part of Uncommon Schools New York City. The school contains two academies: the elementary academy (LPOH-EA) serves grades K-4, and the middle academy (LPOH-MA) serves grades 5-8.

LPOH's lottery preferences guarantee that the majority of its scholars come from the surrounding Brownsville community, which has historically held some of the highest poverty rates in New York City. Serving the Brownsville community, where there are limited options for a high quality education, is crucial to carrying out LPOH's mission of providing an outstanding free, public education to those who would not otherwise have the opportunity to attend a high-quality school. LPOH is 85.9% black, 10.6% Hispanic or Latino, 0.3% white and 3.47% other races. The surrounding district is 76% black, 21% Hispanic or Latino, 1% Asian, and 1% White. The surrounding district is 87% economically disadvantaged, while 82% of LPOH's students are economically disadvantaged.

LPOH is committed both to serving a similar demographic to the surrounding community and to sustaining an exceptional record of academic achievement, as this validates the school's belief in their students' intelligence and ability. In 2015-2016, 77.7% of scholars at LPOH scored proficient in math, and 64.8% of scholars scored advanced or proficient in ELA on the New York State Exams. Comparatively, in 2015-2016, 19% of students in surrounding District 23 scored either advanced or proficient in ELA, and only 15% scored either advanced or proficient on the state exams in math. In 2014-2015, Leadership Prep Ocean Hill Elementary Academy ranked #1 in math out of 2,500 New York State elementary schools and was the only non-selective elementary school with 100% of students passing the math exam. This unprecedented accomplishment, especially in comparison to the results of schools in the surrounding district, highlights the rigor of the instructional quality at LPOH, as well as the exceptional strength of the school community.

These results are made possible by LPOH's commitment to: (i) a school culture that fosters intellectualism and passion for learning in both teachers and students, (ii) ensuring that every decision the school makes maximizes student learning, and (iii) balancing academic rigor with joy and love.

LPOH leaders have built a culture of intellectualism that fosters curiosity and a passion for learning in both teachers and students. Every LPOH student is expected to go to college, so staff creates a culture that sets students on the path to college. Every staff member at LPOH knows that if children are curious and passionate about learning, they will feel ownership over their education and will feel empowered to pursue ideas, further their own knowledge, and take hold of their own futures. This emphasis on intellectualism is manifest in even the smallest of details. For example, teachers refer to their students as "scholars," emphasizing the scholarly behavior they expect of their students.

Leaders know that if teachers are displaying their passion for learning by constantly seeking feedback, this will translate into scholars pushing themselves to do the same. This core belief has informed LPOH's investment in the intellectual growth not only of their scholars, but also of their teachers. Leaders want teachers to strive to be leading content experts, not only within the Uncommon Schools community, but throughout the broader education community. Leaders want teachers to see their careers as intellectually rigorous and stimulating and know that the longer teachers stay in the classroom, the better the student outcomes. To keep teachers engaged and growing, leaders have implemented a strong culture of observation and feedback, a rigorous professional development plan, and comprehensive mid-year reviews. This culture of curiosity and intellectualism at both the student and teacher level is essential to every child's development and has set LPOH students up to be on track for success both at college and beyond.

Another key reason for LPOH's academic success is that every decision made at LPOH focuses on the academic achievement of its scholars, down to the smallest detail. For example, to maximize the time spent on learning, not a moment is wasted during the school day. While scholars are transitioning within the classroom, they count up by 5s, 10s, or practice multiplication tables. At the start of vacation, teachers provide parents with tips on how to read with their children and remind them to turn on closed captioning

while watching television so students can practice reading. When it comes to reversing the achievement gap, LPOH believes that every moment is an opportunity.

While LPOH is grounded in academic excellence, it is also a priority that classes are filled with joy and love. A scholar's academic success is fueled by his or her passion for learning, so creating a strong and happy community is essential to LPOH's success. Trust between teachers and scholars is a priority, as scholars trust that their teachers are doing what is best for them. LPOH traditions are strategically planned to ensure that a culture of joy and a love of learning is perpetuated. Family nights either incorporate math or literacy—a recent example includes a shadowbox and puppeteer company that was brought in to read a book and act out the stories for the elementary school families. Reading is encouraged, and teachers keep track of how many books their scholars have read. Classrooms earn pizza parties and learning-related prizes when they have read a certain number of books (amount varies by grade level). Students who find joy in learning will be empowered to pursue their intellectual passions not only while they are students at LPOH, but in high school, college, and beyond. This combination of joy, community, and intellectualism is the key to LPOH's success as an academically rigorous K-8 institution.

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

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

Curriculum at LPOH is developed in conjunction with a curriculum team that works for Uncommon Schools. Lessons are planned regionally, and teachers at LPOH internalize these lesson plans and tailor each lesson to their class, mindful of the data that they have collected about their specific students. Teachers track data daily through “do-now” activities at the start of class and “exit tickets” at the completion of class and then use this data to tweak lessons and to differentiate the instruction to target their specific students.

The school day lasts from 7:25 to 3:50, providing a minimum of 6 hours of instruction per day. Combined with a slightly longer school year, this provides LPOH students with 25% more instruction time over the course of a year than their counterparts at district schools. At LPOH- EA, scholars receive 2.5 hours of literacy/reading instruction, one hour of writing/grammar instruction, 1.5 hours of math instruction, and thirty minutes each of social studies, science, and character development per day. At LPOH-MA, scholars receive three hours of literacy instruction, three hours of writing and grammar instruction, four and a half hours of math instruction, three hours each of social studies, science and character development instruction per week.

At LPOH, rigor and foundational skills are emphasized in our curriculum planning. ELA curriculum is developed with a focus on literacy and writing and is aligned to the Common Core. Middle school reading curriculum focuses on small-group-discussion-based learning. Students are discussion leaders, and teachers will only intervene if they feel that an essential message is being lost or mistranslated. Students are taught LPOH’s “Habits of Discussion” which they use in grades 5-8 to guide the structure of their conversations. The content of the lessons as well as the books incorporated into the curriculum are selected based on how scholars will be able to relate to the protagonist. Curriculum designers select books with protagonists of color, and a strong thread of overcoming adversity persists throughout the K-8 ELA curriculum. For example, middle school scholars read *Esperanza Rising*, *The Watsons Go to Birmingham, 1936*, *Night*, *Malcolm X*, *To Be a Slave*, and *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl* (among many other texts). Each book is selected not only for reading level, but also for the message that scholars are supposed to deduce from the text. One essential question guides the book selection for each grade’s year-long curriculum. For example, 6th graders this year are reading texts related the question: “What power do individuals have to overcome oppression?” The curriculum is designed to establish a love of reading, but also to include stories that enforce the school’s belief that scholars are their own strongest advocates.

Math instruction is aligned to the Common Core standards, focusing on both numeracy and problem-solving skills. LPOH utilizes a rigorous math curriculum created by Uncommon Schools. LPOH believes that students become mathematically proficient by engaging in discussion around their reasoning as well as learning foundational math concepts and skills. For this reason, literacy is also incorporated into the math curriculum (especially at the elementary level), where students work on building foundational skills using story problems and written explanations. The curriculum has a proven track record of moving students toward proficiency in mathematical computation and problem solving, and incorporates opportunities for “re-teach” lessons and spiral review that teachers will tailor to their students based on data.

Both science and history curriculums are tied to New York State standards. For science and history, there is an emphasis on student discovery rather than teacher lectures. Building literacy is prioritized in both science and history, because college-level classes in history and science require students to be able to unpack challenging non-fiction texts. Both social studies and science investigations integrate literacy and research—students communicate their ideas, form and investigate their hypotheses, record their observations (data) through accurate drawings, diagrams, and notebook entries, and think critically to evaluate their results. We provide students with the tools, experiences, and personal motivation to perceive the world as scientists and social scientists.

History lessons are split between direct instruction and inquiry and include extensive historical document analysis and close reading. Content is tied to New York State standards, and makes sure to incorporate

minority historical figures and political movements.

Science lessons are grounded in student discovery, and focus on hands-on experiments and practice in recording observations and hypotheses. The classes are very rigorous, so much so that this year, students in 8th grade will take the high school Living Environment New York State regents exam.

Learning does not stop after the school day comes to a close. Each scholar, including those in kindergarten, takes home at least 20 minutes of homework as well as a minimum of 15-30 minutes of independent reading every evening. Parents are asked to review each evening's assignment upon completion. Homework is important for preparing scholars for the independent work they will need to perform at the college level.

## **2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

LPOH's rigorous curriculum is supplemented by a vibrant co-curricular and character development program. Scholars at LPOH-EA participate in performing arts at least twice a week. This includes song performances, dance, and drama. Dance is particularly important at LPOH, as leaders know that dance classes are difficult for their scholars to access outside of school, and also provide a combination of creative exercise and physical activity, which is especially important at the elementary level.

Scholars at LPOH-EA receive an hour of either performing arts or physical education per day. Scholars at LPOH-MA receive three hours of art and three hours of physical education per week. In addition to physical education, middle school scholars have the opportunity to join the STEP, boys and girls basketball, flag football or track teams. LPOH has also offered a variety of after-school extracurricular activities such as African drumming, African dance, and martial arts. The enrichment program is designed to open as many doors as possible for scholars by exposing them to a range of creative, athletic, and intellectual opportunities outside the classroom.

LPOH-MA has offered French and Spanish to grades 5-8. During the 15-16 school year, 100 middle school scholars participated in a two semester French or Spanish program. If LPOH students matriculate to an Uncommon high school, they are required to take continue taking a language at the high school level. Many students opt to take AP Spanish at the high school level.

Technology is also woven into classrooms at LPOH throughout the K-8 experience. In the youngest grades, scholars engage with a literacy program on desktop computers during one of their three reading blocks each day, allowing them become more familiar with computer technology and also allowing the teachers to provide more differentiated reading instruction for the class. In the middle academy, scholars use Chromebooks for lessons throughout the year, allowing them to experience educational content through different media. In addition, all teachers use laptops and displays in the classroom to provide additional forms of content, such as clips of natural science through YouTube or Jeopardy-based history games. LPOH-MA allows incorporates typing into the weekly ELA curriculum in order to begin prepping scholars for the essay writing and computer skills they will need to be prepared for college level work.

Character development is interwoven throughout the curriculum. Scholars begin their day with a handshake from their school leader, who asks them to make eye contact and to smile. This practice develops students' presence and confidence. While in school, scholars are expected to look at or "track" their peers and teachers who are speaking as a way of showing respect and engagement. Scholars at the middle school level participate in a weekly hour-long advisory period that focuses on character development. During advisory, LPOH has built opportunities to develop scholars' leadership abilities by having 7th grade and 8th grade students mentor their younger peers. This creates opportunities for leadership for older students, and creates a sense of partnership across grade levels. Advisory periods are also used as time for discussion of current events and to create a community that is aware of what is going on in the world around them and to cultivate sense of civic mindedness among students.

College readiness is also an important part of the school curriculum. Scholars are told that they will go to college starting in kindergarten. At every grade level, each classroom is named after and decorated in the colors of a college or university, and students take pride in their classroom's college, learning its school

songs, color, and mascot. Elementary school students also learn chants that incorporate their class' university as well as positive messages that facilitate a love of learning, and perform these chants every week in front of the whole school at morning circle. Middle school scholars go on spring trips each year, which always include a visit to a college campus, often with an overnight in college dorms. This exposure to college life allows scholars to visualize their futures on college campuses and motivates them to stay on the path to college when they return to school. Most LPOH scholars will be first generation college students, so it is important to provide them with a framework that will allow them to plan for their futures early on.

On these spring trips, 7th graders travel to New Orleans, and 8th graders travel to San Francisco. These trips are paid for by the school and are made available to all students. In addition to including a college visit, these trips also include a volunteer component, as developing scholars into citizens who give back to their community is an essential part of LPOH's mission. These extended trips are in conjunction with more frequent local field trips, as traveling outside of Brownsville and exposing scholars to interactions and experiences outside of their community further fosters the sense of intellectual curiosity that LPOH seeks to instill in every scholar.

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

Leadership Prep Ocean Hill is committed to using data on a daily, weekly, and year-long basis to drive its instruction, ensuring high levels of student achievement. Three or four times a year (depending on subject and grade level), LPOH administers Interim Assessment exams (IA), which are written by content experts at the Uncommon Schools network and are aligned to Common Core standards and New York state standards for History and Science. These exams provide essential data that allows teachers to track students' progress throughout the year. Teachers use detailed pacing calendars to ensure that they cover all the necessary material to ensure that their scholars are prepared for internal assessments, state exams, and to proceed to the next grade.

The data from IAs is carefully analyzed by the regional principal team, analyzed as a school community, and then analyzed by grade level teams and subject areas at the school level. School teams analyze each student's data, ensuring that they understand which concepts their individual scholars haven't mastered yet. Teachers then create plans with the Principal and Deans of Curriculum for how to re-teach content that their class may have missed. During these "re-teach" lessons, teachers break scholars into groups based on their mastery of standards, which allows teachers to provide targeted lessons in content areas that are directly related to the group's areas for growth.

Teachers also collect "real time" data each day by walking throughout the classroom and grading work as scholars are completing it. This allows teachers to catch errors as they are being made and immediately work with the student on their thought process, allowing teachers to understand not only which mistakes are being made, but how students have arrived at the mistake. Class data is debriefed at weekly data meetings between each teacher and their coach. During these meetings, the teacher and instructional leader identify the gaps in student work, develop or revise a lesson plan to reteach the material, and practice how the teacher will re-teach the lesson. The teacher and instructional leader then make plans to review the re-assessment data to ensure the re-teach lesson has met the teacher's goals.

When it comes to internalizing content, scholars are always asked to explain why they have a specific answer, or how they came to a conclusion, demonstrating their thinking to the teacher, who can intervene if they see a problem. When scholars have answered a question correctly, they receive positive reinforcement from their peers, allying scholars with each other and creating the understanding that the class is learning as a team. Teachers are constantly providing both verbal and non-verbal positive reinforcement, and ensure that they are praising scholars not only for getting a correct answer, but also for making an effort, working hard, or persisting through a problem. This creates an understanding of the value of grit and effort and an environment where it is safe to be wrong, so that teachers can spend less time hunting for errors and more time working with students to address them.

LPOH prioritizes a safe and structured environment that promotes students' academic and socio-emotional development that maximizes time spent on learning. When it comes to classroom management and student

engagement, LPOH teachers are trained using the Teach Like A Champion (TLAC) techniques; TLAC techniques are designed to ensure that students are engaged, excited, and fully participating in the work of learning. For example, the techniques of Cold Call, Check for Understanding, or “100%” are all designed to ensure that all students are engaged, and they allow teachers to quickly identify students who may need an extra touchpoint or extra encouragement to understand. Teachers are encouraged to be constantly active, walking the classroom and checking in on students individually throughout class. Every minute matters, so all exercises and assignments that students complete during class are timed, and teachers provide frequent time checks, which allow teachers to ensure that they complete the full lesson and also create a sense of urgency for scholars to help them stay on task.

LPOH believes that all students with disabilities, all students whose first language is one other than English, and all students who enter the school several years behind grade level can and should achieve the school’s goals. As mentioned earlier, 100% of LPOH’s 3rd and 4th graders passed the New York State exam in the 2014-2015 school year, which displays that this belief is transferred to reality. LPOH offers students support for students below grade level in a variety of formats, which are documented in one or a combination of the following plans: At-Risk Student Support Plans, Section 504 Accommodations, and/or Individual Education Plans. General education classroom supports for students are documented in Student Support Plans, which are written using information from teachers, observations, assessment data, and parent reports.

## PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

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### 1. School Climate/Culture:

LPOH leaders have devoted much time to create an intentionally supportive culture. The elementary academy's school climate is captured by its values: love, joy, achieve, dream, and lead. Each month, the school picks both a different value to focus on and a role model of color who represents that value, providing scholars with role models who look like them. At the end of each week, LPOH-EA hosts a school-wide morning circle, where each class sends up a representative who has exemplified the monthly value. This child is recognized in front of the whole school. Their picture is then placed on the most visible bulletin board in the school. Scholars strive for these awards, and the status and recognition that it brings to the scholar encourages strong school culture.

This strong culture is carried into the classroom, where elementary academy scholars are held to behavior standards using a color coding system. Each day, scholars start on green (meeting expectations) and can move down and back up through yellow (below expectations) and red (not meeting expectations). Scholars who have been green throughout the week are allowed to pick a prize at the end of the week from a treasure box filled with educational toys and school supplies. LPOH-MA has a similar student motivation structure, but behaviors are tracked in "dollars" with weekly "paychecks." Scholars can earn dollars based on positive behaviors, and can spend these dollars either at a school store or at quarterly auctions, in which teachers volunteer to take students on activities such as rock climbing or a limo ride around the neighborhood. These incentives keep students motivated throughout the year and support the positive classroom culture that is characteristic of LPOH. Scholars' desks are arranged in groups and scholars are held accountable for each other, creating scholars who are supportive and respectful of their peers and who will grow up to be thoughtful and empathetic adults.

LPOH holds students to high expectations, both academically and behaviorally. Routines are set at the start of the year, and the first 30 days are spent ensuring that the school community is invested and comfortable in each of these routines. Routines are designed to maximize time spent on learning and are based in the belief that students should learn as much as possible during the school day. It is important to LPOH's leaders that both teachers and scholars understand and can explain the rationale behind these routines, since this understanding motivates students to adhere to these routines throughout the year. With a strong school culture, the sky is the limit when it comes to academic achievement.

The culture set by the LPOH community does not limit itself to within the school's walls. Teachers at LPOH dedicate most of their waking hours to their students, and so leaders make sure to support teachers not only professionally, but also personally. Whether this means giving teachers a ride to a doctor's appointment or throwing a baby shower for a teacher who is pregnant, leaders make sure staff can lean on each other. This supportive community intentionally creates trust and camaraderie among teachers, which allows for productive and collaborative working relationships, practice sharing, and a healthy dialogue of feedback.

LPOH leadership has created traditions for their teachers throughout the year that support this, such as a yearly Thanksgiving meal before Thanksgiving, a staff kickball game after state exams, and a Christmas dinner followed by a gathering at a school leader's home. These traditions aim to bring the community together and to create an environment where staff members look forward to coming in.

LPOH leaders also distribute a monthly survey during Friday professional development sessions that asks teachers about what can be improved. Leaders make sure that they have responded to each concern by the following Monday, showing how much they value their staff's feedback.

### 2. Engaging Families and Community:

LPOH knows that families are the best allies in assuring that each of its scholars is achieving their full potential. LPOH considers its families to be an essential part of its community and therefore prioritizes

parent involvement. At the start of the year, families sign an accountability agreement, outlining how the school and parents will work together over the year to support their child's development. This contract includes commitments such as: families will ensure that scholars arrive to school on time, complete their homework, and abide by the school's code of conduct. Clearly setting expectations for how the school and families will collaborate establishes a strong school-family partnership that strengthens the entire community.

Throughout the year, LPOH hosts events that are aimed to involve parents. Prior to the start of the school year, there is a parent orientation, which involves meeting with school leaders and teachers. In the fall, the dean and social worker pair together to work with families on how to provide emotional support to their students, and have brought in external organizations that show parents what they can do to make sure their children feel safe, loved, and supported. In February of this year, LPOH hosted a Black History Month movie night for families, turning its main hallway into a movie theatre, with each classroom showing a different movie (such as *Selma* or *Akeelah and the Bee*). The discussion after each movie was crucial as it incorporated parents into the social justice discussions that frequently happen between scholars and teachers.

Parents and teachers have active relationships, and teachers ensure they are accessible by distributing their cell phone numbers. Parents and teachers check-in regularly both formally in quarterly report card conferences and informally at the end of the school day or throughout the day via text message. The school knows that though report card discussions are crucial, less formal and frequent conversations between teachers and families are just as important. The teachers at LPOH know that they get to experience a lot of the scholar's life milestones. The community views those milestones as a gift, and they want to make sure they are including parents in those exciting milestones by sharing the moment with that parent. Whether through a picture texted to a parent, a phone call, or an in-person conversation during school pick up, teachers make sure that parents feel that they are part of the classroom and are up to speed on their child's progress. If scholars are struggling either academically or behaviorally, teachers will often communicate with parents multiple times a day, and will work with parents to set a plan for their child's improvement so that they can be supported both in school and at home. Teachers value their relationships with parents tremendously and see themselves as partners in the work to educate each child.

According to the NYC Department of Education School Quality Survey, 96% of LPOH's parents agree that "Teachers and parents/guardians think of each other as partners in educating children." Additionally, 96% of parents agree that "Staff at this school work hard to build trusting relationships with parents/guardians like me." This is a point of pride for LPOH, and teachers prioritize forming personal relationships with each of their scholars' parents in order to ensure that the community is strong and that parents are helping to reinforce the learning that students are doing in school. Every member of the LPOH community is essential to its success, and the school staff ensures that reverberations of the joy and love-filled community that exist within the school are also felt by its parents. This feeling of community is intentional set by its leaders, as when teachers, leaders and parents work together to support students, they are far more likely to flourish both academically and socio-emotionally.

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

Leaders care deeply about each individual staff member's professional development and are constantly seeking out ways to improve and refine each individual teacher's craft. At LPOH, Fridays are half days to ensure that there is time for weekly professional development during the work week. It is crucial to the school's leadership philosophy that teachers continue to feel supported and challenged in their work, whether they are in their first or their twelfth year of teaching. PD is intended to equip teachers with the tools necessary to be supportive, effective teachers and to expand their capacity, no matter their level of experience.

Leadership teams meet over the summer to identify strategic priorities for professional development for the upcoming year, ensuring that the sessions are tied to these strategic priorities. Sessions deviate from these priorities only in response to student data. The Principal and DCI carefully analyze data to ensure that PD sessions are responding to the needs of the scholars and that sessions are aligned to the academic standards

established in each grade's curriculum. This year, LPOH-EA PD is focusing on mastering literacy teaching content, while LPOH-MA is focusing on strong classroom management for its new teachers.

Each professional development session has an established routine and agenda. The session starts off with "shout outs." Teachers call out other teachers who are exceeding expectations, but teachers also share student accomplishments of which they are particularly proud. This routine starts off professional development sessions with a sense of teamwork and accomplishment, and grounds teachers in the purpose of PD: teachers are continuously refining their craft so that scholars can also be continuously improving. Following shout outs, PD often breaks out into several sections by content area or tenure, so that grade level teams can work on skills specific to their grade, and so that veteran teachers can feel challenged by each session while new teachers receive development in the most crucial areas. The operations team, a team of 5, also receives targeted PD both at a school level and in conjunction with other Uncommon Schools, so that they can continuously be improving their careers.

As stated earlier, each detail of LPOH's school culture seeks to cultivate a love of learning, including professional development. The school mascot, the elephant, was chosen because of the elephant's intelligence and amazing muscle memory: elephants need only learn something once and never forget it. The use of muscle memory is emphasized with scholars, but also with teachers. Just as students are asked to practice the things they learn, teachers are expected to practice their lessons, commit them to memory, and work toward mastery. Though LPOH holds its teachers to high standards, LPOH's leaders know that no teacher starts off as a master teacher. LPOH leaders believe good teachers perfect their craft through intense practice: teachers are continuously practicing their lessons, strengthening their "muscle memory" so that scholars receive the strongest possible instruction. Professional development sessions ensure that teachers are able to practice in front of their peers, receiving immediate feedback that will allow them to improve. Beyond the weekly professional development sessions, teachers also receive feedback throughout the week: new teachers observe veteran teachers during their planning periods, while veteran teachers, the dean of curriculum and instruction, and the principal observe new teachers and provide real time feedback.

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

The Leadership Prep Ocean Hill elementary and middle academies are run by a dual leadership team. Each school has a Director of Operations and a Principal. All four leaders have prioritized their leadership partnership as a critical responsibility, and, as a result, the dual leader partnerships LPOH-EA and LPOH-MA are exemplary. The Director of Operations and Principal meet at least once a week and check in with each other daily, acting as thought partners and supporters for one another as they work together to ensure the success of their school communities. It is clear that the teacher community sees these strong relationships and attempts to replicate these productive partnerships in their grade team dynamics. In a recent school survey, a teacher noted "At LPOH, I feel like I'm part of a family. My grade team is wonderfully supportive, and I find the leadership team 100% accessible and non-judgemental. I feel safe and eager to grow and learn at work every day."

School leaders also believe that they have to be a part of the community in order to lead it. They exemplify this by covering classes when teachers are out, incorporating hall duty and bathroom duty into their weekly schedules, and modeling positivity. They believe that what they expect of their teachers, they should expect of themselves, and they hold themselves to even higher standards than they hold their teachers.

Leaders firmly believe that teachers should believe in each child's potential to grow and learn. They believe in the promise of a public education: if a parent entrusts LPOH with their child's education, LPOH leaders are committed to honoring that trust by ensuring that student will be prepared to be successful not only in college, but also in the life he or she leads after college. When hiring teachers, they ensure that teachers all fundamentally believe in the ability and the intelligence of LPOH's scholars. Even more important than teaching experience, this commitment to LPOH's mission and its scholars is essential to being a successful part of the teaching staff. During a recent survey, and LPOH teacher stated, "What I like best about LPOH is that I get to do something every single day that matters. I like that by working at LPOH I am more than just a teacher, I'm an urban educator and a civil rights activist."

In addition to the dual partnership, both schools also have a Dean of Curriculum and Instruction (DCI) and a Dean of Students (DoS) on their leadership team. The DCI works closely with the Principal to direct the instructional program, which includes reacting to data, focusing on curricular and assessment related issues, and supervising and coaching the teaching staff. The Dean of Students manages school culture, student behavior management systems, and family outreach. Each of the four members of the leadership team's responsibilities are clearly bucketed and are well known by staff members, eliminating overlap of work. This leadership team meets bi-weekly to review data, plan school-wide events, and check in on school culture goals.

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

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LPOH’s academic success can be attributed to its incredibly strong community, which it establishes by building close, supportive relationships among staff, students, and families that are grounded in a love of learning. From the strong leader-partner relationships, to the positive staff culture, to the value placed on parent involvement, to the individual teacher-student relationships, LPOH makes it clear that positive relationships paired with a love of learning will lead to academic success. It is this foundation of strong relationships (and the trust and emotional stability that comes as a result of them) that allows students to thrive both academically and socio-emotionally in the LPOH environment.

The model for strong relationships is set by the school leader pairs at both the elementary and middle school level. They admire and respect each other and show this by doing whatever they can to support each other. Leaders go above and beyond to make sure that staff feels supported, and make sure to celebrate teachers’ achievements—both personal and professional. The school community sees their leadership as a model for how both staff and students should engage with each other, and the culture of respect and love that the leaders embody is reflected throughout every interaction within the community.

Teachers show that they respect and love their students by staying after their long school day to provide additional help to students who need it, creating clubs such as LPOH-MA’s coding club, and by actively participating in every family engagement event. Several teachers at LPOH-MA have been at the school since its founding year and have “looped up” with the founding 5th grade class, teaching them in 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grade, meaning that they learn entirely new content for each grade in order to be consistent figures in their students’ lives. This reliability and demonstration of investment has forged strong relationships between scholars and their teachers. Many scholars choose to stay after school, taking advantage of every additional opportunity that is presented to them, because it is clear that their teachers are so invested in their futures and have created a school community where students want to be. Scholars know that their teachers are dedicated to their academic success, but also care about their happiness and well-being. It is this thoughtfulness and care that allows students to excel academically.

When scholars feel challenged academically by teachers who they know love and respect them, they are empowered to meet their teachers’ expectations. Students know that teachers will follow up with them when they aren’t meeting expectations, and are motivated to live up to their full potential and stay ahead in their work because it is apparent that their teachers are heavily invested in their futures. It is these high expectations and love of learning that are transmitted through the strong relationships in the community that make LPOH so successful.