



## **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):
- 19 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 9 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 9 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 37 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>	15	18	33
<b>K</b>	29	32	61
<b>1</b>	25	22	47
<b>2</b>	33	30	63
<b>3</b>	25	37	62
<b>4</b>	32	18	50
<b>5</b>	21	23	44
<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>	180	180	360

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 0 % Asian
  - 33 % Black or African American
  - 66 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 1 % White
  - 0 % Two or more races
  - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2016 – 2017 school year: 4%

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	11
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	3
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	14
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	340
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.04
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	4

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 17 %  
62 Total number ELL

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

Spanish, Arabic, Twi, Bengali, French, Hausa, Fulani

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 96 %  
 Total number students who qualify: 346

8. Students receiving special education services: 18 %  
66 Total number of students served

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

- |                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>0</u> Autism                  | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>0</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>7</u> Specific Learning Disability          |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>59</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>0</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: 5
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	1
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	28
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	4
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	6
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	0

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 24:1

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	95%	93%	95%	92%	0%
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.

We provide a safe and nurturing environment where all students are cognitively stimulated by a rigorous curriculum as well as personally motivated by our core values.

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

Our school is located in a Choice District, which means parents who live in the district are eligible to apply. Enrollment makes the selection and provides offer letters to families.

## **PART III – SUMMARY**

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Concourse Village Elementary School opened its doors September 2013 after the city and state agreed to close PS 385 because it was identified as a consistently failing and persistently dangerous school. Concourse Village started with grades PreK-2 and then added one grade per year until reaching capacity at grade 5, September 2016.

We are located in the South Bronx, which is home to more than a quarter-million people. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, most of the people residing in the South Bronx are living in poverty, making it the most impoverished congressional district in the nation. Our school community is made up of a diverse population from Africa, Yemen, South America, and various Caribbean islands. It is an urban community filled with beautiful languages and music from around the world.

As a school community, we have had great success; we have been a Showcase School for the past three years. Through the Showcase Schools program, we are recognized and celebrated for sharing our promising practices across New York City Department of Education schools. Showcase Schools promote collaboration by hosting three visits throughout the school year, in which any interested NYC DOE educator may attend.

Our school community believes all children can succeed hence why our in-house curriculum is rigorous. When designing our curriculum, we begin with the Common Core Learning Standards and then think of topics of high student interest. Additionally, our curriculum is designed with opportunities for Real-World Learning, which focus on connecting what students are taught in class to real-world issues, problems, and applications. For example, students in 2nd grade were learning about making economic decisions based on wants and needs, so they went to Target to apply their learning in a real-world situation. Students were presented with a situation that required them to make purchasing decisions thinking about wants and needs. Another example, the 1st Grade was learning about the concept of producers and consumers and as a result, came up with a plan to produce "wants" within our school community. They sold their items to the consumers in our school community and used the money they earned to purchase goods for the classroom.

Additionally, we have a group of students assigned as our Brain Power Ambassadors. Brain Education is an innovative educational program designed to develop the full potential of the human brain. It is a progressive convergence of traditional Eastern practices for energy development and mindfulness and new findings from neuroscience and education. Distinctions of Brain Education include an integrative approach to enhance physical, emotional, and mental well-being; developing a foundation for students to use their brain capabilities effectively; and experiential training for behavioral as well as cognitive changes.

Through Brain Power, our students are trained to enforce our core values, which are: integrity, perseverance, optimism, empathy, and respect. The ambassadors are our school-wide leaders; they support during lunch/recess and in class. Their primary role is to serve as role models for the community with a focus on motivating their peers. They lead the brain exercises in class when mental breaks are needed.

Overall, our goal is to create various opportunities throughout the day for students to have a voice. We want students to know they matter and that they have the power to make a difference.

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

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

As a community, we work together to develop our school-wide curriculum across all grade levels and content areas. Our process for designing curriculum is to always begin by unpacking the standard to develop a task, and then we work our way back to the learning intentions. We use this method to ensure our focus is clear and aligned to the standard we are assessing.

Additionally, we design opportunities for students to participate in citizenship through participation in class discussions and school-wide topics. Also, we embed cultural diversity into our curriculum so that students' respect and appreciate diversity with the goal of applying social responsibility.

Moreover, we use the EQuIP rubric to assess the alignment of the Common Core Learning Standards to the curriculum we designed. The objectives of the EQuIP rubric is to identify key aspects of how performance indicates student proficiency and understanding and to illustrate levels of student proficiency through analysis of samples of student work from a task within an exemplary unit.

Our reading and writing curriculum consists of mentor texts and/or content specific topics, which support the art of writing informational, opinion, and narrative pieces. Students engage in research for 6-8 weeks about one topic to increase students' content knowledge. For example, 1st grade is currently researching natural disasters with a focus on answering: what it is, how it forms, what parts of the world experience natural disasters, and ways to stay safe during a natural disaster. They read books, watch videos, and engage in partner and class conversations about the topic to better understand and then present what they have learned to their classmates.

Our Read Aloud protocol deliberately measures students' understanding of the reading standards as per the Common Core Learning Standards as well as guides teachers through developing high-level questions so that discussions are meaningful. The questions are accessible to all students because we have taken strategies from the Universal Design for Learning into consideration. Therefore, we have implemented various strategies geared toward forming questions and responses that meet the needs of all children.

Furthermore, our school has identified the following five school-wide rigorous habits we want students to acquire before graduating from 5th Grade:

Students will be able to form an opinion by gathering and synthesizing relevant information from a variety of sources;

Students will be able to cite textual evidence to support a point of view, opinion, and/or statement;

Students will be able to engage in rich academic conversations using information gathered from various sources;

Students will be able to effectively write and talk to clearly express, communicate an idea, point of view, opinion, statement, and/or thought, and,

Students will be able to select/use appropriate strategies/tools to fluently and independently problem solve.

In mathematics, we use Eureka Math, which is aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards. Eureka Math also is known as EngageNY and it a PreK through 12 curriculum that carefully sequences the mathematical progressions into expertly crafted modules. Eureka is a comprehensive curriculum, with in-depth professional development and support materials. Furthermore, we also create supplemental tasks to boost the rigor of math. In addition, we use resources from Exemplar Math. Exemplars performance material provides our teachers with a way of teaching and assessing problem-solving and communication skills. The open-ended material engages students and helps them to develop critical thinking and reasoning skills to solve real-world problems.

For social studies, we solely rely on the K-8 Social Studies Framework. In the interconnected world of the 21st century, it was necessary to use a social studies core curriculum that ensures teaching and learning in social studies is rigorous and prepares students to be college and career ready. The K-8 Framework for

Social Studies allows students to develop an understanding of concepts and key ideas, driven by case studies, analysis of primary and secondary source documents, and an examination of patterns of events in history; assess their understanding of key ideas, as well as conceptual understandings; and be instructed across the K-8 spectrum using a coherent set of themes, key ideas, and concepts.

We look closely at each grade level, unpack each standard, create a task, then design learning intentions to ensure students are receiving grade-appropriate content and instruction. We create opportunities for interdisciplinary modules so that students utilize their reading and writing skills and strategies to access the content.

In science, we refer to Next Generation Science Standards to guide our curriculum. The Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) are K–12 science content standards. Standards set the expectations for what students should know and be able to do. The NGSS were developed by states to improve science education for all students. A goal for developing the NGSS was to create a set of research-based, up-to-date K–12 science standards. We follow the same process (explained in social studies) of unpacking the standards to design learning intentions. We utilize the content and create several opportunities for students to interact with the Scientific Method and Design Process when applicable.

Our curriculum has been designed with several checks for understanding embedded throughout each module with the purpose of forming an understanding of students' progress along the module. Teachers utilize the information gained to modify instruction, form groups, reteach lessons, etc. We use students' work and engage in teacher team discussions about our subgroups with a focus on cognitive engagement. We consistently ask, "How are we providing opportunities to make thinking visible?" We utilize the Danielson Framework to support our work in this area. For example, when you observe educators engaged in instruction, you will hear them asking WHY is that? HOW do you know? SHOW me the evidence.

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

In our community, we have a strong belief in visual arts, music, science, physical education, and technology.

Our Visual Arts Educator has aligned the art content to the expectations of the Common Core Learning Standards. Our Visual Arts Educator has analyzed the writing performance tasks for each grade and has integrated the research focus into art. For example, 2nd-grade students engage in a 6-week research study about three types of communities (urban, suburban, and rural). As a result, they create skyscrapers in art. The focus is on language and vocabulary development as well as the integration of learning.

Our music program is guided by Education Through Music, which has revamped its curriculum to meet the demands of Common Core Learning Standards as well as integrated content. Education Through Music (ETM) partners with inner-city schools to provide music as a core subject for all children, and utilizes music education as a catalyst to improve academic achievement, the motivation for school and self-confidence. Education Through Music believes that every child deserves access to high-quality music education, taught by qualified and well-trained music teachers. Through music, students are learning in other key areas, including math, science and language arts. All students receive music at least one time each week. We have a 3 and 4 Grade chorus and a 5th Grade Band.

We offer students a science lab each week in connection to the learning happening in the classroom. While in science lab, students complete hands-on experiments and engage in conversation around investigations using the scientific method or Design Process. The goal is for students to apply their learning while thinking critically about the world around them.

In physical education, we have integrated dance, yoga and an introduction to various sports such as soccer, basketball, baseball, bowling, and volleyball. The ultimate goal is to develop an awareness of physical and mental fitness along with helping students establish healthy habits. The physical education curriculum included opportunities for students to learn about healthy choices along with learning about how foods impact our bodies.

In technology we are seeking to evolve in the area of blended learning. We currently have a one-to-one iPad ratio. Students use iPads daily for Reflex Math in grades 1-5. Through Reflex Math students' build their math fluency. Reflex helps students of all ability levels to develop fluency with their basic facts in addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division.

Additionally, students use their iPads to read on myON, which is a personalized literacy platform that offers learners easy access to great content. myON has a digital book library, containing thousands of enhanced and age-appropriate titles for PreK-12, is dynamically matched to each learner's interests, grade and Lexile reading level.

All classrooms have a Smart Board, and it is used with the goal of enhancing learning for all children. Also, the Smart Board is used to create an enriched learning experience by projecting visual elements. It also makes differentiated learning much easier because our teachers can accommodate different learning styles. Visual learners can observe the whiteboard, while tactile learners can learn by touching the board. We have a touchscreen option, which allows teachers to run programs with the touch of their finger.

Across all specialties, our goal is to increase students' vocabulary acquisition, make connections across content areas, and to increase students' curiosity about the world around them.

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

At Concourse Village our reading and writing follow the balanced literacy approach because this is how we believe students learn best to read, write, and understand the content. Our staff is trained in Interactive Writing, Guided Writing, Shared Writing, Guided Reading, and Shared Reading. As a school, we understand the importance of the release of responsibility to strengthen students' ability to apply skills strategies independently.

Also, when teaching a new skill or strategy or concept we implement explicit instruction via the “I DO, WE DO, YOU DO” approach. As educators, we all have the same goal, and that is to help our students make the maximum possible academic gains in a positive, respectful environment that promotes their success and nurtures their desire to learn. Explicit instruction—instruction that is systematic, direct, engaging, and success-oriented has proven to be effective. The effectiveness of explicit instruction has been validated again and again in research involving both general education and special education students. While it has proven to be very helpful for normally progressing students, it is essential for students with learning challenges. Explicit instruction is necessary for teaching content that students could not otherwise understand on their own.

We also engage in inquiry lessons when appropriate. For example, if our goal is for students to understand the functions of each part of the plant, we will give them a plant to observe and engage in conversations. Then we would use the information gathered to decide where we should begin teaching. It is essential to strike a balance, however; we have to be fully aware of what our students' need to succeed. Therefore, the approach will vary in response to students' needs.

Our state data for the past three years shows that we are a high performing school. This school year we have taken on the Project Based Learning approaching in 3-5 grades. We use Project Based Learning as a teaching method to support students with gaining knowledge and skills by working for an extended period on investigating and responding to an authentic, engaging and thought-provoking questions, problem, or challenge. We implement this practice with modules that lend themselves to solving a problem or answering a complex question. We have revamped our curriculum to create opportunities for students to take ownership of their learning. For example, students in 3rd grade conducted an 8-week study about the solar system, they generated the questions, they did the research, and they used the information to plan a presentation to share with their peers.

Ultimately, we want our students to remain engaged, curious, and involved in the learning that takes place at school. We know our students are becoming more proficient with each passing year. Therefore, maintaining their interest in the curriculum and school community is crucial to our continued success.

On the other hand, we have developed an intervention approach using Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) for students one or more grade levels below the expectation. Students are pulled out for 8-12 weeks in groups of 2-4 and receive additional support. Moreover, any student who does not respond to LLI is then placed in the Failure Free Reading group for a more targeted approach. Furthermore, a small cohort receives S.P.I.R.E intervention, which is a research-proven reading intervention program for our lowest performing students.

Additionally, our educators understand the importance of using the Danielson Framework to improve their practice as well as adhering to the Instructional Shifts such as shifts Text-Based Answers and Writing from Sources to ensure their practice is aligned to the expectations. They rely on the framework to guide their instruction so that it is designed continuously toward making students think. Our goal is to have students continually questioning, reflecting, and thinking about the content.

Teachers plan lessons that promote student thinking, questions are posed to increase discussion, and Common Core Learning Standards aligned tasks have been developed to reflect high levels of student thinking. Concerning participation, we continuously use “Turn and Share” with your partner. We have found that this is one way to increase participation. Along with the Participation Cards/Multiple Choice Cards we created as a school, we have embedded the tools into our instruction because we wanted to increase participation and engage in checks for understanding.

## PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

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### 1. School Climate/Culture:

At our school, we are committed to working to create a positive climate and promote socially safe and healthy relationships between all members of a school community. The benefits of supporting the whole child are demonstrated across both academic and social measures and include outcomes across all ages/grade levels including Improved academic achievement, increased school connectedness, well developed social skills for communicating effectively, managing interpersonal conflicts, and demonstrating resilience and stamina in the face of personal challenges.

At Concourse Village we pride ourselves on maintaining a safe environment. As a result, we have embedded Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) system that follows a 4-tiered approach. We use PBIS as a model for planning, implementing and monitoring a pro-active climate using a multi-tiered system of prevention and intervention. It includes Whole Group (Ellie Token), Small Group (Collaboration Points), Individual (I-Powers), and Peer-to-Peer (I-Power Coupon).

**Whole Group:** When students work together as an entire class to show that they are living the core values they are awarded an Ellie token. After they receive 20 Ellie Tokens students vote for a class-wide prize such as movie with popcorn, dance party, extra recess, trip to Yankee Stadium park, ice cream party. Each time they submit a completed chart their prize options increase.

**Small Group:** Collaboration points are awarded to students who work well together at their tables. When a table group transitions well, gets ready first, completes their work, shows kindness, etc. then they earn a collaboration point for their efforts.

**Individual:** Students will receive I-Power Dollars for showing that they are living the core values. They use their money to shop at the Ellie Store. The Ellie Store is filled with donations from staff members and outside agencies.

**Peer-to-Peer:** Students in grades 3-5 receive one I-Power Coupon that they give to a classmate who exhibits the core values. The goal of the coupon is to show students that they can acknowledge one another. The coupon is good for 10 dollars off at the Ellie Store.

Our students love this approach because of we hyper-focus on the positive. In school, most students behave well. However, they are not always acknowledged therefore this approach recognizes students' who make good choices. Our positive behavior approach shows all children that we celebrate the positive. As previously shared we have Brain Power Ambassadors who support the school during recess and lunch. These students serve as role models for their peers. They are respected and supported by their peers.

Our guidance counselor meets with at-risk students along with mandated students. She keeps track of their emotional progress and meets with the families to develop plans and conducts check-ins every six weeks. We understand the importance of establishing a safe and nurturing environment for all students to succeed hence why we emphasize collaboration and unity. Creating a classroom that is organized and mutual respect characterizes that makes it a lot easier to teach effectively. Also, our teachers promote loving learning environment with a focus on creating classrooms where students feel safe.

Furthermore, we have a firm belief in smaller class sizes. Therefore, we try not to exceed 25 students per class. We also have a strong idea in Integrated Co-Teaching settings because two strong teachers can move a level beyond its expectations. Research studies have shown that co-teaching can be very effective for students with special needs, especially those with milder disabilities such as learning disabilities. Our goal is inclusion across the entire school so that all students feel validated and supported.

Students listen to classical music when working independently. Some research supports the listening to classical music to increase performance. In 2001, subjects who listened to Mozart's Sonata for just 10

minutes displayed IQ scores that were nearly 10 points higher after the study than before. Researchers explained that classical music is believed to enhance the brain's spatial-temporal reasoning or the cognitive understanding of how items or pieces can fit into space.

While our students' well-being is of top priority our teachers are equally important; our motto is "we are a community of one." As a result of our belief, we have one content specialist per grade, which allows each member to have a role. Also, we have four model teachers that support our school community. Our model teachers demonstrate strong instructional practice, dedication to professional growth, and a strong understanding of their community's needs. Our model teachers lead various initiatives and support the vision of distributive leadership. Our teacher leaders lead curriculum teams and deliver yearlong professional development, through this process our educators are empowered.

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

At Concourse Village Elementary we value parental support. We engage our families in ways that improve learning and support parent involvement at home and school. As a result, our students make more significant gains. We have worked diligently towards building partnerships with families that respond to parent concerns, honor their contributions, and share decision-making responsibilities.

We have a Parent Teacher Association that works together to bring resources into the community such as grants and resources. Also, the School Leadership Team works together to sustain connections that are aimed at improving student achievement. Overall, we try to create multiple platforms of support to meet the needs of all families. With that said below is the example of ways we engage families:

**Learning Leaders to provide Professional Development for parents:** Every child needs the support of their parents, school, and community to succeed. The Learning Leader volunteers can make a real difference in students' lives and connect with their community. Parent volunteers also learn educational strategies to use at home with their children.

**ESL classes on Saturdays:** We open our doors every Saturday and provide ESL classes to families with a focus on enhancing their oral ability to communicate. We use this as an opportunity to increase their confidence.

**Common Core Learning Standards Professional Development sessions:** We provide families with an introduction to how the CCSS evolved. We want them to understand the purpose of the standards so that they embrace the learning their child is doing in class.

**Attendance Workshops:** These sessions are targeted. We only meet with families whose children have poor attendance. This session focuses on explaining the importance of attendance in school and how it impacts long-term performance.

**Cool Culture for our Early Childhood Families:** This resource is for our younger families in PreK and Kindergarten. We purchase cards for families to visit museums throughout the city. We want to increase students' "experience" opportunities so that they can bring their learning into the classroom.

**Parent Engagement Tuesdays:** We meet with various families on a weekly basis. We meet for various reasons; the sessions are targeted as per needs that arise. For example, we may meet to discuss the state test or to teach families new concept students will be learning such as fractions.

Lastly, as a school, we communicate regularly with families via Kinolved. Through Kinolved we can share resources with families this allows them to stay involved in their child's educational progress. We share links to videos, review handout for exams, pictures of their children work, etc. The goal is to make families feel a part of their child's education through a platform accessible such as text messaging.

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

Our teachers participate in a minimum of 60 hours of professional development throughout the school year. The professional development is designed with a focus on best practices such as reading across all content areas, effective feedback, and data. Our educators engage three cycles of professional development geared toward their needs. Each cycle consists of nine consecutive days of professional development with a focus on two topics they want to learn more about such as "Designing Targeted Instruction"; "Using Data to Make Decisions"; "Guided Reading"; "Teaching Reading in Math" and "Lesson Planning for All Students". Teachers participate in two sessions then they are required to submit a learning log that demonstrates what he/she learned as a result of each session with a focus that tells how the session has improved their classroom practice.

Additionally, teachers participate in Summer Professional Development with a focus on unpacking curriculum for September. We want teachers to walk into the new school year prepared and stress-free. We have found that when teachers are able to prepare in advance they own the information, which translates into solid planning and teaching. Summer Professional Development entails 20 hours of unpacking the curriculum along with lesson planning.

New teachers are required to attend eight professional development sessions with a focus on understanding PBIS and lesson planning. We believe new teachers need time to interact with the curriculum and time to get to know their new school because we do not want new teachers to feel lost and/or overwhelmed.

Furthermore, some teachers participate in district professional development with an emphasis on supporting initiatives such as teacher leadership. At our school, we have four teacher leaders that receive targeted professional development with a focus on learning how to mentor and guide their peers. The district believes in teacher leadership hence why they have designed a plan around strengthening this practice.

Overall, the impact on the capacity of teachers and administrators is that it breeds a culture of thinking about best practices. We have become smarter about our decisions and have developed solutions to barriers because our goal is highly effective teaching. We know that our students evolve hence our "thinking about teaching" has to evolve. Therefore, the overall impact is reflection and evolution of best practices with the goal of effective instruction for all students.

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

To be effective and inspiring as a leader, "you must stand for what is right, speak the truth, and lead by example." Our philosophy is that we are a COMMUNITY OF ONE! We progress as one, we lead as one, and we succeed as one. At Concourse Village Elementary the role of the principal is to serve as the Instructional Leader.

The principal conducts model lessons, plans curriculum, participates in lesson studies, and provides feedback on teacher created tasks. The principal believes that through this process she can build positive relationships with the staff because they know she is a credible source of support. Also, the principal is consistently focused on student achievement hence why she is always partners with or obtains resources that will increase student achievement.

At our school, there is a strong belief of working together to design a curriculum that promotes students' learning and is culturally relevant. There is only one administrator, which allows for the message to be communicated to the entire school community. The school is designed with the vision of promoting leadership across the school. Each grade level has a content area specialist, which allows for all members to play a vital role in planning. Also, four lead teachers support instruction across the school community. The lead teachers also teach 50% of the time because the school leader believes they must always remain in touch with the classroom.

The school leader has secured partnerships with New York Cares, FaceLab (STEM focus), Schools That

Can (Makerspace Program), and Caceres Collective for Ballroom Dancing. Through these partnerships, students are offered an array of opportunities that expand their skills and experiences. We have found that these experiences have impacted students' academic and emotional well-being positively. Students are excited about coming to school and feel very motivated.

Also, we provide the following in-house programs led by our teachers: Debate Club, Garden Club, and Tiny Robotics. These programs support in-class learning because it focuses on expanding vocabulary and strengthening communication skills (verbal and written).

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

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As we complete our fifth year as a school, I am confident that the one practice that has been instrumental to our success is Shared Reading. The 5-Phase Shared Reading protocol created by the school leader is implemented at all grade levels. This process allows for students to engage with complex text over a one-week period. The process is as follows:

Phase One: Read for the main idea

Phase Two: Reread with a focus on annotating relevant information about the text

Phase Three: Reread with an emphasis on answering text-dependent questions

Phase Four: Reread with an emphasis on looking at the author's craft and structure

Phase Five: Reread with a focus on summarizing the text

This practice has proven to be successful in developing strong readers along with deepening their knowledge about a topic. Shared reading provides many benefits for young learners as they develop early literacy skills. It can be used to teach alphabet knowledge, phonological awareness, vocabulary, concepts about print, oral language and other predictors of reading success identified by the National Early Literacy Panel.

Shared Reading has had a significant impact on all children. For English Language Learners (ELLs), shared reading can be especially beneficial. “Shared reading provides English-language learners with an opportunity to hear language while observing its corresponding phonological representation. Shared reading also helps children learn left-to-right directionality. Shared Reading gives additional time to ELLs whose native orthography may differ from English’s left-to-right, top-to-bottom directionality.

Through this process our students have developed strength, in reading, their vocabulary has increased, and their knowledge about topics has increased. Topics such as the Arctic, natural disasters, communities, culture, the American Revolution, and many others. Our goal is to ensure that all students can read by the time they graduate from 5th Grade; we can accomplish this through Shared Reading.