

U.S. Department of Education
2019 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Ms. Adele Schroeter

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

Official School Name PS 59 Beekman Hill International School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 231-249 E 56th Street

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

New York NY 10022-4424
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County New York

Telephone (212) 888-7870

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Web site/URL http://www.ps59.net/

E-mail aschroe@schools.nyc.gov

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Ms. Donalda Chumney

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) E-mail dchumney@schools.nyc.gov

District Name New York City Geographic District #2 Tel. (212) 356-3739

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Maud Maron

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

Part I – Eligibility Certification

The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school’s eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. 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, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2019 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.
3. 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.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2013 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, or 2018.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2018-2019) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

- Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
 - 930 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 279 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 523 High schools
 - 67 K-12 schools

1799 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

- Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
 - Urban or large central city
 - Suburban
 - Rural or small city/town
- Number of students as of October 1, 2018 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	9	11	20
K	46	54	100
1	49	62	111
2	56	46	102
3	52	52	104
4	50	46	96
5	30	35	65
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	292	306	598

*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 20 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 11 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 58 % White
 - 9 % 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 2017 – 2018 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.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	25
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	0
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	25
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	614
(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: 5%
28 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Albanian, Armenian, Arabic, Chinese, Cantonese, Czech, Dari/Farsi/Persian, Dutch, Finnish, French, Gujarati, Hebrew, Hungarian, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Lao, Malay, Mandarin, Nepali, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Serbo-Croatian, Sinhalese, Spanish, Swedish, Tamil, Thai, Tibetan, Urdu, Ukrainian

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 11%
Total number students who qualify: 68

8. Students receiving special education services: 14 %
83 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>2</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>25</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>10</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>43</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: 16
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	43
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	18
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	6
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	10

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 17:1

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

Required Information	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014
Daily student attendance	96%	95%	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 2018.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school’s mission or vision statement.

The mission of PS59, the Beekman Hill International School, is to inspire in all our children the joy of learning, while fostering empathy and a love and respect for themselves and all others. PS59's purpose is to motivate our students to become critical thinkers who are willing and able to express themselves in thoughtful and creative ways. By cultivating an inclusive school environment, PS59 supports the healthy development of students' academic, physical, personal, social, and emotional selves, assuring they are poised to become happy, productive, and socially conscious world citizens.

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

PS59, the Beekman Hill International School, is an elementary school with an enrollment of approximately 600 students in Pre-Kindergarten through fifth grade. Located in the Midtown East neighborhood of Manhattan, a neighborhood once comprised predominantly of commercial real estate, it is now a vibrant living and working community. The United Nations is less than a mile south and its affiliated families enrich our school community. Each morning, it is truly uplifting to see hundreds of children and their families cheerfully approaching the gates of our still gleaming six-year old building.

One of PS59's most distinctive features is its diversity. While many schools have a greater percentage of English language learners, few have as diverse a pool of languages. Our families represent three dozen first languages, though many do not require support services. As a zoned elementary school, it seems remarkable to have students born in over 40 nations in the heart of Manhattan. Because of its proximity to the United Nations, students register each year in hard to predict clusters from, for example, the Ukraine and Russia, China and Japan, Qatar and Turkey, or Hungary and Nepal.

In the last 15 years, PS59 has more than doubled in size and moved not once, but twice, into new school buildings as part of a New York City public-private initiative to leverage the value of its real estate to build new schools, adding desperately needed seats and improving the physical structures in which our schools are located. PS59 is privileged to share its campus with the High School of Art and Design and PS169, a District 75 program for students with significant needs.

Our philosophical approach to teaching and learning is rooted in the tenets of constructivism. We benefit from our longstanding relationship with Teachers College and are proud to serve as a lab site for school leaders, coaches and teachers from New York City and beyond, eager to learn about establishing reading and writing workshops in their own schools. PS59 carries out its teaching in a manner that is ever-challenging and engaging, while always remaining mindful of what students bring to our classrooms – their backgrounds and interests, their passions and curiosity, and their boundless energy. Our classrooms reflect a marked degree of consistency in the overall constructivist approach to teaching and learning, with the distinct personality and energy of the teachers and students in any given class being a source of inspiration to draw from on a daily basis. We strive to craft an enriched experience for all students, one that recognizes best practices and the importance of every child's need to see him or herself in the classroom, represented in our classroom libraries, in voices heard each day, in conversation and in topics of study.

Elsewhere in this application we have written at length about a range of PS59 strengths and traditions. We are particularly proud of our Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) program, now in its 15th year, designed in response to legal and moral mandates in an effort to support the needs of a much wider range of students in the least restrictive environment possible. While virtually all schools now offer some version of ICT, we feel PS59 is distinguished by its passionate dedication to this structure in which up to 40% of the students in a class have Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and the whole class is supported by two teachers, at least one of whom is certified in special education. Teachers, service providers, and administrators feel gratified at our deepening capacity to build success and independence in students who need considerable supports. We are proud of the longitudinal progress of older students who entered our ICT cohort in kindergarten, and of our dogged efforts to maintain inclusive classrooms for students whose needs might previously had led to placement in more restrictive settings separated from their general education peers.

We have collaborated with an outside consultant since the ICT program's inception to provide specialized professional development to all teachers and paraprofessionals, and especially those working in our ICT classrooms, in intensifying instruction through the use of ICT structures, Universal Design principles, differentiation techniques and accommodations as needed. In-school data indicates that ICT benefits not just our students with identified needs, but makes our general education students thrive. What ICT has taught us about differentiation continues to flow to other classrooms through the sharing of practices and strategic organizational efforts to strengthen teaching and learning across the school. In addition to professional development, we have invested heavily in technology that enables our classrooms to be more adaptive to meet an ever-broadening range of needs. Thanks to City Council grants, classrooms all have

Promethean boards, access to laptops and up to date software, and our fifth grade ICT is currently piloting the use of personal iPads for every student. Teachers in that particular room have made themselves especially knowledgeable about new applications and programs, and across classrooms we make good use of tools such as Google Classroom.

In ongoing efforts to support the whole child, including his or her social and emotional self, PS59 has strengthened a variety of partnerships. We have a longstanding relationship with Mentoring USA via Bloomingdale's. Close to 100 mentors support students over the course of two to three years in weekly lunchtime sessions, allowing them to develop close relationships. Similarly, close to 100 young professionals serve as lunchtime reading buddies from Read Ahead. In addition, we have invested in a robust guidance staff, employing two full time counselors, one an experienced social worker, though our official caseload funds only half of one counselor. This investment allows counselors to host morning yoga sessions, lunchtime book clubs, and an after-school track program, to facilitate work with peer mediators, to lead student council, and to be cognizant of potential at risk students and to serve as crisis interventionists with students demonstrating severe behavioral challenges. For several years we have also partnered with Child Mind Institute to provide another layer of support for students who are experiencing trauma (i.e., illness, death, separation or divorce in the family, etc.) As expectations increase for schools to have a heightened awareness of mental health issues, we strive continually to enhance our skills and expand our capacity to embrace all students academically, socially and emotionally.

PS59's Wellness Committee, comprised of school leaders, staff and parents, has led to a number of wellness minded initiatives, including the adoption of an alternative school lunch menu, multiple Garden to Cafe events featuring produce from local farmers, and a partnership with Wellness in the Schools (WITS) that includes a recess coach who ensures students are active and engaged during recess. We spent a year studying the importance of play and physical activity in student engagement – and teachers went on to publish a professional text entitled "Purposeful Play." Having made ourselves more knowledgeable about the value of physical activity in developing healthy habits and making students more available for instruction, we have hired a second physical education teacher through the PE Works Initiative so that students have more periods of physical education each week. Related service providers play a big role in these efforts with occupational therapists and a school counselor hosting morning yoga sessions. As a result, we have seen increased engagement in the classroom and a reduced rate of disciplinary incidents.

We believe that we are known for keeping everyone – students and adults – at the very edge of their learning, willing and eager to tackle challenges and engage in productive struggle in the pursuit of excellence.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

1a. Reading/English language arts:

PS59 is a vibrant and exciting place to learn. Students love to work hard and are eager to be challenged. We are dedicated to engaging classrooms with rich and expansive classroom libraries where students feel empowered and in charge of their learning. Our K-5 reading and writing workshop program employs a student-centered, standards-based curriculum, using carefully crafted Units of Study designed by the Teachers College Reading/Writing Project (TCRWP). Our beliefs are reflected in this workshop approach, a to/with/by gradual release of responsibility with appropriate scaffolds, thoughtful ‘kid-watching’ and tons of classroom time devoted to students working with expert teacher conferring. This balanced approach to teaching reading continues to evolve as teachers and administrators participate in ongoing professional development and engage in classroom-based research.

We know students become better readers when they have stretches of time in which to engage in meaningful reading of books within their zone of proximal development, independently or with partners, and have opportunities to share and refine their thinking in discussion and in writing. Teachers coach students to understand themselves as learners and to set well-considered goals through teacher-, peer- and self-assessment. We use the Whole Book Independent Reading Assessment running records, written responses and conferences to deepen our understanding of kids’ skill and strategy development. These efforts are supplemented by Words Their Way and the TCRWP Units of Study in Phonics to ensure kids’ discrete word work skills are also being cultivated and refined.

At the heart of our writing curriculum is a similar idea – children become skilled writers by having many opportunities to write, by being exposed to expert models and mentor texts, by communicating a consistent message that every child has a lot to say, and by instructing and supporting the development of the skills necessary to ensure their voices are heard. Teachers view student work as an essential tool for assessment, providing meaningful insight into where learners fall on a continuum. Using both teacher and student-friendly versions of rubrics and checklists, we are able to build expertise and ensure the feedback students receive is accurate and actionable, allowing them to set ambitious but attainable learning goals. These classroom tools, coupled with more formal reading assessment data, help us to track the growth of individual students and cohorts over a semester or a school year, to look at short- and long-term trends and to reflect on the effectiveness of teachers, coaches and interventions.

1b. Mathematics:

Classroom environments and thoughtfully planned instruction communicate our beliefs about mathematics to students. At PS59, students are surrounded with, and immersed in, a variety of mathematical experiences that help them embrace problem-solving and productive struggle. The environments we create, the systems we set in place and our ongoing monitoring of progress help us challenge students to consider, question, research, conclude and generalize about the greater world around them. Because we believe in responsive, inquiry-based teaching, we base units of study on the Contexts for Learning. These contexts allow students to explore big ideas and strategies deeply, negotiating meaning and providing feedback in partnerships and whole-class discussions. Through a series of tasks and mathematical situations aligned to the Common Core, students grapple with rich and rigorous mathematical work that leads them to discover and take ownership over new strategies and skills.

As students work through contexts, teachers are skillfully coaching to nudge students towards deeper mathematical understanding. Using teacher-created conferring guides, teachers are monitoring the progress of students against the “mathematical landscape of learning.” Throughout units, teachers are monitoring for each student’s understanding, both informally and formally. In addition to conferring, teachers make strategic use of exit slips, allowing for frequent and timely feedback. Based on conference notes and written check-ins, teachers collect data in order to refine teaching and plan small group instruction. Teachers

employ the Early Childhood Assessment in Mathematics (ECAM) to analyze the progress of our primary students and those who seem at risk of falling behind. PS59 uses Dreambox as an online platform for individualized and engaging math practice aligned with the Common Core standards in mathematics, our curriculum, and our instructional approaches. This Dreambox platform gives us a plethora of data that allows us to monitor, track, assign follow-up work, plan small group instruction and tailor teaching for each student on an individualized basis. The data we gather allows us to couple inquiry-based investigation work with more direct and explicit teaching. As Jo Boaler writes in *Mathematical Mindsets*, “Scientific evidence suggests that the difference between those who succeed and those who don't is not the brains they were born with, but their approach to life, the messages they receive about their potential, and the opportunities they have to learn.” It is our privilege and duty to create joyful learning opportunities for students in mathematics that give the message that we encourage students to work hard, take risks and make and realize mistakes.

1c. Science:

PS59 has a lively science lab where students are intellectually engaged in scientific concepts and investigations aligned with the New York City Science Scope and Sequence, and we are currently working to ensure alignment with the NYS Next Generation Science Standards. We use an inquiry-based approach to our science curriculum where students approach new concepts through close observation, then form hypotheses, conduct research through multiple sources, then revise and/or confirm hypotheses, making real-world applications through new understandings.

Additionally, our science curriculum allows for students to extend research and projects beyond the FOSS (Full Option Science System) curriculum of study to independent projects for our annual PS59 Science Expo and annual STEM Night. Our science program also provides enrichment opportunities for students. Students attend "Early Bird Science" where they investigate scientific topics of their choice. Students study everything from robotics and coding, to the hard drives of obsolete computers during this enrichment time.

We aim to provide our students with a well-rounded scientific experience. During after school enrichment, science teachers have designed classes allowing students to engage in the dissection of dogfish sharks and American bullfrogs. Several school trips are arranged throughout the year to parallel units of study. Our fourth graders visit the NY Botanical Gardens when they are studying food chains and webs and go on an overnight trip to Frost Valley Environmental Center where they have hands-on experiences related to the full range of their curriculum. We have a guest zoologist visit our science lab when third graders are studying structures of life, second and third graders investigate the neighborhood construction work in the community during balance and motion and simple machines units of study. First grade teachers work closely with the Central Park Zoo in a yearlong collaboration, and second grade teachers work with the Audubon Society in a study of birds and their urban environments.

1d. Social studies/history/civic learning and engagement

We provide a strong social studies program to help students make sense of the world in which they live. Through inquiry-based learning, students engage with a range of texts, from a just-right independent level to those that push the boundaries of their current reading level, including primary documents, current events newsletters, and multimedia resources, take trips to cultural institutions and historical sites, and study meaningful artifacts. We take pride in seeing how all of this inquiry-based learning enriches our students who are making connections across history, generating big ideas about the world, then and now, and seeing themselves as citizens of the world with an active, powerful voice that can be used to make change.

The NYS Scope and Sequence and NYC Passport Curriculum provide us with a progression of thinking that helps shape units from K-5. This progression allows for units that align with students' developmental stages, knowing that curiosity begins with oneself and one's immediate community and then branches out to how one fits within the greater world, both in the past and present day. Our approach to literacy plays a significant role in social studies instruction. Students engage in critical literacies that transform the way in which they read, write, think and analyze. We encourage students to determine whose perspective is being represented and whose might be missing. By researching topics, reading and dissecting articles, writing and

responding to texts, having whole-class conversations and debates, working through simulations, replicating and exploring through role play, students are able to grapple with challenging concepts and content.

Similar to literacy, our assessment is ongoing and student-centered. Through rubrics and student friendly checklists, students are guided through self-reflection, peer feedback and goal setting. Teachers play a vital role in balancing feedback between critical literacy skills and acquisition of content. We continue to enrich nonfiction resources in both school and classroom libraries as part of highlighting anti-bias efforts, and we are mindful in making these resources representative of diverse authors, characters and contexts. We have increased our attention to content area literacy, with the goal of expanding world knowledge and vocabulary. Whole-class grand conversations, debates and partner discussions give ample opportunity for students to open their minds and hearts to other perspectives, growing both a more comprehensive understanding and empathy for others.

1e. For secondary schools:

1f. For schools that offer preschool for three- and four-year old students:

While this is only the second year of our Pre-Kindergarten program at PS59, we feel fortunate that our program is thriving. Each of the 20 seats available this year and last has gone to the sibling of an older PS59 student, which speaks to our strong relationships with existing families and the confidence they have in our ability to nurture and teach our youngest learners. Our families are in close communication with our Pre-Kindergarten teaching staff. Each morning and afternoon, our Pre-K students are brought right to, and picked up from, their classrooms by parents and caregivers. As a result, they are able to see firsthand the classroom, the day's agenda, artifacts of recent studies and student work on display. Pre-K students are provided many opportunities across the day to learn through play, to explore, investigate, problem solve and interact with their environment and their peers and teachers.

We work with the New York City Interdisciplinary Units of Study and provide aligned opportunities for students to take walking trips, interview experts, and explore books to satisfy their curiosity and support their growing knowledge. Utilizing the New York City Pre-Kindergarten Scope and Sequence, which includes both social emotional competencies, as well as cognitive competencies, our Pre-K teacher plans thoughtful units of study across the year. Our Pre-K teaching team meets regularly to plan and adjust curricular activities and the learning environment, based on knowledge of curricular content, sequences for learning and development, and opportunities for connections within and across domains. This is all bolstered by our school-wide professional development, our support team, including our Pre-K Instructional Coordinator through the Department of Education, and weekly collaboration meetings with our kindergarten team, coaches and administration. Aligning with our school values and beliefs about how kids learn and the importance of play, our Pre-K teacher promotes children's critical thinking, connecting the learning to their real lives and previous experiences, and offers acknowledgement and feedback as a way to support children's understanding of new concepts. Because our Pre-K program is so closely connected to our greater school community, there is a strong shared vision for empathetic, curious, rigorous and developmentally appropriate learning.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Because we believe that every child deserves to engage in an enriched experience in a comprehensive educational program, we are committed to providing students with a range of opportunities that enhance and expand their vision of themselves and the world.

The visual arts department at PS 59 provides an extensive survey of the materials and methods used in art, as well as an understanding of the elements and principles of art and design. Students are exposed to art from cultures around the world and to art throughout history. Starting in Pre-K and continuing through fifth grade, students learn about texture, line, color, shape, value, space and form through collage, painting, drawing, sculpture and printmaking. Students enrich their vocabulary of art through exposure to clay, oil and

chalk pastels, watercolor and tempera paint, found-objects, craft materials and more. Students in the Art Studio gain confidence and mastery through hands-on art activities and through discussion of art techniques in a non-competitive environment. Students are encouraged to treat mistakes as opportunities for growth and understanding. Along with student art being displayed throughout the school on an ongoing basis, student art is also displayed in local venues such as Bloomingdale's windows, Sotheby's, and MoMA. A website is maintained for easy access and insight for families into the daily processes and activities of the Art Studio.

In our library, students are able to grapple with and expand their understanding of the world around them. Given our schoolwide focus on equity and access, we have spent some time expanding our classroom and school libraries to be more inclusive of a diverse community. Through a study of Sarah Ahmed's *Being the Change*, teachers have learned new strategies to support students and raised awareness of their own identities in a way that has made them more sensitive to others. Throughout their library experience, students engage in inquiry studies and discussions of a variety of texts including news articles, poetry, narrative and opinion pieces using traditional, digital and multimedia resources. These activities enhance students' critical thinking, inspire grand conversations and support the acquisition of world knowledge. We are fortunate to have access to MyLibraryNYC, a New York Public Library System, and NYCReads365, another resource to expand our collection beyond our school walls.

Our students participate in technology cycles throughout their time at PS59, preparing them for our best approximation of the digital world they'll face as older students and adults. Our school has technology resources including multiple class carts of laptops, iPads and Promethean Boards in all classrooms. All cycles address Digital Citizenship including being safe online, the importance of your digital footprint and using digital resources wisely. Lower grades focus on coding, using online reading tools and digital resources to support curriculum. Upper grades use Google Classroom to support their writing and research and to give and receive feedback to their teachers and peers. Older students learn to use technology for multimedia projects including student led parent conferences, creating public service announcements (in video format) around a topic about which they care deeply, publishing research by creating a website and community projects like the fifth grade graduation slideshow created by fourth graders as a farewell gift to their departing peers. Embedded in each cycle are basic technology skills that prepare students to make good use of technology in all future endeavors.

Finally, we have noted elsewhere the importance of enhanced arts, STEM and cultural experiences. PS59, in collaboration with our PTA, brings a range of experiences to every child in every grade. We partner with the New York Philharmonic, Creative Stages, Arch for Kids, Chess NYC, Wellness in the Schools, Arts Connection, New York City Center Dance, the Museum of Modern Art, the Central Park Zoo, and the Audubon Society. We aim for students to share in these experiences for any number of reasons. Frankly, we believe it makes them more compassionate and empathetic human beings. We also believe these experiences expand horizons and offer students many routes to success and positive connections to school. Finally, we believe they ensure students grow up with an appreciation for what such institutions do for the quality of life in our extraordinary city.

3. Special Populations:

We firmly believe a workshop approach allows a great deal of latitude for customizing instruction across content areas. Using this approach, classrooms have greater capacity to meet students where they are and teach within their zone of proximal development. The choreography of brief, intense whole class direct instruction and demonstration of essential strategies, followed by small group and independent work with purposeful conferring, allows students to practice and engage at their own just-right level which is essential to success. In general, we aim to enrich and augment instruction through enhanced experiences whenever possible. Our Title III program, for example, is a collaboration with the Central Park Zoo in which two dozen students collaborate with our English as a New Language (ENL) teacher, a dual-certified classroom teacher, and a zoo instructor to study local wildlife and environments, a program that incorporates two visits to the nearby zoo while building world knowledge and STEM vocabulary in an incredibly engaging way.

Team to analyze student data, zeroing in on subgroups of students who are underperforming or not making progress. We noticed that students with disabilities (SWD) do not progress at the same rate as our more typical students. Similarly, some ELLs and former ELLs continue to need a layer of support in addition to mandated services. Some PS59 children learn in what we believe is one of the richest educational settings for any student's learning: a class with integrated co-teaching (ICT). In ICT, two teachers share responsibility full time for a class of students, 40% of whom have IEPs. The class is, first and foremost, a general education class. It follows the same curriculum and pace of other classes on its grade. No two students in an ICT, or any other class for that matter, have precisely the same needs; what each student does share is that, given the thoughtful support of two teachers, each thrives.

At least one teacher in an ICT has a special education license, though every adult works with every child. Expertise in special education allows teams to co-plan and co-teach lessons targeting many different learning styles. They help students break complex problems into smaller steps, stay organized, and increase stamina and concentration. Students in ICT have the opportunity to spend more time in small groups, benefiting from individualized attention. The official purpose of ICT is to meet a legal mandate of maximizing access for students with disabilities, but its unofficial benefit is to help all students maintain or accelerate learning.

We believe in ICT because its nuanced teaching and attention to individuals make us smarter about how all students learn. At least once each week, ICT teams meet with grade colleagues, to plan their shared curriculum and to share techniques for differentiation with colleagues. ICT teams participate in all grade-level and schoolwide professional development, and spend an additional ten days working with a widely recognized and consulted expert in the field, who happens to be a former PS59 parent. We are proud of this aspect of our work and appreciative of all we have learned from the children who have come our way.

In an effort to keep referral rates down, leadership meets quarterly with our Reading Recovery (RR) teacher, coaches and Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETSS) teacher to reassess reading interventions and their impact. We review schoolwide Assessment Pro data to identify students not yet meeting grade level benchmarks and make plans to support as efficiently as possible. We then ensure vulnerable students get early bird school or school day support in the form of Reading Rescue, one-on-one with a trained tutor, typically a paraprofessional or a teaching assistant. Depending on reading level, some students receive small group support in Leveled Literacy Instruction (LLI). Our coach trains classroom teachers in using this approach. While ICT teachers have some specialized training in Orton Gillingham, for example, teachers in all classrooms have access to LLI.

Our Pupil Personnel team (PPT) meets weekly with related service providers acting as liaisons to specific grades. At PPT meetings, teachers present a guiding question about a student, with colleagues sharing observations, efforts made and ideas for raising the level of support. Each child study is reconvened within six weeks of the initial outreach to determine next steps. Our Occupational Therapists, for example, provide insight into how to make classrooms more hospitable to students with attention issues, sensory issues, or executive functioning challenges. Speech teachers remind colleagues of the importance of previewing, visual supports and modeling.

Like all schools, we work hard to improve our capacity to support students with emotional and behavioral challenges. We collaborate with the Child Mind Institute and have studied, and will continue to study, these issues deeply. We take a team approach to crisis intervention and de-escalation. Counselors, occupational therapists (OTs) and other staff provide in-the-moment support and then debrief and plan strategically for how to make responses more effective. We try to anticipate what might be triggers or stressful circumstances and aim to circumvent the problem before it occurs.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

The shared, collective sense of community at PS59 is vibrant, heartwarming and exceptional. As a school that welcomes families from the neighborhood as well as from many different countries, it is gratifying to see differences that are so evident in the world fade in school among children and families who spend their days together. School leaders and our parent coordinator staff the entry gate each morning and from that very first moment aim to set a tone of warmth, welcome, joyful learning and safety. Families routinely cite the warmth and familiarity among adults whose children attend PS59, and speak appreciatively of the opportunity to visit their children's class for monthly Family Fridays and regular morning curricular workshops that enhance their ability to be effective educational partners.

We recognize that students are primed to thrive and more available for instruction when they feel safe and happy and connected to the teachers, adults, and other students in school. Our office walls are adorned with lovely letters, photos and poetry from appreciative students and their families. Adults in school cultivate these connections to kids and families in ways that matter. Our librarian, for example, is able to talk knowledgeably with the families of all 600 students about their child's favorite authors, titles and genre. Students in stressful situations might choose to spend a few quiet minutes in Community Service, reshelving books in the library or helping out in a kindergarten classroom with a former teacher, as a way to collect themselves.

Teachers pride themselves on being exceptionally collegial. PS59 is rife with structures that support collaboration, and it is very much a part of our culture to share leadership and make public the achievements and efforts of colleagues in "Weekly Notes" messages to staff and in opportunities for leadership and professional development. Guidance counselors devote many hours to negotiating challenging family situations knowing those relationships can either be a barrier or a gateway to success. We know that those personal connections pay off in immensely profound ways.

We ensure children and adults know that conflict is a natural part of life and teach into resolution skills, so we feel better equipped to negotiate relationships and the inevitable conflicts that arise. We have been learning and utilizing the Yale RULER approach to social and emotional learning and are excited about its potential to bring adults and students closer together.

It is this appreciation for the whole child – and the whole adult, that ensures a rapidly growing school continues to feel intimate, helps kids be well known, and strengthens the school's ethos of inclusion.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

PS59 is a diverse school community that connects families through community engagement, ongoing communication, and a whole host of family events designed to make sure families feel welcome and comfortable in school. The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and school-based teams collaborate to organize events throughout the year that provide opportunities for academic and social interactions in which all families can participate. With our proximity to the United Nations, our International Families Committee works to support new families. It connects over 70 international families at the school with community resources. We highlight and celebrate the international nature and cultural flair of our community on International Night, a rich cultural event attended by hundreds of families and teachers.

To foster and capitalize on family involvement, the school offers multiple opportunities to meet with the teaching and support staff. These opportunities range from school-wide events (e.g., Meet the Teacher Night) to classroom gatherings (e.g., Secret Guest Reader). Once a month, we have schoolwide Family Fridays, which are routinely attended by 80% or more of our families. During this time, families are invited into their child's classroom to engage in curriculum-based tasks. These opportunities provide families with real time insight into their child's classroom culture as well as a vision of best teaching practices. We align these opportunities with curriculum focused parent workshops. To promote and enhance communication,

staff members provide conference time to families on a one to one basis during scheduled Tuesday morning communication hours. Families engage in official parent-teacher conferences three times a year, with our upper grade students presenting their self-assessment of recent growth in student-led conferences that are held in March each year. Our school has invested in a campus-wide Weebly website where teachers post weekly blogs and classroom updates.

Community engagement is very pronounced at family events hosted by community outreach programs and/or the Parent Teacher Association (PTA). Our local City Council provides, in the form of a Cultural After-School Adventures Program (CASA) grant, free after school arts experiences as well as family centered after school performances. Current offerings include theater work with TaDa! and digital animation. Another program tied to community engagement is known as Wellness in the Schools which hosts a Family Fitness Night for families to engage in fitness activities and enjoy a healthy meal. PS59 has maintained a partnership with Mentoring USA via Bloomingdale's department store. This program is known as Bloomingdale's Buddies. Bloomingdale's employees serve as mentors to fourth and fifth grade students by engaging in social and emotional learning activities. The highlight of the program is the collaborative art project featured prominently in the store windows during January mentoring month.

The PTA plans and funds regular family-friendly events from social gatherings to fundraisers supporting the greater school community. The PTA holds monthly general meetings and maintains weekly communication with families through their website. Class parents are also utilized in each classroom to act as a liaison between the PTA and families.

3. Professional Development:

At the heart of our professional community is a commitment to ongoing learning that is rigorous, thoughtful and research-based. We believe that in pairing deep content and pedagogical knowledge with a deep understanding of our students and their strengths, needs and interests, we are in the most informed position to make decisions about next steps in teaching and learning. In short, we lean toward investing in teacher expertise over out of classroom intervention.

We recognize that in order to do this well, teachers need access to the resources (i.e., planning time, expertise, professional texts, teaching materials) and tools necessary to be constantly outgrowing ourselves. Allocating those resources strategically is at the core of how our school is organized. This commitment is reflected in layers of embedded support and opportunities for leadership. Longstanding collaborations with the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP) and Goldmansour and Rutherford Consulting (GRC) have helped us build expertise in literacy and in supporting vulnerable learners, respectively. TCRWP consultants spend 20 or more days in school, collaborating with teachers, coaches and school leaders on improving practice, studying student work and reflecting on the impact of our efforts on student growth and who might need additional supports. GRC, led by a former PS59 parent, spends 10 or more days in school collaborating with teachers, coaches, service providers and school leaders with an intense focus on practices supporting students with identified needs and those at risk. We engage in case studies, classroom studies and studies of co-teaching structures, differentiation, and Universal Design to ensure the needs of all students are being met in the least restrictive environment.

Knowing mentoring is critical to the development and retention of new teachers, we have designed support structures in which experienced, certified mentors provide support for new mentors, and newer teachers now benefit, by choice, from two full years of mentoring support. Our highly skilled literacy and math coaches provide support to all teachers, new and experienced, and ensure those experiences are collaborative and classroom-based. Grade teams have three common planning periods each week and grade leaders are provided with designated meeting times with coaches and outside consultants to enhance coherence and a cross-grade sense of community and shared purpose.

Teachers also benefit from support via peer-led study groups focusing on school- and district-wide topics of interest, currently teacher-student feedback and issues of identity, equity and access. This feedback work has led teachers to develop math and literacy conferring toolkits that ensure feedback is timely, accurate and actionable as described by researcher John Hattie. School leaders, too, participate in these opportunities

and model thoughtful engagement, serving in leadership roles on a district and citywide level. Opportunities inside school (e.g., work with coaches/consultants, grade team planning, engagement with online platforms including New Perspectives and YouCubed) and outside school (e.g., summer institutes, calendar days, PLCs, inquiry and specialty groups) are paired with opportunities to share with colleagues, both in school and at local and national conferences.

We believe deeply in a growth mindset and know that thoughtful colleagues are drawn here because of the high expectations and opportunities for continuous learning. Our kids and community benefit in a myriad of ways.

4. School Leadership:

PS59 school leaders are committed to learning alongside teachers and sharing leadership among staff members. PS59 teachers have gone on to serve as staff developers for Teachers College, to become principals and assistant principals, to write professional texts and journal articles, to speak at local and national conferences and to win NYS and NYC awards in recognition of excellent teaching. Providing opportunities for leadership and growth are very much a part of our school culture. Opportunities include serving on any one of our many committees – New Teacher Hiring, Professional Development, Wellness, Being the Change/ Equity; serving as teacher representatives on School Leadership Team, as grade leaders and as mentors. Our teachers host colleagues attending coaching and leadership institutes and our classrooms serve as lab sites for consultants and visitors from across the district, the country and beyond, allowing us to study alongside them and benefit from their insight. Teacher leaders facilitate workshops for families and colleagues, attend Teachers College leadership and specialty groups, facilitate Pupil Personnel Teams and ICT Team Meetings, and lead our in-house collegial Try It Tomorrow workshops.

Everyone at PS59 expects to grow and be challenged; that is a big part of why they joined our staff. Leaders here are those who are looking to challenge themselves in any number of ways – perhaps taking on a new grade, trying out a new practice, supporting a student teacher or intern, seeking out opportunities to work with learners with identified needs. Teachers routinely request the opportunity to attend professional development at places like Bank Street College during the summer and on weekends. In recent years we have been fortunate to have our PTA invest in teacher professional development efforts, which not only helps mitigate the cost, but also heightens parent awareness of all teachers do to stay sharp and growing. Our students know when their teacher is out at “Teacher School” learning (still) to be the very best teacher they can be.

We also leverage organizational moves to anchor new grade teams and provide leadership opportunities. Teachers have come to appreciate the insight about teaching and learning that can be gained from teaching on different grade levels and in ICT. Our assistant principal, for example, taught in ICT classrooms on first, third, and fourth grades and served as the science cluster prior to becoming the assistant principal. Our literacy coach taught on second and fourth grades in ICT settings prior to this assignment, and our math coach taught second and fifth grade in the general education and ICT setting prior to becoming the math coach.

We work hard to attract teachers who have a tenacious desire to learn and to contribute to the school community, our city and society at large. We intend for our work with teachers to parallel the sort of learning environment we want to create for our students, one in which they feel included and empowered, and where their voices are heard.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

One thing we believe makes PS59 successful is our attention to the whole of a child’s experience. We provide many ways for every student to be successful in school. Our beliefs about how students learn and what comprises an excellent educational experience are reflected in virtually every choice we make, from our workshop approach to instruction, to thoughtful kid-watching as a major means of assessment, to building weekly schedules that reflect our desire for children to be authors of their own learning. We aim for our students to be curious, engaged learners with a sense of agency and ownership over their academic learning, and over their relationships with peers, teachers, families and the larger world.

To be sure, we have a highly skilled Reading Recovery teacher who supports primary teachers as well as our most vulnerable young readers. We have invested in training all of our teaching assistants and paraprofessionals in a modified version of that approach known as Reading Rescue. Our literacy and math coaches support at risk learners and coach classroom teachers in the use of Fountas and Pinnell’s Leveled Literacy Instruction (LLI), while our dual-certified science, library and SETSS teachers all see at risk and mandated students in spare periods across the week.

As importantly, however, we are dedicated to engaging classrooms where students feel empowered through opportunities for student choice in topics of study, the texts they read, the strategies they use, and the social action projects they take on. While academics might prove challenging for some, students have opportunities for play, physical activity, and enriched experiences as part of our core – chess, dance, drama, music, chorus, architecture, technology and art. As a result, families often tell us that their kids LOVE to come to school.

Knowing the importance of social and emotional development and of feeling connected in school, we devote precious resources to two full time guidance counselors who provide proactive supports by supporting teachers in making classroom communities more accommodating to a broader range of kids and needs, offering at risk social and counseling groups, conflict resolution and crisis intervention, running, yoga and track clubs, and engaging with kids on the playground during recess. In recent years we have invested in studying the Yale RULER approach (Recognizing, Understanding, Labeling, Expressing and Regulating) to social emotional development and are studying its impact on peer and adult relationships.

We strive to make our school a welcoming and inclusive place where all kids feel seen, valued and understood no matter their background. In alignment with city- and district-wide initiatives we are devoting time to a deep study of issues related to equity, access and identity. We are rooting our efforts in our summer professional text, *Being the Change* by Sarah Ahmed, which has inspired us to engage in this work with colleagues and students as part of yearlong community building efforts. Students from our youngest to our oldest have explored skin color, family structures, cultural norms, language backgrounds, and created portraits and poetry to celebrate where they come from.

It is our ongoing commitment to this whole of a child’s experience that we believe contributes so greatly to making PS59 successful.