

***U.S. Department of Education***  
***2020 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. Laura Avakians  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name PS 94 David D Porter Elementary School  
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 41-77 Little Neck Parkway  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Little Neck State NY Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 11363-1738

County Queens

Telephone (718) 423-8491 Fax (718) 423-8531

Web site/URL http://www.ps94.org E-mail lavakians@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. Danielle Giunta E-mail dgiunta4@schools.nyc.gov  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name New York City Geographic District #26 Tel. (718) 631-6943

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 Ms. Ariel Chen  
(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 2020 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 2014 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: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, or 2019.
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 (2019-2020) unless otherwise stated.

**DISTRICT** (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools)

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 22 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 5 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 0 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 27 TOTAL

**SCHOOL** (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located. If unsure, refer to NCES database for correct category: <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/> (Find your school and check “Locale”)

- Urban (city or town)  
 Suburban  
 Rural

3. Number of students as of October 1, 2019 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	13	4	17
K	20	30	50
1	25	28	53
2	26	22	48
3	25	25	50
4	31	32	63
5	39	24	63
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>	179	165	344

\*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):
- 0.6 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 63.2 % Asian
  - 1.5 % Black or African American
  - 15.8 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 14.9 % White
  - 4 % 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 2018 - 2019 school year: 6%

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, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	16
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	3
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	19
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	310
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.06
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	6

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

Chinese, Korean, Spanish

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 11 %  
38 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 44 %

Total number students who qualify: 152

8. Students receiving special education services: 13 %

45 Total number of students served

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

- |                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>3</u> Autism                  | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>1</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>39</u> Specific Learning Disability         |
| <u>2</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>0</u> Speech or Language Impairment         |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 5

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	24
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	11
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	8
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	3

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 14:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015
Daily student attendance	97%	96%	97%	97%	97%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2019.

<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.

Our mission is to foster collaboration among parents, students, and staff to enrich the learning experience of each child through high expectations, academic rigor, and a thinking curriculum. In an atmosphere rich with cultural diversity, we provide a differentiated program of instruction that sets high standards while celebrating individuality and encouraging creativity.

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**

---

Our mission at PS 94Q is to foster collaboration among parents, students and staff to enrich the learning experience of each child through high expectations, academic rigor and a “thinking” curriculum. In an atmosphere rich with cultural diversity, we provide a differentiated program of instruction that sets the highest standards for all our children while celebrating individuality and encouraging creativity. We are preparing them to meet the academic and technological challenges of both the present and future. Our entire school community endeavors to be lifelong learners, socially responsible citizens and unique individuals.

The David D Porter School is an elementary school with 345 students from pre-kindergarten through grade five located in Little Neck neighborhood of Queens. Little Neck represents one of the least traditionally urban communities in New York City; with many areas having a distinctly suburban feel. The school population is comprised of 2% Black, 16% Hispanic, 15% White, and 63% Asian students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2018-2019 was 97%.

PSQ 94 has strived to adapt and change with the needs of our student population ensuring that “every student can learn, just not on the same day or the same way.” This quote, from George Evans, is the first thing seen upon entering the building, is posted in each classroom, and the essence is embedded in each lesson being conducted by the classroom teachers.

With technology ever changing, we pride ourselves in being a Computer Science for All pilot school. Every classroom has access to a class set of laptops, a SmartBoard and Elmo projector, as well as iPads and either a laptop or desktop for each teacher. The use of technology is integrated into the curriculum and is not perceived as a separate entity. As such, technology tools have become a critical means of instruction used throughout the day. For example, problem-solving strategies that are integrated across all content areas are taught through the use of robots, tablets, Sphero, and RoboMouse. To ensure the effectiveness of the Computer Science for All initiative, every classroom teacher has adopted a hands-on approach to learning whereby students actively use the engineering design process to solve problems. This fosters access, autonomy, confidence, friendship, and inclusiveness.

PS 94Q believes that education goes beyond academics, should incorporate student interest, and allow for experimentation in multiple areas. To that end, the school provides students with the opportunity to choose from a variety of enrichment and extracurricular programs that offer learning through an range of disciplines while also allowing them to have fun. These include: Suzuki violin, Glee Club, Art/OT Club, STEM Club, Student Council, Lego Robotics, Chorus, Musical Theater residence, Running Club, Recycling Squad, Bricks4Kidz, Coding classes, theater, arts residencies and more.

To foster civic participation and encourage community service, we have established collaborations/partnerships with community organizations, such as, North Shore Animal League, March of Dimes Walk-a-thon, American Heart Association, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

The school leader and staff have put a strong process in place to regularly evaluate and adjust curricular and instructional practices in response to student learning needs and the expectations of standards across content areas. To accomplish this, we have implemented the following curriculum: Pearson ReadyGen, Wilson Foundations, Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, Passport to Social Studies, Civics for All, and GO Math. For this current school year, we have chosen to use Amplify Science and enhancing with Mystery Science.

One of the key areas of focus at PS 94Q has been to increase performance for students with disabilities and students for whom English is a new language.

Students’ social emotional health is a top priority. We have adopted the Sanford Harmony curriculum and CASEL principles – including the “Mood Meter” from Pre-kindergarten to fifth grade.

PS 94Q will continue to focus on improving communication between the school and parents regarding student progress, as well as increasing parent involvement in school events and as volunteers to support the school community.

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

---

### **1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.**

**1a.** Overall approach, which may include overarching philosophy or approaches common across subject areas

Our comprehensive rigorous curriculum is aligned with the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) – with a transition towards the Next Generation Learning Standards (NGLS) – and incorporates the tenets of the NYCDOE Instructional Leadership Framework. Embedded in organization of curriculum are the Hallmarks of Advanced Literacy. The instructional focus – Multiple Entry Points Rather than relying only on printed materials and whole class lecture notes, teachers will incorporate multiple formats to represent information and enhance student engagement – is the guiding principle that is based on ensuring a seamless transfer of skills from one grade to the next across K-5. A standardized assessment system specifies each student’s development in ELA and math is shared with the next grade’s teacher to ensure that there is no lag in targeted instruction at the start of each new school year.

In order to maximize the strategic use of instructional time, the PS 94Q staff has examined the amount of time on task students spend throughout the day. This study has allowed us to become more aware of the length of mini-lessons, the use of differentiated learning, and the use of small group instruction – as well as the types of tasks assigned. With this knowledge, we began working on developing comprehensive curriculum maps that capture the essence of each content area and connect all teaching and learning to our overarching goal of reading performance for all students – including SWDs and ENL students.

To ensure that teachers stay up to date with their pedagogical practice, we participate in learning opportunities offered by the Queens North Borough Office as it has been a crucial resource for our staff. Over the last two years, all staff members – principal, Parent Coordinator, teachers and paraprofessionals – have attended numerous Professional Learning Cycles (PLCs) designed to strengthen core instruction in English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. Teachers College calendar days are also attended by select teachers who then turnkey strategies for improving practice in reading and writing.

Additionally, we will continue to work towards closing the achievement gap for our students with disabilities and ENL students through differentiated lessons that meet the needs of individual students.

#### **1b.** Reading/English language arts

The key to success in reading begins with clearly defined student outcomes, strong research based practices, frequent monitoring of student progress, and a strong systematic intervention program.

We follow a Balanced Literacy approach – which includes Reading Workshop (shared reading, guided reading, independent reading), Writing Workshop, and Word Study. Beginning in the early grades, we place a focus on the five (5) pillars of reading - phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension – in order to lessen the widening of the achievement gap.

The core reading curricula used across the school includes Teachers College Reading and Writing Project in K-1, and Pearson ReadyGen in grade 2-5. Additionally, in our early childhood and self-contained special education classrooms, foundational skills are taught through Wilson/Fundations.

Daily guided, shared, and independent reading enables our students to foster their love of reading and to build stamina as readers. Students have daily opportunities to read in large groups, small groups, and independently. Reading instruction is presented at grade and instructional levels. A portion of the library is leveled so that students can choose books based on their assessed reading levels. There are also books organized by genre, theme, and author. Each student has a book baggie filled with both leveled and interest books which can be read in school and at home. So that our diverse student body has the opportunity to see themselves in the books they read, we have taken a critical look at libraries have begun to incorporate a variety of culturally relevant texts into each classroom. Students keep daily reading logs to monitor their

reading volume and stamina, taking ownership of their reading lives. Charts filled with post-it notes and entries in readers' notebooks are some of the ways students demonstrate understanding of strategies taught.

By continually improving our craft through ongoing professional learning, we are using newly learned skills that allow us to make a direct impact on student achievement. Through ongoing professional learning, our teachers have honed their toolkits of strategies that are shared with readers and writers on a daily basis. Strategic modeling provides students with exemplars of how readers think critically, analyze, interpret, and synthesize within and across texts. In all grades teachers devote daily time to practice of these skills, which are reinforced throughout the various reading opportunities that students are provided. Anchor charts posted around the room memorialize new and previous instruction and are available for student use as needed.

New York State English Language Arts standardized assessment scores are analyzed across standards for trends. Based on our findings, we identify areas of growth and areas for improvement. Upon receiving the results, teams of teachers conduct a review the item analysis and individual student reports to help plan targeted instruction to address students' needs and adjust our curriculum units. The acquisition and development of reading skills by individual students is monitored by classroom teachers daily, as well as through common formative assessments, and school wide benchmarking using the Teachers College Reading Writing Project assessments). Additionally, our assessment program includes Foundations unit assessments, i-Ready, Acadience (DIBELS), and Spire – the results from which are used to determine targeted academic intervention services for individual and groups of students.

### **1c. Mathematics**

At PS 94Q we challenge each student to develop and extend mathematical proficiency through a focused and coherent curriculum, high quality mathematics instruction, and assessments that meet the learning needs of each student. We place our focus on mathematical reasoning and fostering a deeper conceptual understanding in order to prepare each student to succeed in a changing world. With the Common Core Standards as the foundation, the instruction provides an emphasis on depth over breadth with an emphasis on essential concepts and processes of mathematics.

Our teachers know that learning mathematics is a process that requires active involvement. As such, they aim to provide opportunities for students to become engaged in the learning process because it is our belief that mathematics is best learned through activities that allow students to explore and understand the mathematics on their own. The Standards for Mathematical Practice are integrated into daily instruction as way to highlight the critical thinking aspects of rather than a set of rules and formulas to memorize. Getting to the point where students are able to take an active role in their learning of mathematics happens because our teachers design tasks that allow meaningful engagement with the content.

Through the mathematics curriculum adopted for use, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt GoMath! we take the constructivist approach to mathematics to prepare students to think critically, problem solve, innovate, communicate, and collaborate. GoMath! provides students with the conceptual framework in which students are required to explore and experience multiple pathways to problem solving. Rather than teaching a skill in isolation, skills are taught and re-visited throughout the year. Students are taught and then strategies are strategically re-visited and reinforced over the course of the year through to guide students toward achieving mastery.

Our mathematics program is differentiated so that we ensure access and multiple entry points for all of our students – including English as a new language students, students with disabilities, and above level learners – so that they are continually exposed to complex math concepts at the appropriate depth. To do this, teachers integrate hands-on and digital learning experiences with manipulatives and interactive tools to further the understanding of complex mathematical concepts. These include, Ozobots, Robot Mouse, and Sphero – which incorporates technology into math in authentic ways so that we continue to yield the great results we have been seeing and help students see the real-world connections that can be made with math.

Our schoolwide mathematics program also provides opportunities for students to transfer newly learned skills to be applied in unique situations and/or real life scenarios. Including multiple experiences outside of

pencil and paper not only allows for access to the problem but also a new way to approach the skills that are taught. In this way, we are producing learners that will be able to think outside the box so that they are prepared for college and career.

In addition to conducting a thorough analysis of the New York State Mathematics Assessment results by question and by standards, our teachers utilize the results of Go Math! chapter tests, exit tickets, and teacher created checklists drive instruction and establish small group instruction for targeted students. Additionally, our students participate in simulated math assessment using the released NYS mathematics exam questions and the New York City Performance Assessment. Teachers use these simulations to inform their daily instruction and prepare their students for the NYS Mathematics exam. A systematic, comprehensive math intervention block has enabled us to further address the needs of our students below, at and above grade level standards.

#### **1d. Science**

Our comprehensive and rigorous science program allows to experiment and explore their world to discover new things. The walls are lined with animal habitats, housing a gecko, a hamster, a bearded dragon, a toad and a rescued tortoise among other critters. By following the New York State Science Learning Standards we provide our students with opportunities to investigate core science concepts in increasingly complex ways.

To further our philosophy of how students learn science best, we have adopted the Amplify Science Program which provides a hands-on, inquiry approach to science learning. Our classroom teachers and science teacher design science learning experiences that allow students to investigate scientific phenomena, work collaboratively with partners and small groups, and foster genuine discussion so that they discover multiple pathways to arriving at a solution. Each student maintains a science notebook where they sketch noticings and observations, craft claims and support with evidence, record conclusions, and share findings.

To supplement the curriculum, we have designed STEM-related science kits and includes such experiments as making an open and closed circuit for fourth graders, and creating a boat for buoyancy in third grade. These tasks extend the learning that the curriculum provides and allows us to take some of the concepts across grade bands. As a way to incorporate the disciplinary literacy aspect of science, teachers include non-fiction and informational texts into the curriculum as a way to build a foundation of science knowledge for our students.

The acquisition and development of scientific skills by individual students is monitored by classroom teachers through the products of scientific inquiries. These products are assessed formatively to provide the teacher with next steps for instruction and feedback is shared with students as to their areas of strength and areas of focus as to their ability to apply newly learned concepts.

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

The social studies program at PS 94Q is based on the NYC K-8 Social Studies Scope and Sequence and the New York State Social Studies Framework through the use of the NYCDOE-created Passport to Social Studies curriculum. In order to support the mastering of key concepts, students use trade books, primary and secondary source documents, online resources and field trips to bring historical events to life.

The goal of our social studies program is to develop engaged citizens. As such, we teach our students to be aware of the world around them and their future role as a global citizen. As a vehicle for doing this, we have opted to incorporate the Civics for All curriculum which aims to provide students with opportunities to develop skills and knowledge related to democracy. Our students learn about our local, State and Federal governments. Upper grade students examine ways to improve our school, write letters to our councilmembers, visit Town Hall, and invite them to visit us. Additionally, we have an elected Student Council which provides students a glimpse of the electoral process. Students are nominated by the classmates. They campaign, compose and give speeches, and vote in a schoolwide election. The elected officers meet weekly with a teacher advisor and help our school to thrive.

Social studies is taught through an inquiry/project based approach and is incorporated with other content areas wherever possible – particularly the arts and computer science. Current events is used to keep our students aware of what is going on in the world. Field trips are incorporate across grade levels and aligned to the units of study found in the social studies curriculum – which allows for extended and enriched learning experiences.

**1f. For secondary schools:**

**1g. For schools that offer preschool for three- and/or four-year old students:**

Our Pre-Kindergarten classes are instructed using the five domains of the New York State PreKindergarten Learning Standards – Approaches to Learning, Physical Development and Health, Social and Emotional Development, Communication, Language and Literacy and Cognition and Knowledge of the Real World. Within each of our 10 units of study, the core curriculum areas of reading, writing, mathematics, social studies and science are addressed.

The Pre-K program at PS 94Q incorporates the use of specially designed learning centers that include opportunities for social interaction, purposeful play, literacy, math, language development, social/emotional development, and fine and gross motor skills centered around one of the five (5) themes. Through these centers, students explore and interact to develop a better awareness and understanding of the world around them. Additionally, the units that students engage with in Pre-K have a direct connection to their future achievement as the standards addressed in Pre- K help our students successfully transition to kindergarten – which has adjusted its program to include more developmentally appropriate practices by also creating purposeful play centers – to allow them to ease into a more academic environment while fostering learning and growth.

**2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

PS 94 offers a variety of enrichment/extracurricular activities such as, Suzuki violin, Glee Club, Art/OT Club, STEM Club, Student Council, Lego Robotics, Chorus, Musical Theater residence, Running Club, Recycling Squad, Bricks4Kidz, Coding classes, after school residencies and more. We have also established collaborations and partnerships with community organizations, such as, North Shore Animal League, March of Dimes Walk-a-thon, American Heart Association, SNAP, Queens College, Alley Pond Environmental Center, New York Road Runners, RoboMindTech and Bricks 4Kidz.

**Arts:**

Students learn about artistic technique and history through study and application. A culminating Art Night in the spring showcases a sampling of the work and talent of our student artists. Music history and technique are taught through a rich curriculum that emphasizes performances vocally as well as using instruments such as the violin. A full participation chorus as well as a Glee Club performs at concerts. At each we sing The National Anthem and the PS94Q School Song.

Theater Arts is presented from grades K-5. Through a grant, a former Broadway producer arranges shows that are appropriate for our grade levels. The children work on songs, scripts, and, of course, act in the shows. The community is invited to attend and the performance in the evening and is repeated for the entire school to enjoy.

**Character Education/Social Emotional Learning:**

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is a mainstay at PS 94Q with the Sanford Harmony curriculum at the core. Each month, we introduce a virtue and learning experiences across the curriculum is planned to enhance understanding of the virtue and to encourage children to follow it throughout. In addition, the student council incorporates team spirited activities to support the particular virtue. The application and reinforcement occurs in all aspect of the student’s day from the bus, to the classroom, the hallways, recess, and the cafeteria.

## Physical Education and Health:

The goal of physical education is to help students develop healthy habits and routines that will last a lifetime. Across the year, students participate in a variety of activities that will increase physical, social, emotional, and mental abilities. We provide a safe and motivating class in which all students are included. We encourage all students to try their best each day! Physical education classes promote and emphasize developing life-long physical activities and learning skills in a non-competitive, fun format. Additionally, there is an opportunity for students to participate on the CHAMPS Basketball Team.

Students in Pre-K through grade five receive periods of physical education every week and participate in Move-to-Improve elementary classroom-based physical activity program. The Move-to-Improve program integrates grade level academic concepts and physical activity in lessons that are aligned to NYS Physical Education Learning Standards.

Health topics include nutrition, the human body, safety and social skills. Special emphasis has been placed on dealing with conflict and responding to bullying.

## Computer Science:

Computer Science for All is a New York City initiative that has been incorporated across grade levels over the past few years. As new programs are introduced to students – they become experts and are then able to assist their peers and teachers in other classrooms. Code.Org, Ozobots, CS First, Botley and Scratch.org have been used consistently. Our early grade students are provided with opportunities to enhance their learning with a four week course using Lego Robotics. The upper grade students are given the opportunity to enhance their computer science knowledge base by participating in four week long coding course with experts in the field. CS4all has been integrated into other curricula areas such as: Mathematics, Social Studies, Reading, Science, etc. Every classroom is equipped with computer carts for daily exploration – along with iPads, Legos, Robot Mouse, and other technology and digital tools. Now that the students are becoming more technological, they are expanding the fun aspect into one of enhancing their academics. To do this, Google Docs and Seesaw are used so that students can save and share their work for all to view. Finally, to keep the children up to date, the teachers regularly attend professional development to build their own technology skills.

### **3. Academic Supports:**

#### **3a. Students performing below grade level**

PS 94Q has implemented a multi-tiered system of supports to develop, improve, and maintain systems of support for all students. The multi-tiered system of supports integrates instruction and interventions based on an analysis of data from a universal screening process. Based on the results, we match the intensity of support needed to address student strengths and areas for growth using differentiated practices to help them master grade level standards and close the achievement gap.

The Academic Intervention Services teacher specifically works with students in the first and second grades who are not on grade level. Across classrooms teachers provide differentiated supports for all learners using varying approaches for students' different learning styles. Multiple entry points actively engage all learners, including students with disabilities and ELLs. Multiple entry points are also embedded into all unit plans. Schoolwide professional learning is working on gradual release of the teacher as facilitator to mediate discussions to extend student thinking.

In order to make the programs accessible for all learners, classroom teachers have made refinements to the reading and writing units. Additionally, teams of teachers have refined GoMath! in order to provide scaffolds for our ELLs, SWDs and students who struggle. Our teachers have developed toolkits of close reading strategies, objectives and mentor text that are shared with readers and writers of all levels to strengthen their comprehension and writing skills. Strategic modeling during the mini-lesson, interactive

read aloud, shared reading, and guided reading provides students with exemplars of how good readers think critically, analyze and interpret text, and synthesize across texts.

For students who continue to struggle, Tier 2 intervention is provided in addition to core instruction. A small percentage of our students will require Tier 3 instruction that is more explicit, more intensive, and specifically designed to meet their individual needs.

### **3b. Students performing above grade level**

PS 94Q is a school whose motto is “All Children can Learn, but not on the same day or in the same way.” The educators in this school have worked collaboratively to provide extended learning and enrichment opportunities for our above grade learners.

It's essential for advanced learners, as it allows them to delve deeper into a subject. Classroom teachers do that by offering a broader range of text and text sets that include multiple perspectives; providing opportunities to work in partnerships or teams with other high performing students to conduct research that encourages divergent thinking – while also allowing them to set their own pace; and incorporating the use of technology so that they can follow their interests. Examples from across the school include programming interactive stories, games, and animations using “Scratch” based upon a book being read or creating short recording using Flip Grid in response to an issue learned during a social studies or civics lesson.

Our Robo Pandas Lego Robotic League club attends competitions and showcases that are highly motivating and engaging way for our above level students to expand their STEM skills. In a recent NYC First LEGO League Championship Tournament! our team worked together to fulfill the contest's two-part requirement: a research project and robot design. They decided to tackle the controversial bio swale: a rain garden designed to capture storm water and reduce sewer system pressure and harmful overflow into nearby waterways. After extensive research the students came up with the "moat-o-swale", a new and improved design. The group decided to use a 50/50 soil and wood chip mix which they found was most effective to absorb the water They also designed a robot, "Aquabot", which they specially programmed and designed to complete a series of timed tasks at the competition.

### **3c. Special education**

Our special education program ensures accessibility for all students with disabilities. We provide individual, flexible schedule based on Individualized Education (IEP) so that each students is provided with the services they are entitled to receive. Teachers plan instruction for students with disabilities inclusive of appropriately rigorous standards-aligned annual goals. Our teachers revise the curriculum to include differentiated tasks, choice boards, and specially designed instruction.

Teachers provide differentiated supports for students with disabilities and vary approaches based on differing learning styles. Multiple entry points actively engage all learners, including students with disabilities. Schoolwide professional learning opportunities support special education teachers with the gradual release of responsibility so that students with disabilities begin to take on their role as independent learners.

Schedules of special education teachers are arranged to allow time to meet with service providers. Schedules of general and special education teachers are arranged to allow time to work together to build supports and scaffolds into daily instruction. They develop appropriately rigorous, standards-aligned annual goals and high-leverage cross curricular skills and tasks for all students with disabilities in order for them to be able to participate in and access the general education curriculum.

Parents and families of students with disabilities are offered the opportunity to meet with the School Based Support Team (SBST) on a weekly basis to help them understand their child's IEP, management needs, SMART goals, and instructional supports that are provided by the school to ensure student success in meeting IEP goals. All “Turning 5” cases involve the participation of the parent/family and SBST, ensuring

that the appropriate setting is recommended and goals written to reflect the Present Level of Performance (PLOP) – along with the child’s specific needs.

**3d.** ELLs, if a special program or intervention is offered

There is a growing number of newcomer students bringing new languages to PS 94Q – mostly Spanish, Chinese (Mandarin), and Korean. To serve these students appropriately, our English as a New Language (ENL) program is focused on meeting the individual needs of English language and multilingual learners. ENL students are taught by dually certified teachers in small group settings, which allows for more individualized instruction.

The ENL teacher works collaboratively with classroom teachers to provide coherent and high level instruction. While the classroom teacher delivers the core instruction, the ENL teacher differentiates in small groups to preview vocabulary, conduct guided reading, scaffold by activating prior knowledge, using gestures, sentence stems, repetition, and visual support. The ENL teacher also engages during classroom discussions by specifically targeting the development of oral English proficiency.

ENL students are provided with home language support through the use of technology, literature in their native language, and the use of bilingual dictionaries and glossaries. Former ELLs are provided with continued opportunities to develop academic vocabulary across content areas and strategies to help them approach complex texts. Instruction is scaffolded through the use of conversational prompts, graphic organizers, and visual supports.

To expand on the support for our ENL/MLL students, we offer an after school program that targets the development of oral language skills through hands-on science experiments using Hand2Mind STEM in Action kits. The STEM kits provide targeted students with the chance to dive deep into problem solving projects and content area material designed to prompt discussion and problem solving strategies. Additionally, all ENL/MLL students are provided with Raz Kids and i-Ready accounts, which provides opportunities for at home. The ENL teacher uses data gleaned from these programs to target instruction focused on the individual needs of this diverse group of students.

**3e.** Other populations (e.g., migrant), if a special program or intervention is offered

## **PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE**

---

### **1. Engaging Students:**

PS 94Q takes every opportunity to engage the whole student – academically, socially, emotionally and physically. Our goal is to convey excitement for learning by creating a solid foundation where our students are encouraged to become autonomous and independent learners who can reach their fullest potential. Across the school, we incorporate these ideals into the curriculum through academics, the arts and enrichment opportunities. As a small school, we have been able to provide more individualized educational opportunities as a result of the collaborative efforts of the school leader, teachers and parents.

Students are engaged in a bustling and lively school where their voices are heard. In all the classrooms, there are animated, student-led discussions, engaging all students in important issues and promoting the use of precise language to deepen and extend their learning. Rather than one-size-fits-all instruction, teachers use different approaches with different children. Children have a choice of activities and tasks for reading and math, depending on their interests and level of skills: one child may work on a puzzle, another may write words with magnetic letters, while a third may read to himself. And, as early as kindergarten, children are reading and writing. Support structures are in place for advancing to the next level and students are aware of their next learning steps.

The active Parents Association helps pay for activities such as tennis and taekwondo. Lunchtime clubs include knitting, karaoke and sports. There is also a glee club and chorus. As the school has a small playground, we utilize the city playground to support physical development. Our LEGO Robotics club wins awards at citywide competitions and some of our top-performing students join an early morning STEM class doing such experiments as building a chair out of pasta and glue. Additional clubs such as, Suzuki Violin, Peer Mediation, Recycling Squad, Robo Panda Lego League and Student Council appeal to different interests.

Social and emotional learning is incorporated into every school day so each student learns how to be aware of their feelings and learn strategies to help them manage emotions. All teachers engage students in social emotional lessons throughout the school year using the Sanford Harmony curriculum. Our bright, colorful hallways incorporate sensory designs available for all students when they need time to gather their thoughts. And – brain breaks are encouraged. Additionally, we incorporate the CASEL principles and the Mood Meter from Yale's Center for Emotional Intelligence's RULER movement.

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

The school creates multiple opportunities to partner with families, such as tea with the principal and small group conversations with parents and families. Parent workshops communicate the high expectations for students and give families tools to help them meet goals. Community activities promote civic responsibility and inform students of possible career and college goals. These have included a food drive, toy drive, Mathathon, musical theater programs and a program promoting physical health and well-being. Students and parents take on an active role in cultural activities building a relationship of trust and respect. Each class has their own website with learning goals and parent activities.

We have a Parent Coordinator who is the connection between school and family. She is available to assist parents get information and support they need in their home language. We have a strong PTSA which supports the school community a variety of ways – including money to fund some of our special programs. Our School Leadership Team is made up of both teachers and parents who work together to make the best decisions for the school.

To maintain ongoing communication, classroom teachers provide monthly newsletters, class pages on the school website, and utilize “Remind” – an application that allows a direct line between families and teachers. In these ways, communication between parents/families and the school is always open. Additionally, every Tuesday afternoon is set aside as Parent Engagement time during which teachers either

make phone calls or conduct parent meetings in order to keep them informed of their child's progress. To bring families together, we hosts events, such as the International Food Festival, where we celebrate diversity, and an Evening of the Arts – both are well attended every year. When we celebrated our Centennial a few years back, the entire community attended to celebrate!

We partner with our community organizations, such as Flushing Town Hall, and Alley Pond Environmental Center to enrich our students' learning while also supporting our local businesses. The Little Neck/Douglaston Fire Department, Police Department, Long Island Railroad, and our local Library enrich our students' learning with safety lessons and by making reading materials available that might not ordinarily be available at home. Our Borough President's Office has made funding available for much needed Technology grants and our local Councilmembers are often found attending our assemblies, awards ceremonies, and graduations.

### **3. Creating Professional Culture:**

The PS 94Q community is a place where teachers feel they are valued members of an esteemed group who are empowered to take the lead. The school leader is always open and available to ensure that teachers' voices are heard when it comes to schoolwide decision-making. The teachers, School Leadership Team (SLT), and the school leader collaboratively design the instructional focus each year. Teachers also collaborate daily around the best ways to address student needs and curricular and instructional needs.

The Professional Development Team has a strategic, transparent system for organizing the professional learning opportunities that are designed to support the instructional focus, teacher effectiveness, and interest. Professional learning offerings are gleaned from an analysis of student and teacher work and are tied to how the instructional focus should look across all grades and core subjects.

Our professional learning program is a rigorous, fluid, and flexible process that is ongoing, differentiated, and structured to advance teaching practice with the goal of positively impact student achievement.

Teachers are provided with common preparation periods so they can plan with their grade colleagues. This allows them to meet regularly to discuss shared students and identify students in need of support both academically and emotionally. Teachers look forward to their time together to receive feedback from colleagues and to help advance and improve their unit and lesson planning. There are also opportunities for teachers to work vertically to ensure coherence from one grade to the next. The school leader has given them freedom to explore their students' needs and to find ways to better address them. One suggestion came from the special education teachers – who now conduct walkthroughs of each other's classrooms and hold bi-weekly meetings to share pedagogical strategies and resources. As a result of these walks and intervisitations, teachers have implemented multiple entry points into their lesson planning to make content more accessible for all students.

Scheduling accommodations – in collaboration with the school and teacher leaders – made it possible for targeted teachers to visit other schools to observe and bring back new ideas. There is a culture of distributive leadership throughout the school that allows teacher leaders to serve as peer instructional coaches offering support, establishing a schedule of intervisitations, and provide professional learning to demonstrate best practices.

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

PS94Q is a small school with only one administrator. She encourages teachers to take on a more active role in their school through the use of shared decision making and allowing them to take on more than one role. The school leader has high expectations for all staff members which is evidenced throughout the school through verbal and written structures, such as new teacher orientations, ongoing workshops, and a staff handbook which was developed by teachers as a guide to professional responsibilities.

The leadership philosophy is to develop an outstanding teaching staff to enable all of our children to be successful lifelong learners. Towards that end, the principal has embedded distributed leadership structures

that allow for multiple opportunities to engage in teacher-led professional development around curriculum. Teachers who demonstrate exceptional pedagogical skills are continually encouraged to assume mentoring and leadership roles in our school. Teachers play an integral part in key decisions that affect student learning across the school. Cabinet Team members analyze school data and plan for professional learning opportunities within and outside of the school community.

The school leader communicates these high expectations in order to move the learning needs of the school forward. Through goal-setting meetings, teachers align their practice to the school's instructional focus. Monday professional learning time, department meetings and individual conversations with teachers, communicates a focus on improving instruction using the Danielson Framework for Teaching (FfT) and schoolwide and individual professional development plans. The principal messages excellence by being a visible presence in the classrooms. That means attending and leading professional learning sessions and joining teachers for planning meetings and study groups. The message is that the school leader is also a lifelong learner who serve as a catalyst for innovation and improved teacher capacity. As a result, teachers take ownership for their own professional learning by participating in internal inter-visitations to view best practices and incorporating ideas from professional books and journals.

The school leadership maintains a culture of mutual trust and positive attitude that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults. The principal effectively involves and communicates with the school community, including teachers, families, and students, regarding school improvement plans and decision-making processes.

## **PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

---

Our principal challenges the school community by introducing new initiatives into our practice. One example of this is “Computer Science for All”. This is a NYC public school program where students learn computer science so that they graduate high school with the 21st Century skills needed to be college and career ready. This has grown exponentially and has become embedded in our classrooms, allowing every student to build hands-on confidence in their computer skills.

In order to bring this initiative to life, select teachers were chosen to lead the work. To get a feel for what was expected, this group of teachers were sent to visit other schools who were already up and running. In turn, they led professional learning for the staff on the learnings from their observations and as to the expectations of the initiative. Little by little, teachers began to incorporate technology their daily instruction – beginning with programs such as Coding, Scratch, Dot and Dash.

As the initiative grew, teachers realized that these skills could be used throughout the day – not just during scheduled computer lab visits. As teachers became more comfortable with the technology and the platforms, we started to see evidence in cross curricula activities. Students were demonstrating their math skills on a board using Robot Mouse and designing Revolutionary War Scratch projects.

During our first year as part of CS4All, PS 94Q was honored as a Spotlight School and hosted a series of visits for our Superintendent, representatives from CS4All, and other teacher colleagues. They had the opportunity to observe our students engaged in various technology-related activities. To prepare for the visits, our student leaders created QR codes for the guests to follow throughout the school. These were strategically placed to explain our computer science journey. The meeting agendas were also created in QR code so that our visitors needed to scan the codes using iPads to know what came next. Additionally, each visitor received a coded Lego piece upon entering a classroom. These needed to be put together in order to read the message – “Together is Better” – our district’s motto.

An outgrowth of CS4All is our Lego Robotics team – The Robo Pandas – who have had the opportunity to compete in citywide competitions and present their research to local politicians.