



## **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 2018 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 2012 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: 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, or 2017.
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 (2017-2018) unless otherwise stated.

### DISTRICT

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

1806 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
  - Rural or small city/town
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2017 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
<b>PreK</b>	40	38	78
<b>K</b>	48	52	100
<b>1</b>	46	59	105
<b>2</b>	47	46	93
<b>3</b>	52	45	97
<b>4</b>	59	47	106
<b>5</b>	62	53	115
<b>6</b>	0	0	0
<b>7</b>	0	0	0
<b>8</b>	0	0	0
<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>	354	340	694

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 15 % Asian
  - 3 % Black or African American
  - 7 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 73 % 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 2016 – 2017 school year: 1%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain.

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

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	7
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	0
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	7
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	683
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.01
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	1

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 3%  
20 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):  
Czech, Portuguese, Spanish, Mongolian, Bulgarian, Swedish, Japanese, Danish, French, Russian, Korean, Chinese, Tagalog, Turkish

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 12%  
Total number students who qualify: 80

8. Students receiving special education services: 15 %  
102 Total number of students served

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

- |                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>3</u> Autism                  | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>2</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>29</u> Other Health Impaired                |
| <u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>28</u> Specific Learning Disability         |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>32</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>2</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 11
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	3
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	31
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	12
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	14
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	6

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

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	96%	96%	96%
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 2017.

<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.

PS 6 is committed to seeing all students succeed as individuals: academically, socially, emotionally, and creatively. Our school values social/emotional education, an investigative-based academic curriculum, interdisciplinary teaching, and a highly motivated faculty serve as the foundation for identifying, developing, and promoting successful strategies that meet the individual educational and emotional needs of each PS 6 student.

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

## **PART III – SUMMARY**

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PS 6 is located a block east of Central Park and a “stone’s throw” from the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Cultural literacy is literally at our door, and is an integral part of our students’ school experience. Whether it is third graders enhancing their study of African culture by exploring African Masks at the Met, second graders visiting the Museum of the City of New York to gain an historical perspective of our great city, fifth graders taking part in a collaboration with the Guggenheim through an after school CASA program, or kindergarteners adopting a tree in Central Park to study across the seasons, we are committed to our students’ understanding that learning takes place both inside and outside our doors. Our student body represents the cultural diversity of New York with families representing over 45 different cultures. We have instituted a new tradition at PS 6 to celebrate this diversity, now in its third year – hosting a World’s Tour Celebration - an evening where families come together to learn about and appreciate how diversity adds richness to our lives.

Historically, our school has maintained a high level of parent support and involvement. We believe successful education must include a partnership between home and school. By inviting parents into our classrooms as well as offering a multitude of parent information sessions, we are giving our families an education about their children’s education. Parents As Learning Partners (PALP) is a program where families participate in a variety of curricula activities alongside their children. Throughout the year parents/guardians are invited in and become mathematicians, readers, writers, and social scientists alongside their children.. Teachers provide parents/guardians with a “take away” including an explanation of what they did as well as ways they can support their children at home. In addition to our Curriculum Night at the beginning of the year, we host Math and Literacy Information Sessions. The goals of these mornings are multidimensional. First and foremost, we want parents to understand our philosophy of instruction and how their children learn. Additionally, we want parents to understand the stages of development they can expect their children to go through within each content area. Finally, this communication allows for more successful support at home. These sessions are highly attended, which speaks to our parent involvement. Thus, our parents truly are partners in their children’s education.

We believe the only way to challenge all students academically is to provide assessment driven, responsive teaching. Although we develop unit plans prior to teaching a unit, we know once a unit begins what happens each day needs to be factored in to what we teach in subsequent days. We are tackling the complexities of assessment driven instruction by first making sure each teacher understands the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and how our curriculum teaches those standards. Looking at student work alongside standards is key – as we want to objectify our interpretation as much as possible. We work together on grade level and cross grade level teams to develop strategies to support students at their instructional level. In reading and writing we use common core aligned progressions and rubrics when looking at student work so we always know next steps. With this approach, a child’s learning is never “done” – teachers and students know the goals they are working towards. A major component of academic success is targeted small group instruction. Teachers work with associate teachers, student teachers, coaches, mentors, and interventionists to ensure each child is being appropriately challenged based on the data provided by continuous assessment.

Academic success is connected to emotional/social health. This year we began a school wide initiative to adopt Responsive Classroom - an approach to positive discipline that “...focuses on the strong relationship between academic success and social-emotional learning. The Responsive Classroom approach empowers educators to create safe, joyful, and engaging communities where all students have a sense of belonging and feel significant.” (<https://www.responsiveclassroom.org/>). All staff members participated in four days of training to understand the philosophy of the program and to be able to develop consistency of language when talking to children. Staff members worked in small groups unpacking the key elements of Responsive Classroom and presenting these elements to the entire staff. In conjunction with Responsive Classroom, a group of teachers were trained in Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS). Our school has adopted the motto Be Kind, Be Safe, Be Responsible, and through student led assemblies our entire school body is learning what it means to create a kind, safe, responsible environment. Looking forward, our goal is to balance and integrate the elements of Responsive Classroom and PBIS in order to ensure the emotional and

social well being of every PS 6 community member.

Our school is also dedicated to having more immersive opportunities for students to grow emotionally and socially. To that end we have a variety of clubs and programs for students to participate in. Our guidance team has trained twenty fourth and fifth grade students to become our Peer Mediators to implement conflict resolution strategies. You can often see our mediators, supported by a counselor/social worker, sitting with a group of students helping them resolve a schoolyard conflict. Younger students know they can go to our mediators for support. PS 6 Change Makers is a community service program where upper grade children develop an understanding of the importance of being an active member of their community. These children take on leadership roles, sharing with all our students the importance of supporting organizations that help the community. Children across the school collect change and during a school-wide celebration children share out where they would like to donate the money collected. Our Change Makers research and interview different organizations before making the final decision as to where to donate funds collected. Our Eco Kids Club is a lunchtime program where children partner with the Children's Environmental Literacy Foundation to integrate the theme of sustainability throughout the school.

Our goal in whatever we do is to provide opportunities for to empower children so they see they have the power to change something they care about.

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

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

The New York State CCLS is the basis for instruction in all content areas. Our literacy curriculum is based on Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP). Teachers collaborate alongside coaches and staff developers planning units that meet the needs of students. Using tools, such as common core aligned rubrics and progressions, small targeted groups move students along a continuum of skills. Our English as a New Language (ENL) teacher and our Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETSS) teachers collaborate with classroom teachers to explore specific strategies for our English Language Learners and Students with Disabilities. PS 6 has a large population of high performing students. To that end, teachers are well versed in the standards and provide small group targeted instruction meeting the needs of our highest achieving students.

PS 6 uses a Balanced Literacy approach: through read aloud, shared and guided reading, interactive and shared writing, and word study children are taught specific skills necessary to become proficient readers of fiction and nonfiction and writers of opinion, narrative and informational pieces. During reading and writing workshop children work independently and with partners practicing skills taught. Teachers and students work together to set goals for future learning.

Foundational skills are taught in two ways: a direct instruction approach to teaching phonics skills in isolation in Kindergarten and first grade and an holistic approach where phonics and fluency are modeled during read aloud and reinforced through shared reading and interactive writing. In grades 2 through 5 foundational skills are taught primarily within units of study, as well as through programs such as Words Their Way and Wordly Wise (for our 4th and 5th graders).

Developing positive attitudes towards reading and writing, and creating a social experience around literacy are key elements of our curriculum. From kindergarten through 5th grade, children talk to partners about their reading, growing ideas in increasingly sophisticated ways. Sharing and listening to the ideas of others and changing your thinking are major components of our literacy curriculum.

Our Social Studies Curriculum is based on the New York City Passport to Social Studies. The ELA CCLS are integrated into this curriculum, as students read and write in the content area, and use their listening and speaking skills to communicate ideas to others. Students learn to think critically, to connect their learning to their own lives, and to understand the richness and diversity of different cultures.

PS 6 believes in a constructivist approach to math education. Our math lessons are designed for students to build on their previous knowledge, and extend it to include new concepts. Lessons typically begin with a class discussion, where students are encouraged to participate and share their strategies for the math concept being tackled. Students learn from one another as well as the teacher, and are encouraged to solve the given problem in a variety of ways. Students have time for individual or paired work, and usually reconvene as a class to reflect on their learning. Small group instruction often replaces the large class discussion, with students rotating through centers that employ a similar format but are able to focus more on the different needs of the class. Built into all of this is a focus on students learning their basic facts in the four operations - we believe this is fundamental to them engaging in a rigorous math curriculum that meets the CCLS.

Our spiraled science curriculum is based on New York City Department of Education's (NYCDOE) Scope and Sequence. Our lessons are hands-on, minds-on investigations which immerse the children in rich, inquiry based content. Children are challenged to solve relevant problems and construct learning using available technology. Our rooftop garden classroom affords our children ways to meaningfully connect with the environment and foster learning about sustainability. Our science program supports the both the Science and ELA CCLS as students think critically, question thoughtfully and write carefully about their observations and experiences.

Our PreK curriculum is aligned to the New York State Pre-Kindergarten Foundation for the Common Core

(PKFCC) and is taught through a developmentally appropriate curriculum designed by New York City's Division of Early Childhood Education. Through play within interdisciplinary units of study, children learn the social and emotional skills necessary to participate in a community setting. Teachers work collaboratively to design centers that encourage exploration, creativity, and socialization. Centers are designed to be open-ended so that the process of learning is honored over any product produced. Through the use of high level questioning, children develop language skills and the ability to communicate their ideas and feelings. Teachers assess a student's development in all the domains using the Teaching Strategies GOLD Authentic Assessment System. When our youngest students leave PreK, the social and emotional skills they have developed prepare them for kindergarten. Their ability to express themselves to their peers, along with their new/y found independence, prepares them for their next school experience.

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

PS 6 believes in teaching the whole child and not just addressing the academic subjects. All students in our school engage in a Physical Education program that focuses on wellness of the whole person, incorporating social and emotional learning in addition to physical activity. Students work together in teams and learn about problem solving, team building and leadership strategies. Wellness education also encompasses nutrition in both science and physical education. Vegetables grown by the students in the eco-center are used to make nutritional snacks and students are given many opportunities to discuss health and food choices. The focus on food and wellness was further developed this year when the Beecher's Foundation ran a healthy cooking program focused on fresh, local produce.

Ultimate is a team based sport that has been developed at PS 6. Based on the sport Ultimate Frisbee, Ultimate is unique to the school and has grown to incorporate over 100 students played year-round over four seasons. This is a great opportunity for students to learn team skills, sportsmanship and refine gross motor skills before and during the school day. The program provides athletic opportunities for approximately half of all graduating students each year.

Teaching students in elementary school, we believe that we have a responsibility to prepare the students for the physical changes that will take place to their bodies as they get older. We have a partnership with School Health Solutions and an outside health educator comes into the classroom for five sessions. The program teaches students about physical changes that their bodies will go through while teaching empathy for students of the opposite sex. In addition, facilitators provides a parent workshop to support parents in ways they can continue the dialogue with their child and support them as they go through this time in their lives.

Technology is woven into all grades through the use of iPads and Chromebooks, shared throughout grades, and employed in different subjects by the classroom teachers. Students in grades 3-5 engage in further technology work where they learn to use Google G Suite, a collection of software ranging from word processing and spreadsheets, to graphic design and presentation software. Google Classroom allows students to complete assignments, collaborate with teachers and peers, and complete assessments from one central location. As part of the technology curriculum, students engage in digital citizenship activities, which prepare them for an ever-expanding technological world. Activities cover a wide range of topics including internet safety, privacy, digital footprint, cyber bullying, social interaction, online information analysis and copywriting.

Music is learned in all grades, with instruction focusing on elements of singing, reading music, and playing various instruments. Students are immersed in multiple opportunities to explore sound, beats, culture and dance, while visiting many of the curriculum areas from the classroom. Sidewalk singers is a program that gives students the opportunity to perform and share their musical talents. Performances are held in and out of school promoting the arts and developing connections with the community.

Art is taught to all grades and students are exposed to a variety of mediums and work by various artists. Our students benefit from our proximity to the many museums our neighborhood has to offer. An example of this is our Third Grade African Studies unit, which incorporates social studies and art - our students visit the Metropolitan Museum of Art to view the African masks and then make their own masks on their return to school. Our fifth grade students participate in the CASA Guggenheim program, which involves a cycle of 4

visits during which they meet with artists and produce their own work. In addition, we take full advantage of what all NYC has to offer, as seen by our Second Graders visiting the Queens Museum to observe the panorama of NYC in preparation for their own city planning and developing their grade wide city of “Sixville” on our gym floor.

Art comes in many forms, and we believe in exposing our students to these during their years at our school. Pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students are visited by musicians, whilst first-fourth grade students participate in a variety of dance programs - Hip Hop, National Dance Institute, African dance, and ballroom dancing. Our fifth grade students learn about Shakespeare by focusing on one particular play. All these programs culminate with a performance for the students families and their peers. Many of these programs weave in work from other curriculum areas - the third grade African dance expands on the students African studies unit, whilst the second grade NDI performance incorporates elements of their NYC study.

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

In order to achieve rigorous instructional goals PS 6 believes in explicit instruction of skills and strategies in all curricula, as well as differentiated instruction to meet the needs of our students. Through the Gradual Release of Responsibility Model, teachers model their own practice, guide students in their attempts, and then gradually release the responsibility to students as they work with partners, in small groups and independently. Through station teaching and centers, children have opportunities to be in charge of their own learning; children in all grades are versed in using rubrics and checklists to reflect on their work and set goals. Multiple entry points are provided so all students have access to material taught. Our support staff collaborates with teacher teams, sharing strategies so our ELLs and Students With Disabilities have access to the curriculum. We have cycles of staff development that focus on how to move our highest achieving students. Using the CCLS, and the “learning progressions” that are part of the Teachers College Reading and Writing Units of Study Curriculum, teachers determine each student’s instructional level and next steps in learning. In order to maintain high levels of achievement, we view curricula along a continuum of development.

Teachers use inquiry based learning to bridge important concepts and real-life application. Investigations allow for students to develop understanding of scientific phenomena, while using evidence to evaluate and explore possible solutions. Experiential learning opportunities are at the heart of this practice and form a large part of science exploration at PS 6. Emphasis is placed on structured, guided and open lessons to successfully model the inquiry based process and provide students with the structure and motivation to explore real world problems in a meaningful way.

We believe collaboration is the key to creating high level, engaging instruction. Grade level teams meet regularly to review student work, to revise curricula and to share ideas for best practice. Through structures such as guided reading, shared reading, and read aloud, teachers provide opportunities for students to engage in high-level thinking. The use of authentic texts allows students to transfer skills learned to their own reading. We have cross grade meetings, to share expectations at every level and develop a deeper understanding of how we can support our students who are performing above their grade level expectations.

Teachers use a variety of assessment tools to inform instruction, both formative and summative. Pre- unit assessments in ELA and Math are used to determine where students fall along a continuum of skills. On demand writing assessments are administered across all genres in grades K - 5. Reading Performance Tasks are administered in Grades 3 - 5 to assess major skills taught in each unit. Small groups are formed based on these assessments, and students use rubrics to set goals and evaluate their own progress. To determine students’ independent reading levels, teachers administer Teachers College Running Record Assessments as well as Jen Serravallo’s whole book assessments. Teachers meet within and across grades to norm assessments. Observations and anecdotal records are key in determining areas of strength and next steps. Students receive regular feedback, to ensure that they know their areas of strength and next steps. Performance levels are shared with students so they can be part of setting personal goals and strategies for learning. Post unit performance tasks are administered to determine the effectiveness of instruction and small group interventions.

Technology plays a pivotal role in instruction and assessment. Laptops are available in grades 3-5 and are used to enhance activities and collaboration. Students use their school Google accounts to collaborate, share and reflect on assignments. Rubrics are shared with students in real time and become an integral part of the learning and reflecting process. Opportunities are available for students to collaborate with teachers and peers enabling a collaborative working environment where the emphasis is on communication and feedback.

Response to Intervention, a multi-tiered intervention approach, is used to determine the best methods to support our students who are struggling academically, socially, or emotionally. Weekly meetings are held by both our Pupil Personnel Team and Special Education Implementation Team where teachers come to discuss concerns and share data about a student who is struggling. Interventions the teacher has already tried are shared, and a decision is made as to next steps of support. Our SETSS teachers, ENL teacher, literacy coach, and specialists work with the classroom teacher to provide targeted instruction and support for these students. Goals are set and progress is monitored to determine the success of strategies employed and next steps.

## PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

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### 1. School Climate/Culture:

The social and emotional development of our students is extremely important, and we are always looking to improve the quality of our school culture. It is important that the members of our community feel valued and respected, and that every day is an opportunity to learn and grow. We believe that for children to be successful academically they need to be happy and healthy, emotionally and physically.

At PS 6 we have put systems and structures in place to create a school culture that fosters social-emotional and academic inclusion. Teachers read literature to help start conversations around various social/emotional issues and instill the importance of compassion and respect for yourself and others. Through the use of daily community circles and morning meetings, students can openly discuss concerns or issues that arise throughout the day. We also believe that in order to have a successful school culture we need input from the students who attend our school. One approach we have begun to adopt is Responsive Classroom. The approach has many goals- one being that every child feels a part of his or her classroom and school community everyday. Creating our school community in this way has created an atmosphere where students have taken over ownership of their behaviors and see the value in rules as a way for us all to achieve our goals. This framework has brought together the students and staff in our school community to come together around our school motto of “Be Safe, Be Kind, Be Responsible.” Through reinforcing the students class rules, school rules and school motto we have created an environment where students understand that we need to work together to keep each other safe and treat each other with kindness and respect.

Our teachers strive to support their students to meet their full academic potential. The responsibility is not solely on the classroom teachers - there are resources outside the classroom teachers can utilize. One resource is our school Pupil Personnel Team and Special Education Implementation Team. This is a team comprised of our Related Service Providers, ESL teacher, Special Education Support Services Teachers, School Based Support Team and Administration. The team comes together weekly to develop plans for students who need additional interventions or formalized support. These teams collaborate with the teachers to ensure that students are receiving instruction in their Least Restrictive Environment. In addition to academic supports our school also provides social-emotional supports outside of the classroom: Art Therapy, Bullpen, Empowerment Group for Girls and Banana Splits.

We collaborate with New York Psychoanalytic Society & Institute who collaborates and co-facilitates with our School Psychologists and Social Worker to provide divorce groups and empowerment groups for both boys and girls for students who have trouble expressing their feelings and are exposed to strategies to boost and support their self-esteem.

Through a private grant we have cultivated a partnership with New York University Art Therapy Program. This program enables us to offer a full-time art therapy program to support children at risk and their families. This is a particularly important therapy for students who do not respond well to talk therapy and for young children.

In order to promote a positive and engaging environment for our children and staff, we offer opportunities for both to demonstrate leadership and to address their passions outside the classroom. Children are invited to join various clubs Peer Mediators, PBIS Kids, EcoKids or ChangeMakers to take active roles in supporting our school community - emotional, socially, environmentally and

Children in the upper grades are invited to join our peer mediation program where students are trained to support peers in conflict. They can also join our EcoKids or ChangeMaker lunch clubs where they can work to improve our school environment and engage in philanthropic work. Staff are invited to become a member of our Professional Development or Pupil Personnel Teams, Wellness or Hiring committees, or Green Team to name a few.

The needs of teachers are directly addressed as they participate in these programs, designing and choosing professional development opportunities as well as having a say in who will best complement our community. The Middle School Transitional Program provides parents with a smooth transition to Middle School. There are several information sessions and guest panels, as well as alumni who come together to answer questions and present relevant information. Parents receive ongoing communication via regular newsletters with updates and reminders. Individual parent meetings are held to support this process.

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

Walking through the red doors of our school, one immediately senses the energy and enthusiasm of our students, staff and parents. The entire community comes together to support the needs of all students and embodies the school vision that students learn best when there is a partnership between home and school. This energy and enthusiasm go beyond the red doors, as our parents remain highly dedicated, not just to their own children, but to the school as a whole.

This partnership begins each year before the official start of school with a “Meet and Greet” where children visit their new classrooms meeting their teachers, reuniting with “old” friends, and meeting new classmates. This is especially helpful to new families who have the opportunity to make connections to our community before school officially begins. During the first week of school we hold “Spirit Night,” bringing our community together again for a fun evening after a long summer. Opening our doors in these ways sets the tone that we welcome parents, we are interested in getting to know them, we believe that education involves all people in a child’s life.

The PTA plays a vital role in supporting the school. Our Parent Volunteer Committee reaches out to all families encouraging participation in ongoing as well as short term projects. Our philosophy of “there is something for everyone to do” has resulted in volunteers from across our school population, demonstrating the importance of inclusion in creating a strong community. Our library program is run by a parent committee; our Eco Center is supported by family gardeners; our artwork displays are created by our family art committee in conjunction with our art teacher. Parents participate in fundraisers, give to the annual fund, and donate field trip scholarships, showing commitment not only to their child’s education, but to the community at large. We have an active School Leadership Team that brings the interests of all members of our community to the table, including our ELLs and students with disabilities. Through parent and staff surveys this committee makes decisions on initiatives that will greatly impact the lives of students in our school.

Information is key in engaging families. In addition to Curriculum Night, we host annual Step-Up Meetings to share the developmental stage their children will be approaching as they enter the next grade. Our literacy coach hosts literacy mornings for our lower and upper grades for parents to gain an understanding of literacy development across the grades. Parents learn specific strategies to engage their children in positive reading and writing experiences. Our teachers host math morning, taking parents through activities and lessons their children will be doing, developing a greater understanding of our constructivist math approach to mathematics. Parents learn the mathematical understandings gained through math games their children will be playing. ELA and Math Test information sessions are hosted to help parents understand the connection between our curriculum and the state tests. Our ELL teacher hosts sessions sharing strategies their children are learning, as well as the language development they can expect their children to go through as second language learners. Our guidance support staff, as well as outside experts, hosts mornings that focus on issues relating to social/emotional development. The topics for these information sessions are based on assessment of needs of our community.

Family participation in all stages of the learning process will lead to greater academic success. The information sessions provide the backdrop for parents when they spend time in the classroom. Our monthly Parents As Learning Partners (PALP) provide opportunities for parents to learn alongside their children across all content areas. Teachers model lessons, parents and children work together, and a “take-away” is provided for parents to support their children at home. Throughout the school year parents are invited in to come in to observe their child in a multitude of learning experiences, such as publishing parties, class presentations and culminating events as Asia Day in Third Grade. Our World’s Fair Night

celebrates the diversity of PS 6, when our families from cultures across the globe share their food, their arts, and dance.

PS 6 is viewed as a model school by the educational community. Several times a year we open our classrooms to serve as lab sites for coaching and leadership institutes. Visitors from schools across the nation come to learn about balanced literacy and workshop teaching from our classrooms. Our teachers have presented at the National Council of Teachers of English, TCWRP and host field course seminars for students attending Hunter College and New York University.

It takes a village is certainly a true adage that we believe has led to the success of PS 6 students academically, socially, and emotionally.

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

Professional Development is the foundation grounding everything we do in our classrooms, and across our school. Our academic curricula as well as our social emotional learning is supported through ongoing professional development led by outside staff developers and our staff. Our professional development is geared towards supporting the varying needs within the building, taking into consideration the range of experience of our teachers, what is revealed through student assessments, as well as goals for our community.

Our work with TCRWP has been a major support for our literacy instruction. Teachers and staff developers work collaboratively to study curricula, and look at student work in order to create targeted instruction. Using learning progressions and rubrics to assess student work has been a big part of our professional development, resulting in student improvement.

There is a balance between teachers observing staff developers teach, and staff developers supporting teachers as they teach. Teachers host lab sites to watch a demonstration, then teachers work together to implement lessons while a staff developer gives feedback. Professional development is also provided by teachers. Each year on our school Preference Sheets teachers are asked about an area of expertise they could provide professional development in. Based on this information a calendar is created to provide opportunities for teachers to learn from their peers.

This year we adopted Responsive Classroom, an approach to creating a classroom community that focuses on the strong relationship between academic success and social-emotional learning. In order for this to be a successful initiative our entire staff - administrators, teachers, para-professionals, and all support staff, participated in ongoing professional development - beginning with an outside staff developer and continuing with study groups within our school. Our work with Responsive Classroom will continue as we share how it has impacted our classroom culture and make decisions about plans for next steps.

In order to build capacity new teachers have an assigned mentor. Our assistant principal, literacy coach and mentor teachers meet weekly with new teachers to guide them in successfully planning and teaching the curricula. Mentors demonstrate lessons and observe lessons in order to give feedback and create goals. This system has allowed for new teachers to grow and learn while feeling supported.

Our professional development is responsive to trends we notice by looking at school data. The Related Service Providers hold meetings in order to support teachers with Tier One interventions. For example, we noticed a high rate of referrals for students with fine motor needs. Our occupational therapist met with teachers to share what is developmentally appropriate and strategies to support fine motor development and muscle control.

The summer is also a time when many of our staff participate in professional development. Attending programs like Math in the City and Algebra for All offer opportunities to enhance our math curriculum. Teachers who attend these programs turn key the information to their grades during the year. These teachers become the “point people” for support and staff development.

At PS 6 there are constant and ever-changing opportunities for teachers to enhance their learning and develop professionally.

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

PS 6 believes in the distributive model of leadership, with the thought that many minds come together to grow big ideas and follow them through to completion. School leaders meet with a wide-range of staff members, students and parents to discuss new initiatives, reflect on current and past practices, and monitor student progress. The principal plans regularly with a team of two APs, the literacy coach and teacher leaders. This team maintains a school calendar, the daily schedule, weekly communications with teachers and parents and organizes professional development cycles. The team shares teaching and learning trends observed in the building, and identifies areas of best practice and collaborates with teachers to replicate this work in other classrooms.

Staff members and students are held to high standards, with an ongoing reflective approach to curriculum and instruction. Administration and grade teams regularly review student work and monitor students' progress, reflect on current and upcoming curriculum, and make decisions about any necessary modifications. Each year, the teacher teams analyze the results of the NYS test scores, pre/post unit assessments and other data and formulate plans to improve student performance. This year, the teams identified essay writing and accountable talk as areas of needed growth and implemented an improvement plan where top-notch Teacher's College consultants hosted lab sites modeling high-level accountable talk during interactive read aloud in grades K-2. Planning meetings were held for teachers in grades 3-5 to look at students' essays from last year's NYS test and recent essay work and the teams created small targeted groups aimed at improving specific writing skills.

Our school believes that every child should get what they need to be successful. Each week, clinicians, selected teachers and administration hold a Planning and Placement Team meeting. The PPT identifies children who are academically, socially-emotionally at-risk and put appropriate supports in place. Each team member monitors the progress of a caseload of students. Last year, the team implemented a special education planning component to the committee. Special education teachers presents needs of specific students and the team works as a think tank to make recommendations.

PS 6 encourages lifelong learning and the school administration leads by example. Each day, school leaders learn alongside teachers, children and parents to grow ideas about the latest and greatest best teaching practices. In line with the distributive approach to leadership, teachers, paraprofessionals and related service providers are encouraged reflect on areas of expertise and create and facilitate professional development for their colleagues. Over the summer, the principal continues her own professional growth, and interested teachers are invited to join in the learning. Some of this work has included: Instructional Rounds presented by the Harvard Graduate School of Education, Responsive Classroom and the RULER Program presented by the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence. In addition, the principal seeks out opportunities and programs to support aspiring leaders and help build capacity not only for PS 6 but for all schools. Together, the principal and aspiring leaders have participated in such programs as Cahn Fellow Program for Distinguished Public School Principals at Teachers College and NYC Department of Education Leaders in Education Apprenticeship Program (LEAP).

Hiring highly qualified teachers is a priority. A committee comprised of teachers and administration interviews candidates and looks for intelligent, hard-working people who value learning and have an innate love of children. New teachers are provided with summer professional development before even entering the classroom and assigned a mentor to guide them through their first few years. As important as the onboarding process is the moving on process. Interested teachers are encouraged to grow leadership skills and move into roles beyond the classroom. Currently our school has several administrative interns who are in the process, or have recently completed a Master's Program in Education Administration. These teachers have taken on leadership responsibilities such as special education liaison, teacher mentor, student/associate teacher liaison, adjunct faculty with partnered colleges, professional development coaches and serve on various committees with administration. Many teachers have moved on to other schools and districts to work as a specialized teacher, assistant principal and literacy and math coach.

The School Leadership Team, comprised of parents, teachers and administration monitors and revises the school's Comprehensive Education Plan. Each meeting, the team closely examines one goal and evaluates the progress of that goal, collects relevant data and feedback and makes modifications as needed. The team plans for necessary budget allocations, materials, resources and professional development that supports the work of the goal.

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

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What makes PS 6 academically successful is that we are a community of learners - parents, teachers, students working together towards academic success. To this end we make students an integral part of their learning by providing resources for them to be reflective of their work and set their own goals. In all grades K-5, students use rubrics, checklists and/or learning progressions to assess their learning and create next steps. In conjunction with classroom teachers, students are supported in this work. The single practice of using these tools has helped students become reflective learners who work independently towards reaching their goals.

To introduce these tools in writing, students and teachers look at a shared writing example alongside a rubric to determine the areas of success and next steps. Students and teachers together set goals based on this work. Teachers then work with individual students and small targeted groups supporting them in looking at specific areas of their own work using the rubric. They identify their success and teachers help them set goals for their next steps. Students are taught strategies to achieve these goals. As children progress along the grades, this work becomes more independent, where students work with each other to provide feedback as to next steps. Students are engaged in this process as they become teachers and use rubrics to lead small student learning groups.

To engage parents in our community of learners we provide many opportunities for them to participate in the writing process with their children. The rubrics are an important piece of this participation as they are a tool that shows the progression of learning their children will take. This creates a partnership between school and home so that when their child is writing at home parents have an understanding of how they can support them.

In grades 3 to 5 we have been using Narrative and Informational Reading Learning Progressions to support the development of reading skills. Teachers collaboratively studied these progressions to develop a deep understanding of each skill and how to evaluate their students' work. This led to conversations within and across grades about expectations for students' performance across reading levels. The reading work is more concrete for the students - providing written examples of what writing looks like when you are, for example, inferring about character response/change across levels, or what writing looks like when you are analyzing perspective across levels. Students are taught to assess their own understanding and create goals for next steps based on the progressions. Book club members and partners provide feedback and suggestions for their peers. Based on pre- and post-unit assessments it is clear the use of progressions has lifted the level of comprehension as evident through their ability to talk and write about their reading.

The use of these resources has developed a commonality of language with which we look at and talk about student work. It has clarified the value we put on the process of learning as much as the finished piece, and equally important, it has clarified for parents the work their children are doing to grow as readers and writers.