

**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 [X] Magnet [ ] Choice

Name of Principal Ms. Marquita I. Bryant

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

Official School Name Frederick Law Olmsted 64

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 874 Amherst Street

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

Buffalo NY 14216-3502  
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Erie County

Telephone (716) 816-3420

Fax (716) 871-6021

Web site/URL

https://www.buffaloschools.org/PS6

4

E-mail mbryant@buffaloschools.org

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent\*Dr. Kriner Cash

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) E-mail krinercash@buffaloschools.org

District Name Buffalo City School District Tel. (716) 816-3391

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board

President/Chairperson Mrs. Sharon Belton-Cottman

(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

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 38 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 6 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 27 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 71 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, 2018 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	16	20	36
K	51	45	96
1	59	43	102
2	54	45	99
3	58	61	119
4	60	60	120
5	0	0	0
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
<b>Total Students</b>	298	274	572

\*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):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 2 % Asian
  - 18 % Black or African American
  - 19 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 55 % White
  - 5 % 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: 7%

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, 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	14
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	39
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	599
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.07
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	7

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 5%  
27 Total number ELL

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 26%  
Total number students who qualify: 149

8. Students receiving special education services: 18 %  
104 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>37</u> Autism                 | <u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>13</u> Other Health Impaired                |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>0</u> Specific Learning Disability          |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>50</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: 3
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	30
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	12
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	21
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

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 19:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014
Daily student attendance	96%	95%	94%	94%	95%
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.

<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.

To provide our students with an educational experience that merges academic rigor and relevance with creativity and social responsibility within a safe, caring environment.

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

Frederick Law Olmsted #64 (Olmsted #64) is a school with a gifted and talented component. 65% of general education students at each grade level are identified as gifted. The remaining 35% of general education students at each grade level are selected from the neighborhood/citywide boundaries. Potential candidates for the gifted and talented program are administered an IQ test or standardized test of cognitive abilities and must achieve a score that falls within above-average ranges to qualify for a seat. The remaining 35% of students are selected in the following manner: (1) Neighborhood siblings; (2) Neighborhood; (3) Citywide siblings; (4) Citywide with proximity preference; and (5) Citywide.

Olmsted #64 also has a Dual-Language Immersion program immersing native Spanish speakers with native English speakers to learn collaboratively across the content areas. Students are selected for the DLI program based on a language assessment test administered in the child’s native language.

## **PART III – SUMMARY**

---

Olmsted #64 is an elementary school within the Buffalo City School District. Olmsted #64 services many of the students of its immediate neighborhood as well as housing a Gifted and Talented program (GT), a Dual Language Immersion program (DLI) and a program for students diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The school is situated on the site of the Pan American Exposition that was held in Buffalo in 1901. The school is also located near Delaware Park and bears the name of the park's designer, landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted. This rich history is evident throughout the school and is reflected in murals inside the building as well as the facade that makes up much of the building's exterior.

The GT program began in 1981 as an elementary program and has now spread to a K-12 program that is housed in an elementary school and a separate 5-12 building. Students who enter the GT program are challenged with a curriculum that incorporates critical thinking, creative thinking, and metacognitive thinking as an interdependent process.

In 2005, Olmsted #64 implemented a two-way DLI program (50/50 model), to provide a learning environment that delivered instruction in both Spanish and English. The program is designed to immerse native Spanish speakers and native English speakers to learn collaboratively across the content areas. The goal is for both groups of students to become bilingual, biliterate and bicultural.

The school also hosts a program for students diagnosed with an ASD in grades K- 4. Students are provided with intensive, specially designed instruction and support in order to access the curriculum. Students served in the program have needs in multiple areas such as communication, social skills, behavioral and academic supports. Teachers deliver needs based-instruction that emphasizes safety, academics, independence, functional and behavior skills. Students participate in lunch, recess, special area courses and other school-based activities with non-disabled peers, with the ultimate goal of full integration within the whole student body.

Due to the diverse student body, the focus has been and continues to be to challenge all students at their current level on the developmental spectrum and then encourage them to go above and beyond their believed potential. In the area of academics this means infusing elements of the GT program throughout the building. In practice, this means that non-instructional time is spent examining individual student data and professional development in the areas of creative problem solving, critical thinking skills and creative thinking skills.

Outside of academics there is a strong belief in instilling a sense of family and community. When students enter Olmsted #64 they become part of a greater network of individuals and organizations that care about the maturation process of the whole child. The Olmsted Parent-Teacher Organization (OPTO) assists in this area through fundraising and general community events. The annual Field Day, Round-table Coffee Hour, Food Truck Night, and the Spaghetti Dinner and Basket Raffle are just some of the events that are planned by parents and supported by the community.

The Olmsted School Foundation (The Foundation) provides support by dispersing funds for projects and equipment related to the Olmsted Schools (elementary and high school). While OPTO is more involved in the day-to-day workings of the school, The Foundation supports programs that ensure the long-term growth and stability of the Olmsted Schools. The Foundation also provides monetary assistance to teachers who wish to receive additional training in GT education.

An integral part of strengthening home-to-school involvement is having parents take an active role in the school's events. Every year Literacy and Math Nights are hosted. On both evenings the parents assist their children in various literacy and math activities. Literacy activities focus on improving comprehension, word recognition, decoding and encoding, fluency, as well as various reading strategies. Math activities focus on familiarizing parents with math instruction via fluency games, activities to promote conceptual development as well as providing tips for parents in supporting their child's growth. These evenings are invaluable as they provide parents with tools to help their children, as well as instill a sense of community and strengthen the

climate and culture of the school.

In addition, parents serve on the Site Based Management Team as well as the Health and Wellness Team. This allows stakeholders to receive parents' perspective relating to decisions pertaining to the school.

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

---

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

#### **1a. Reading/English language arts:**

The Buffalo City School District (BCSD) reading curriculum incorporates writing strategies from Step Up to Writing, a researched-based writing program, and text and reading skills from Journeys, a research-based reading series that contains a scope and sequence based on the five major components of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension and fluency. Skills based on the Common Core standards are scaffolded throughout the grade levels.

Students are introduced to phonemes and their letter correspondences in kindergarten. They practice reading decodable text, listen to rich text read aloud by the teacher to build vocabulary and background knowledge and begin to identify elements of story structure, main idea and details. As students progress through the grades, a wider variety of texts and writing formats are utilized to expose students to academic and domain specific vocabulary. Opportunities are provided which allow students to develop opinions, distinguish between several points of view, and identify text features. Students are required to cite evidence when responding to questions as they read and write.

A variety of instructional approaches for teaching reading are utilized within the school. While whole group and small group instruction is primarily led by classroom teachers, students in kindergarten through second grade participate in walk-to models of tiered instructional interventions. Third and fourth grade are departmentalized by content area. Students struggling to meet proficiency in reading receive direct and explicit instruction from additional support staff.

Olmsted #64 follows a data driven instruction (DDI) cycle to triangulate data, analyze district benchmark assessments (DBAs), DIBELS Next screening and progress monitoring measures, and NYS assessments to create focused, targeted instruction in the areas where students demonstrate proficiencies and deficiencies. Additionally, the data helps to create RTI groups and parallel tasks to be administered after the proper interventions have been implemented. Other formative assessments, including programmatic end-of-selection tests, are used to assess student progress.

Classrooms in grades K-2 have shared iPads for small-group technology-based support allowing students to access apps, download/upload assignments, and create a variety of electronic products. Every classroom is equipped with a classroom computer center. The school's computer lab is accessible to all students as well.

#### **1b. Mathematics:**

The BCSD follows modules hosted on EngageNY that focus on the standards and skills embedded in Geometry, Operations and Algebraic Thinking, Measurement and Data and Number and Operations in Base Ten. Math instruction at Olmsted #64 emphasizes conceptual development as well as the importance of fluencies and landmark numbers to help promote automaticity when utilizing mathematical skills.

Geometry begins in the primary grades, requiring students to identify and describe basic shapes, then extending into classifying and categorizing based on attributes as they progress through the grades. In Operations and Algebraic Thinking, students begin to understand concepts of mathematical operations, solve word problems, and develop the foundation for multiplication. Students begin to generate and analyze patterns in math while also explaining their thinking. Measurement and Data provides the foundation for students to represent collected data in multiple formats. Students are also taught the essential concepts of telling time, counting money and measuring. In Number and Operations in Base Ten, the emphasis is on understanding place value when applying mathematical operations to a variety of problems.

Instructional approaches for mathematics are varied among the grade levels. Whole group instruction tends to be the primary mode for teaching mathematical concepts. Differentiated small group instruction occurs on

an as needed basis. Students are expected to explain their mathematical thinking through writing and discussion with their peers.

EngageNY provides ongoing assessment in mathematics using module assessments and exit tickets. Benchmark data is gathered using the STAR Math assessment three times per school year to track progression through the math domains. The DDI cycle is also used to evaluate DBAs given quarterly. NYS assessment results are analyzed to create groups and place students on an appropriate trajectory.

Technology is integrated into math classes using resources and websites including Prodigy, LearnZillion, Zearn, and Khan Academy. iPad apps are also used to demonstrate understanding of mathematical concepts.

### **1c. Science:**

The BCSD is in the process of phasing in the new NYS science standards. The science program in kindergarten through second grade is from Scott Foresman. The Pearson Elevate program is used in third and fourth grade. In-depth studies of science content are provided using programmatic labs and TEAM Science Kits, which promote engagement in scientific inquiry and action research in classrooms.

Students understand and apply science concepts related to the Living Environment and the Physical Setting using inquiry methods and scientific equipment. The Scientific Method and infusion of concepts such as selecting appropriate forms/tools of measurement, recording and analyzing data, and formulating reasonable conclusions based on information is emphasized throughout the grade levels.

A combination of whole group and small group instruction occurs at each grade level. Additionally, students work in cooperative groups to conduct experiments, test hypotheses, and draw conclusions based on qualitative and quantitative data. Small group instruction is used to reteach and enrich student learning.

All grade levels administer assessments embedded within their respective curricula. A comprehensive assessment of concepts acquired in kindergarten through fourth grade is administered to all fourth graders in the form of the NYS Science assessment.

For the purpose of providing visual aids and supporting the content presented within the texts, technology is integrated when applicable.

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

The BCSD kindergarten through fourth grade curriculum is designed around a series of inquiry units which are part of the NYS Social Studies K-12 Resource Toolkit hosted on EngageNY and supplemented by readings and resources from a Scott Foresman textbook. The inquiries set a curricular and instructional course that is based on the NYS Social Studies Framework. The Framework integrates NYS Learning Standards with the NYS Core Curriculum and outlines social studies practices, key ideas, and conceptual understandings.

Social Studies curriculum begins with identifying similarities and differences among communities and focusing on the rights and responsibilities of individuals within those communities (citizenship). Students make connections between cultures that influence communities and explore the many contributions of those cultures. Students learn about the role of government in their daily lives. A variety of geographical concepts are taught using basic maps and globes and using the understanding of geography to explain changes/modifications to meet basic needs. Early history of New York State is explored using overarching concepts of conflict and how conflict led to change in political systems in NYS.

Assessments take place at the conclusion of each chapter or topic. There are assessment questions included with lessons from the Toolkit inquiries and teachers use those as well.

Teachers incorporate the use of technology via district-approved websites to enhance the curriculum.

## **1e. For secondary schools:**

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

The Pre-K core curriculum is aligned to the NYS Learning Standards along with Buffalo City Schools' academic expectations. A variety of strategies based on data analysis are used to allow for targeted and differentiated instruction to enhance student learning and guide student readiness levels for various content areas.

Olmsted #64 utilizes Big Day, a research-based reading series, that integrates learning experiences and introduces students to a variety of robust vocabulary, concepts and skills. Students receive targeted instruction in the areas of oral language and vocabulary, emergent reading and writing, science and social studies. Daily small-group sessions focus on skill development, feedback and support.

Building Blocks mathematics curriculum, again a researched-based series is utilized. Focus areas include Counting and Cardinality, Geometry, Operations and Algebraic Thinking. Students utilize math manipulatives, technology, games, real life scenarios, etc. to enhance learning experiences.

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

All students in grades Pre-K through fourth grade participate in visual arts education. Classes are taught one to two times per six-day cycle for thirty-fourty minutes, depending on grade level. Creativity and innovative thinking are essential life skills that shape artistic goals. Student artists balance experimentation and freedom to work with form, materials, concepts, and media in order to develop, critique, refine, and present artwork. Generating and solving artistic problems prepare children to contribute solutions to influence the needs, desires, and beliefs within a society and/or culture. Art can lead to a better understanding of and response to the world. Third grade students participate in annual field trips to the Albright Knox Art Gallery to gain an appreciation for the arts and art studies.

Vocal music lessons are taught to Pre-K through fourth grade. Lessons are provided one to two times per six-day cycle for thirty-fourty minutes, depending on grade level. Students in third grade and fourth grade may also participate in chorus one time per six-day cycle for 30-minute periods. The music curriculum revolves around the Elements of Music: rhythm, melody, form, harmony, tone color, and expression. These are learned through singing, playing instruments, moving, dancing, creating, reading music, listening, and researching. The music curriculum aspires to engage students to express themselves through vocal or instrumental means, such that they can perform as an ensemble team to produce a finished product and connect music to other disciplines. Students are evaluated in their understanding and demonstration of activities and lessons. The hope is that students will become lifelong learners of music.

Third and fourth grade students may elect to participate in instrumental music through orchestra lessons. Small group lessons take place for string instruments one time per six-day cycle for 30 minutes, for third grade and two times per six-day cycle for 40 minutes for fourth grade. Music and orchestra lessons develop life-long skills of problem solving, task commitment and teamwork through learning to read music notation, performing in concerts, and participating in solo festivals throughout the school year.

Physical education lessons are provided to students in Pre-K once per six-day cycle for 30 minutes, and in K-4 three times per six-day cycle for 40 minutes. Additionally, health and nutrition lessons are taught through Coordinated Approach to Child Health (CATCH) ten times per school year. The acquisition of skills through physical education includes teacher modeling, explicit instruction, and guided and independent practice. New York State Standards 1 & 2 assure students gain life-long skills in the physical, cognitive and affective domains, while Standard 3 is met through relationships with community partners that work closely to provide programs, activities, and incentives to encourage students to choose and maintain a healthy lifestyle. With CATCH, students acquire skills by participating in real world situations to problem solve and decision make regarding health and nutrition choices.

Spanish as a foreign language is provided to students in Pre-K through fourth grade. These lessons are provided to students one time per six-day cycle for 30 minutes, and twice per cycle for a total of 80 minutes in fourth grade. The Spanish curriculum augments the grade level curriculum, especially in grades Pre-Kindergarten through first grade. Conversational Spanish and vocabulary are learned via gross and fine motor skills, singing and dancing and paragraphing strategies.

Students in Pre-K through fourth grade are provided access to the library and participate in lessons about library skills. Classes take place one time per six-day cycle for 30-40 minutes or as needed. Library skills support curriculum with fiction and nonfiction literature read-alouds, activities, research and the selection of reading materials for academic and leisure reading purposes. Student choice of reading material is not only extremely motivating in terms of furthering knowledge and skills, but also impacts literacy and content learning.

Third and fourth grade students participate in a Schoolwide Enrichment Model (SEM) twice a year for one hour, with another grade level being added each year. SEM escalates the level and quality of learning experiences for all students, above and beyond the Common Core curriculum by creating higher levels of thinking and performance in an area of special interest, a new subject, hobby, and/or an area of curriculum. Experts and mentors in their field then teach classes that are established via Student Interest Inventories, in order to deepen an understanding of an interest, subject or topic for the students.

All students participate in character education. Monthly lessons are used to promote a character trait of the month with hands-on lessons and collaboration with peers.

### **3. Special Populations:**

The Olmsted #64 population is comprised of a diverse group of students. Each grade levels' composition consists of general education students, students diagnosed with an ASD, dual-language immersion students, and English language learners. Most classrooms are interspersed with students who have been identified as gifted.

Current academic levels are determined using screening measures, progress monitoring, benchmark assessments, programmatic assessments, and New York State assessment data. Students that score "at-risk" receive more intensive academic interventions. Students scoring at or above proficiency are challenged with more rigorous, academic material that extends beyond the grade level expectation.

Olmsted #64 is staffed with highly qualified teachers certified in the areas that comprise the varied population. Special education teachers have been trained in specifically designed instruction (SDI) which assists them in tailoring instruction to the needs of individual students. A literacy coach provides instructional support for teachers in the areas of curriculum, data analysis and lesson delivery. Students experiencing difficulty with reading meet with a support reading teacher daily to assist in remediating deficits. Students with an IEP are supported by consultant teachers who push-in to classes to assist classroom teachers, modify assignments and provide visual aids and cues. Additionally, the consultant teachers also support students reading below-level with direct instruction. Students acquiring English as a new language (ENL) receive instruction from a certified ENL teacher specializing in scaffolding and differentiation strategies. The ENL teacher utilizes a push-in/pull-out approach to instruction based on NYSESLAT data. Students selected for the DLI program receive instruction in both English and Spanish. DLI teachers move fluidly between the two languages to promote bi-literate, bilingual and bicultural lifelong learners. Gifted and talented students are presented a challenging curriculum comprised of critical and creative thinking skills. Classes are taught by certified GT teachers whose goal is to teach students to think metacognitively and move laterally between the domains of critical and creative thinking.

Using instructional strategies provided by specially certified teachers, Olmsted #64 is attempting to close the achievement gaps that exist among subgroups according to NYS assessment data. Additionally, school-wide initiatives such as utilizing the DDI process, increasing usage of writing across content areas, showing

fidelity to programmatic resources and offering embedded professional development opportunities, have raised the awareness that gaps exist as well provide an avenue for addressing the needs of specific students.

## PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

---

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

Olmsted #64 utilizes a multifaceted and individualized approach to encourage a positive school climate and culture that responds to the unique needs of the school community. Faculty, staff, students, parents and community members alike feel valued and supported.

The school embraces a school-wide character education curriculum that recognizes success in faculty and staff as well as students. Focus is put on a different character trait every month and daily quotes, monthly lessons and hallway decorations work hand in hand to support the implementation of that trait. At the beginning of each year students are introduced to ten character traits while taking part in activities that support being part of the Olmsted #64 community.

The student support team (SST) consists of a clinical social worker, school counselor and a school psychologist. Social Academic Intervention Groups (SAIG), social skills groups, needs based groups, and individual counseling are all facilitated by members of the SST. Parent support, education, linkage and referrals are also coordinated through the SST. There is a calming and meditation room for instruction in yoga, meditation, grounding and calming techniques. Individualized behavior motivational charting is used for students.

School clubs include a Kindness Club and running club for students and a Sunshine Club for staff. Teacher representation is sought on all decision making committees that impact the school community as well as input in the planning of the school events calendar and topics for professional development. Teacher appreciation lunches are provided by administration as well as OPTO. In addition, staff nominate an employee of the month to recognize the hard work and dedication of faculty and colleagues in conjunction with character education traits.

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

Olmsted #64 focuses on the mindset that children will reach their full potential when the connection between home and school is effectively strengthened. This requires integrating parents and guardians into the day-to-day processes of the school. Teachers communicate with parents daily via take-home folders, phone calls, email, and various home-school connection apps. At a more holistic level this involves parents taking active roles in the Site Based Management Team (SBMT), Health and Wellness Team, as well as two parent organizations - OPTO and the Olmsted Foundation. It is not enough that parents feel heard, but that they know they are taking an active role in the direction of the school.

OPTO regularly fundraises to provide events throughout the school year. Parents support and/or help to facilitate annual school events such as the Olmsted Color Run, Halloween parade, talent show, movie night, seasonal concerts, etc.

One of the unique ways that parents play an active role is in the Schoolwide Enrichment Model Cluster events. SEM Clusters are non-grade groups of students and adults who share a common interest. Parents and community leaders are invited into the building who have an expertise in an area that some students may have an interest in. Students and “experts” work together to research, create, collaborate and design a product, a performance or service based on that area of interest. This allows parents to be used as a resource and allows parents to be part of the school’s educational process while strengthening the home-school connection.

Another way in which the home-school connection is enhanced is in how students interact with their immediate community and the greater culture of the student body. The Three Kings Celebration every January brings many parents into school and provides an opportunity for students to experience their personal culture. Students who are part of the dual-language program have also taken multiple trips to Puerto Rico in past years to become immersed in the culture of the language they are studying. Various

times throughout the year students are able to participate in parades through the local neighborhood. Walking field-trips make use of much of the culture of Buffalo that is accessible for them. Any one of these events would enhance the educational experience of students. Taken as a whole the students are able to benefit from their immediate environment.

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

Olmsted #64 has developed instructional “rocks” that serve as annual goals to guide student improvement initiatives and professional development for staff. Instructional rocks are referred to using the acronym SOAR (School-wide Gifted and Talented Instruction, Ongoing Small Groups and Differentiated Instruction, Always be Your Best You (Character Education) and Regular use of Data Driven Instruction. “SOAR with the Olmsted Owls” is the catchphrase used when referring to school goals, as an owl is the school mascot.

The Data Driven Instruction (DDI) process is used during grade level meetings (GLMs), common planning times (CPTs), and job-embedded professional development sessions in order to incorporate data into instructional decisions. Teachers participate in GLMs and CPT facilitated by an administrator and literacy coach, once during a six-day cycle and once per month respectively. CPT allows grade level teams to vertically and horizontally analyze common formative assessment and programmatic data, backwards plan in the various curriculum areas, examine teaching practices, and decide on specific areas of focus that address achievement gaps in and across grade levels. After analyzing data findings, teams begin to plan action steps for reteaching and enrichment. After implementing action steps, formative data is collected again to continuously monitor if action steps were effective and revise students' achievement plans. The school's literacy coach, building math teacher, building reading teacher, GT resource teachers and administrators are all collective members on grade level and department teams.

A frequent strategy in GLMs is the review of instructional strategies they could be incorporated into lessons to improve student performance/development. Strategies and programs that are reviewed and implemented include close reading, Step Up to Writing, and DeBono's Six Thinking Hats. Another focus for meetings is ensuring the continuous use of formal and informal assessment results to monitor student performance. Throughout the year, teachers analyze their own classroom data, including District Benchmark Assessments (DBAs), to track students' performance in ELA and Math in alignment to Common Core Learning Standards.

Monthly faculty meetings train teachers in the use of best practices, including consistent grading practices, DDI, tracking student progress through Infinite campus (an online teacher/parent portal). In addition, teachers review the New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) evaluative rubric on an annual basis.

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

Olmsted #64 believes in a philosophy of democracy, collaboration and shared leadership. The school community understands that all stakeholders are critical members of the school community and contribute to the success of the school. The school principal and assistant principal both maintain a leadership style in which faculty, staff, parents, students and community members alike have a shared voice that contributes to ideas, concerns, school improvements, and safety.

Building administrators capitalize on the strengths of each staff member and build upon a school environment that focuses on collaboration, distributive leadership, and transparency. Building administrators also identify teacher leaders throughout the building who support school-wide goals and initiatives via sharing best practices, collaboration, leading grade level and/or faculty meetings, modeling lessons, etc.

Olmsted #64 focuses on a philosophy of whole child development and support. Faculty and staff utilize methods and supports that teach to every aspect of students' lives, whether it be academic and/or social/emotional. Students engage in a robust academic curriculum and in-depth social and emotional development lessons and activities. School social workers and counselors have an open door policy in

which students and/or parents/guardians may contact a member of the student support team to request counseling, remediation or supports (i.e.- grief counseling after the death of a loved one, counseling after a divorce, self esteem building workshops, etc.).

Building administrators provide teachers with professional development opportunities, guidance and observational feedback to ensure that critical components of the school's vision and mission are adhered to. Teachers create lessons to encourage students to be problem solvers and thinkers by utilizing creative problem solving, critical thinking skills and creative thinking skills. Students are also challenged to use reasoning and logic concepts to validate and/or support arguments. Students are specifically taught inductive and deductive reasoning skills. Students practice inductive reasoning by drawing a conclusion based on a specific premise. Students practice deductive reasoning by using basic principles to draw upon a specific conclusion.

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

---

Olmsted #64 utilizes strategies from the gifted and talented program school-wide to support all students. One component of the program is to conduct whole-group, introductory lessons to students identified as gifted as well as those that fall within the general school population. These introductory lessons expose all students to both critical and creative thinking skills that can be incorporated throughout the core curriculum. The strategic infusion of these skills into teaching of the content area curriculum places the cognitive demand on the students and engages students in higher, more challenging levels of thinking.

Olmsted #64 offers three types of GT classes. The first type of class is called a Type I class. Type I classes are comprised of students identified as GT as well as those that entered the school under the general program. Type I classes are interest-based and often initiated by students. Type II classes use instructional methods and materials that are purposefully designed to promote the development of thinking skills and foster the use of authentic, investigative methods in students. Type III classes use investigative methods whereby the learner assumes the role of the firsthand inquirer. Type III's are typically conducted individually or in a very small group setting.

The GT curriculum combines critical, creative and metacognitive thinking. Creative thinking is promoted by incorporating skills such as brainstorming, F.F.O.E. (Fluency, Flexibility, Originality, Elaboration), patterning, and S.C.A.M.P.E.R. (Substitute, Combine, Adapt, Modify, Magnify, Minify, Put to Other Uses, Elaboration, Reverse, Rearrange). Critical thinking is infused into the higher grades using skills such as deBono's six Thinking Hats, forced relationships, creative problem solving, Bloom's Taxonomy, logical reasoning, and the Scientific Method.

A final component of the GT program consists of the Schoolwide Enrichment Model (SEM). Enrichment classes are held 2-3 times per year and expose students to others' interests, careers and hobbies. The goal of SEM is to escalate the level and quality of learning experiences for all students, above and beyond the Common Core curriculum. SEM classes are established via Student Interest Inventories and then taught by experts and mentors in their field, in order to deepen an understanding of an interest, subject or topic for the students.

A combination of Type I's, Type II's, Type III's and the Schoolwide Enrichment Model provide the framework for the GT curriculum and its overarching goal: for students to think metacognitively and fluidly move between critical and creative thinking skills.