

***U.S. Department of Education***  
***2021 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. Kelly Shannon  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name PS 41 Greenwich Village  
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 116 W 11th Street  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City New York State NY Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 10011-8364

County NEW YORK

Telephone (212) 675-2756 Fax (212) 924-0910

Web site/URL https://ps41.org/ E-mail kshanno@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\* Mr. Kelly McGuire E-mail kmcguire@schools.nyc.gov  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

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

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board  
President/Chairperson Benjamin Morden  
(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, leave blank.*

## **PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION**

---

The electronic signature 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 2021 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 must include one or more of grades K-12. Schools located on the same campus (physical location and mailing address) must apply as an entire school (i.e. K-8; 6-12; K-12 school). Two (or more) schools located on separate campuses, must apply individually even if they have the same principal. A single school located on multiple campuses with one principal must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2015 and grades participating in statewide assessments must have been part of the school for at least the three years prior to September 2019.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 or 2020.
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 current school year (2020-2021) unless otherwise stated.

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

- Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
  - 37 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 11 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 1 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools

49 TOTAL

**SCHOOL** (To be completed by all schools. Only include demographic data for the nominated school, not the district.)

- 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

- Number of students as of October 1, 2020 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school. Include all students enrolled, in-person, participating in a hybrid model, or online only. If online schooling or other COVID-19 school issues make this difficult to obtain, provide the most accurate and up-to-date information available:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	22	27	49
K	27	44	71
1	46	32	78
2	40	43	83
3	42	46	88
4	36	42	78
5	39	47	86
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>	252	281	533

\*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
  - 7 % Asian
  - 1 % Black or African American
  - 10 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 68 % White
  - 14 % 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 2019 - 2020 school year: 2%

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, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	7
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	4
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	11
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	669
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.02
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	2

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

Albanian, Chinese (Cantonese), French, Italian, Japanese, Slavic, Spanish

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 2 %

12 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 8 %

Total number students who qualify: 40

8. Students receiving special education services: 14 %  
77 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. All students receiving special education services should be reflected in the table below. 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>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness           | <u>12</u> Other Health Impaired                |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay      | <u>0</u> Specific Learning Disability          |
| <u>10</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>29</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment       | <u>1</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>21</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 16
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	<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.	32
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	9
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	15
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	6

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 17:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	96%	96%	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 2020.

<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.

At PS41, we believe in the power of collaboration. We strive to create a supportive environment that affirms and celebrates individual identities and learning styles.

16. Briefly describe how your school has been operating during the current 2020-2021 school year (e.g., open as usual, online only, a hybrid model, etc.)? If different grade levels in your building operate in different ways, include this. If the school began with one model and switched to another partially through the year, include this as well.

We have operated in a hybrid model during the 2020-2021 school year.

From September-November, we had 1 Full-Time Remote cohort, and 3 Blended Learning cohorts, with students attending school in-person 1-2 days each week and learning remotely 3-4 days each week.

From December-March, we had 1 Full-Time Remote cohort, and 2 Blended Learning cohorts, with students attending school in-person 2-3 days each week and learning remotely 2-3 days each week.

In March, we were able to bring in almost all students with IEPs or students who are ELLs for 5 days a week of in-person instruction. We also brought back all 2nd Grade Blended Learning students to 5 days a week of in-person instruction.

In early April, we were able to bring in all Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten, 1st Grade and 3rd Grade Blended Learning students for 5 days a week of in-person instruction (this was before the CDC changed social distancing guidelines).

We continue to offer a Full-Time Remote class for each grade level.

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

## **PART III - SUMMARY**

---

PS 41 is a welcoming and collaborative community of students, educators, and families, dedicated to providing the highest quality education to each of our students. Located in the heart of historic Greenwich Village, PS 41 reflects the rich cultural diversity of our neighborhood and dynamically incorporates the resources of our neighborhood into our studies. A core question we continually ask of our students, faculty and families is, what is possible? This question supports a wide range of ideas and perspective taking that leads to innovation and supports our commitment to lifelong learning.

Central to our mission is a shared belief that each child and family brings to our school a unique set of experiences, perspectives, and abilities. We work to build strong relationships between and among each student, family, and educator. We believe all students benefit from diverse and inclusive schools and classrooms. Our school community is built on an understanding of and respect for others. As a New York City Public School, our community encompasses diversity in many ways, with a variety of ethnicities, races, family structures, learning styles, socio-economic backgrounds, and beliefs. Our curriculum provides academic rigor for all students and strives to provide cross-cultural understandings among our students while promoting a strong sense of social responsibility. We seek to create an equitable community for people of all races, abilities, genders, socioeconomic statuses, religions, ages, and sexual orientations to achieve personal success by being represented, loved, supported, and heard.

We provide an academically rigorous program to ensure all students succeed within the school and beyond. As educators, we believe a supportive environment affirms and celebrates individual identities and different learning styles, and also provides students opportunities to meet their full potential. Our educators use a variety of teaching practices to achieve this, such as the workshop approach, which encourages student voice and choice. We aim to make curricular decisions with intentionality and purpose that are rooted in equity. Our curriculum choices support our belief that conceptual understanding across content areas is critical and goes hand in hand with skill development. We believe learning is an iterative process and we strive to provide opportunities across content areas for students to imagine, design and redesign projects.

Our curriculum and school practices incorporate the importance of sustainability and environmental justice in order to create a safer, healthier and more resilient future for all. We aim to teach students the limits of natural resources and how to meet our own needs while also enhancing the ability of future generations to meet theirs. Our school has a student-led recycling team, each year we have a STEM Inquiry Fair facilitated by our science teachers and environmental studies educator. We collaborate with organizations that support environmental studies, including The Highline, Organic Valley and World Wildlife Federation. We aim to instill a commitment from our students that they will be stewards of our planet throughout their lives.

We place a strong emphasis on incorporating the arts into our daily programming and work closely with several community organizations, such as the National Dance Institute, the Whitney Museum, McBurney YMCA, and Jazz at Lincoln Center.

Our highly dedicated faculty works closely together to engage in continuous, ongoing professional learning that helps educators grow their practice to create and sustain equitable outcomes for students through an affirming and enriching environment. Professional development is tailored to support educators at all levels of their development and to foster a culture of excellence, support retention of educators and ensure impactful teaching and learning. Our educators engage in professional learning communities both inside our school and across our district through book clubs, workshops, seminars, institutes, think tanks and committee work.

We value parental involvement and collaboration among students, families, and faculty. We believe in engaging educators, students and families as allies to foster real dialogue around issues of inequities. In collaboration with the community, PS 41 aims to nurture lifelong learners who navigate the world through an equitable, anti-bias and anti-racist lens.



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

---

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

PS 41 has a robust curriculum across content areas. In ELA, we use Teachers College Reading and Writing Units of Study in Grades K-5. We also use the Teachers College Phonics program in grades K-2. In ELA, teachers use pre and post assessments to gauge student growth and plan for small groups. Student choice is given in topic and formatting on published pieces in writing and in book choice in reading.

Our primary mathematics curriculum is Investigations, with elements of Engage NY and Math in the City woven in. Students are taught to conceptualize in mathematics, to model with mathematics, and are taught that mistake-making is a necessary part of understanding. Students openly share both their ideas and questions in math class, and teachers convey the process is valued more than the solutions. To assist remote teaching, Investigations created a digital platform where students can watch videos to review mathematical concepts. To supplement our remote mathematics work, we use IXL, an online platform that personalizes learning based on student responses and provides teachers real-time analytics of student work.

Teachers track student assessment results in reading and math on spreadsheets and analyze data as grade teams. They use the data to plan instruction and reflect on practices. We also use student surveys to gauge students' feelings about both teaching practices (e.g., the use of departmentalization this year for the first time) and to inform curricular decisions (e.g., book clubs, writing topics).

In social studies, PS 41 uses a teacher-created curriculum that blends the New York State Social Studies Standards with the Learning for Justice Social Studies Standards. Our units of study are deep and focus on developing critical readers and critical thinkers. Students are taught to question text, look for untold voices in history, and understand the world around them in order to become productive citizens.

In science, we use Amplify across Grades K-5. Amplify Science curriculum is aligned with the Next Generation Science Standards and incorporates teaching science concepts through real-life contexts. In addition to hands-on investigations, Amplify's inquiry-based approach allows students to explore ideas and build understanding. A range of digital tools enhance science work across all grades. Amplify has adapted all its resources to accommodate the needs of in-person and remote students.

Additional curricular components include PAF (Preventing Academic Failure), our self-created character education curriculum, and equity education themes of the month.

For this school year, PS 41 developed a Reimagining Education Committee to think about how to restructure the curriculum to meet both the needs of students and the time limitations of the blended model. We followed a hybrid learning model, and used Google Classroom as our primary material platform and Zoom as our classroom communication tool. A change for this year was the widespread use of breakout rooms as a means to create remote small group instruction and discussion.

#### **1a. For secondary schools (middle and/or high school grades):**

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

We provide high quality early childhood care and education to 3- and 4-year-old students through the Pre-K for All Inspire Interdisciplinary Units of Study. Our curriculum offers hands-on play-based learning opportunities and is designed to support the early childhood learning domains, which include social-emotional development, literacy and language development, math, science, technology, social studies, physical development, music, art and school readiness.

We intentionally embed themes to support the emerging and foundational skills in these core areas. These themes are aligned to the New York State Pre-K Scope and Sequence, which include My Community and NBRS 2021

Me, The Environment and Me, and Change and Growth All Around Me.

Our work this year centered around building connections between in-person and at-home experiences. Our work is anchored in these 6 guiding principles: relationships are key; maximize in-person experiences; ensure age-appropriate spaces; young children can and should play together; use remote experiences intentionally; partner with families.

Social-emotional supports we offered this year included starting the school year with community building activities, and adapting our first unit of study and integrated learning opportunities to explore and learn about social themes and concepts including flexibility, persistence, respect, kindness and resilience.

Due to the nature of blended learning, we had to re-imagine our educational and instructional goals for our early childhood grades. We continued to implement a standards-based and data driven curriculum. However, we had to be mindful of adult dependency, age-appropriate content, pacing, depth, quality, approaches, balance of screen time/play time and levels of engagement.

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

PS 41's specialty classes and enrichment programs are designed to foster the many talents and individual interests of each child, and have been adapted to accommodate both remote learners and in-person students.

Visual art is offered to remote and blended learning students in Pre-K through 5th Grade. We support each child's individual approach to making art while they search for meaningful, personal solutions and responses. The social studies themes in each grade offer opportunities for vital cross-curricular work. Virtual art classes have been a highlight for students during the pandemic. We continue our partnership with the Whitney Museum with remote visits.

Students in Pre-K through 5th Grade have weekly Dance/Drama classes that include various styles and cultural styles of dance including singing, acting, yoga, improvisation and choreography. Students have class outside or in the auditorium. Remote students have live Zoom lessons and share performances using applications such as Flipgrid. The 5th Grade musical is an example of how students learn to build confidence and social connections.

Physical Education teaches all students (Pre-K - 5th Grade) to stay active and healthy remotely and in-person. Aligned to SHAPE America's Grade-level Outcomes and National Standards for Physical Education, the curriculum offers a variety of fundamental skills through games, challenges and team-building activities. These include cooperation, sportsmanship, participation, locomotor/nonlocomotor skills and strategies.

The K-5 Amplify Science curriculum is aligned with the Next Generation Science Standards and incorporates teaching science concepts through a variety of real-life contexts. In addition to hands-on investigations, Amplify's inquiry-based approach allows students to explore ideas and build understanding. A range of digital tools enhance science work across all grades. Amplify has adapted all its resources to accommodate the needs of in-person and remote students.

In Green STEM, students have explored water issues, the United Nations Sustainability Goals, climate change, the downside of the fashion industry, and environmental justice issues. The program moved smoothly into the virtual learning space for all students in Grades 3-5. Our award-winning Green Roof offers vital outdoor classroom space and is used by all classes for active learning experiences in many subjects.

Other enrichment programs and partnerships include National Dance Institute, Jazz at Lincoln Center, Friends of the Highline, Brooklyn Conservatory of Music and Carnegie Hall. Additionally, we offer clubs for Math, Chess, STEM, High Notes School Chorus, violin, piano and guitar lessons, as well as financial literacy and health/puberty classes for 5th graders.

curriculum. Self-Awareness, Empathy, Responsibility, Flexibility, Perseverance and Compassion are among the personal traits studied through read-alouds, discussions, art and writing tasks. Our Faculty Equity Team has begun working to address issues of race and racism through this SEL curriculum. Our early childhood social worker provides emotional support and workshops for Pre-K and Kindergarten families, as well as in-class work with teachers and students.

Our Wellness Committee works to provide nutritious school lunches and also runs the WITS (Wellness in the Schools) program where qualified chefs teach students about balanced nutrition, and lead them in a cooking activity. Recipes are shared to encourage joyful and healthful cooking at home.

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

All students receive additional support during the school day. If students need additional support, teachers can present the student to the Academic Intervention Team (AIT), which consists of classroom teachers, service providers, special education teachers, and the assistant principal. During the session, the team provides a targeted goal for the teacher to use with the student. We collaborate on how to modify work, make any necessary accommodations, and see which type of RTI (Response to Intervention) needs to be provided. The teacher returns to AIT 4-6 weeks later to assess the data s/he collected and see what progress the student has made.

During the school year, teachers meet once a week with grade teams, coaches, and special education providers to discuss ways to support students who need additional support within the units they are teaching by analyzing the data they have collected. They have utilized various features in Google Classroom and Zoom, and have created breakout rooms for more targeted instruction (e.g., breaking down the task into more manageable steps, creating digital checklists, modifying assignments and slides on Google Classroom, providing guided reading or explicit phonics instruction - PAF, SPIRE, Foundations). Our goal is to find any and all entry points for students.

Classroom teachers provide differentiated instruction within each unit and are able to offer extensions for students who have mastered the benchmark. This gives students opportunities to challenge themselves when they are exceeding grade standards. Many of these extensions are offered through Google Classroom and breakout rooms. Teachers group students based on skills and may have them work together in a small group, or hold 1-1 conferences.

Students with disabilities have an IEP that targets their needs and provides specific goals for them to make progress towards. The placements we offer are ICT (Integrated Co-Teaching), SETSS (Special Education Teacher Support Service) and related services (speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, counseling, paraprofessional). Services are provided in either small groups or 1-1 in-person and/or remotely (using breakout rooms to target IEP goals).

The Pupil Personnel Team (PPT) is composed of service providers, special education teachers, school psychologist and social worker, and building leaders to discuss individual students. During this time, we review any referrals, provide updates on students who need support, and support teachers as they support students. We analyze ways to adapt and modify the curriculum, assignments and Google Slides to meet students' needs with specially designed instruction in mind. As of March 2020, we have been able to invite almost all of our students with IEPs, and all of our ELLs back into the building 5 days a week for in-person learning.

Our English Language Learner (ELL) teacher delivers ongoing, language-specific, 1-1 and small group support to ELLs. This helps to ensure individual mastery of grade-level content, while meeting students' language goals in listening, speaking, reading and writing. Our teacher

collaborates weekly with classroom teachers to reflect, plan and differentiate instruction for one subject. She also develops additional instruction, resources, and/or materials for students on an as-needed basis so they can collect evidence of student growth toward mastery of specific academic language needs. Communicating with families is important to bridge the digital gaps and resolve any technology concerns (learning the platform, submitting work, uploading videos/assignments) and check in on the family's emotional well-being during remote learning.

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

---

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

At PS 41, we take a holistic approach to support our students' academic, social, and emotional growth. We are driven by the words of Dr. Ross W. Greene: "Kids do well if they can." We provide an environment in which students learn how to be their best selves, grow their confidence in the process, and develop into empathic members of the community.

Our community focuses on the positive behaviors of our students in order to build self-worth and support our struggling students with compassion and understanding. Students are supported through the use of positive behavioral reinforcements. We strive to help our students grow into mindful and empathic individuals. Character education is embedded into our curriculum for each and every student, inclusive of anti bullying lessons, antiracism conversations and education, and mindfulness activities such as meditation and yoga. Additionally, students have opportunities to work toward motivating and creative community building activities, such as class parties and theme days (e.g., Pajama Day).

The COVID-19 school closure certainly had an impact on our community. Our students missed the connections that they had with their friends and teachers. Like most students, they missed being in the school building, following routines, and engaging in hands-on activities. Our staff quickly shifted our focus on ways to support our students through the use of social-emotional learning opportunities. We began implementing the Mood Meter, both in-person and virtually, so that students could speak about their feelings in a nonjudgmental and brave space. Students report that they have felt heard and supported by their peers and teachers, as well as service providers and administration. Our students have been quite resilient during this challenging time and our staff has truly committed to not only supporting our students' academic achievement, but their social-emotional wellbeing as well. PS 41 believes strongly in serving the whole child and we know that is done most effectively when there is a distinct focus on social emotional learning.

We also know that our equity work needs to address students' social and emotional learning. Our team is helping support teachers in recognizing and valuing the diverse social and emotional skills that students bring with them to the classroom.

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

One fundamental challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic has been its impact on the relationship between families and the school. Families could no longer build relationships and trust by standing outside during drop-off, running into each other in the neighborhood, or having informal conversations at school events. We learned in the early days of the pandemic that connecting regularly, with predictable vehicles for collecting questions and feedback, was essential to helping families feel informed and prepared for the ongoing changes. Student success relied more heavily than ever on a partnership between families and the faculty and we established strong virtual communication structures to keep parents informed.

Specifically:

The Home - School Connection

To communicate district/school wide updates: weekly emails from our administration about new or changing policies

To help families understand our joint problem-solving approach as the pandemic guidance evolved: bi-weekly updates via Zoom (recorded for parents who could not attend with written follow-up)

To collect feedback and listen to concerns on a classroom and grade level: weekly meetings with class parents (representing all grades) who then work as informed liaisons to both gather feedback and share information

To address individual concerns: weekly Zoom office hours for our Parent Coordinator to meet with families who have questions about quarantine requirements, travel plans, and exposures in their households

Great emphasis has been placed on maintaining our culture of open communication, mutual respect and feedback, and continuous review and improvement. We all succeed when we are listening to each other.

### The Community Connection

This year we expanded upon the years of work our Faculty Equity Team has done around diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI). A parent committee has formed and a partnership established with the Center for Racial Justice in Education. Our community expressed sincere and urgent interest in offering additional training, and we did not want it to be stalled by the pandemic.

We also maintained (and frequently adjusted) the enrichment available to our students. The needs across our community were diverse: some families needed significant virtual enrichment to occupy their students while others resisted on-screen opportunities. We partnered with our local YMCA, our local public library, and local businesses to provide a diverse menu of options:

For families who need full-time in-person support: our long-term partner, the McBurney YMCA, offered its Learning Bridges program to PS41 students

For families who need part-time virtual support: our PTA developed a PS41 Enrichment Portal, which offers up a searchable menu full of virtual enrichment options such as chess, dance, music, art, robotics, science, journalism, history, book clubs...and more!

For all families: We worked with our PTA to create several community-wide virtual events throughout the year: movie nights, a light-hearted 5th grade news program, character education videos, a Halloween scavenger hunt, and padlets for sharing photos on spirit days... all featuring PS 41 students, teachers, and families having fun.

### Our Greater Community

Early in the pandemic, our families worked to create and fulfill wish lists for District 2 students in temporary housing. This fall our community reshaped our annual Can Drive with City Harvest to a hybrid virtual/in-person collection that provided over 7,000 pounds of food to New Yorkers in need. These events and others continue to provide our families, students, and staff an opportunity to connect in meaningful ways to the world around us, even during the toughest times.

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

During the transition to distance learning and to a hybrid model of education, its effects on educators, students, families, and communities have been diverse and wide-ranging. Our school community, like all others, faced immense logistical challenges, and teachers/families worked tirelessly to support students' learning and well-being in an unprecedented environment.

Our goal was not only to support our community professionally, but to also support them emotionally and personally. We believe reflection, connection and care are the pillars of how we can help support our teaching teams. Our teachers needed to be heard, valued and supported differently. We reimagined the systems and structures for how we planned, communicated, led, supported and leaned on each other. We reset norms to communicate and work together due to the uncharted circumstances from COVID-19.

Teaching teams consistently met to share, reflect, debrief and plan several times a week with their instructional coaches and/or school leaders. The agenda items were co-constructed and were responsive to the direct needs of the teachers and students. Collaborative discussions, questions, shared challenges and celebrations inspired our teams to think, communicate and educate more creatively, passionately and

purposefully.

Our instructional team would frequently check in with our grade leaders to gather the pulse of any weekly milestones, challenges and suggestions of each grade. Building leaders shared daily morning announcements highlighting any celebrations, updates, professional resources and videos that were relevant and pertinent to the community's direct needs.

Amongst many powerful moments, our community came together to mourn and grieve as we experienced the loss, pain and injustices during the death of George Floyd and most recently, the tragedy in Atlanta. We knew it was important to create a safe and brave space for us to share our feelings, pains, and questions together. As a result, there was a need to deepen our work to explicitly address race, combat racism and continue to strengthen our work through a culturally responsive lens.

This year, we partnered with the Center of Racial Justice Education and with Dr. Sonja Cherry-Paul from Teachers College to create professional opportunities to study, learn and further develop our teaching practices.

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

At PS 41, we believe in a distributed leadership model to build capacity. Our school has embraced the importance of every educator finding a strength, passion or talent to share with the community. There is a range of professional roles our teachers take on, such as grade leader, teacher leader, mentor. Our schedule has been created to provide common planning time for professional collaboration across all grade levels, specialty teachers, service providers. We have several faculty committees, including our Faculty Equity Committee, and established during the summer of 2020, our Reopening Committee and Healing Support Committee.

It is our goal to empower teachers to advocate for their students, support their colleagues, and lead the work forward. Teacher voice was critical this year in establishing and revising our in-person cohort models. School leaders met frequently with each grade team of teachers, and asked teachers for their input on what was working and what needed adjustments. Our 4th grade team, for example, proposed an in-person model where two of the three in-person teachers worked with each in-person cohort of students in the gym, while the third teacher taught the hybrid students during their remote learning days. School leaders realized there was a way to have all students with IEPs and all ELLs return to 5 days a week of in-person instruction; they met with each grade team to discuss implications. Committee. We believe in shared facilitation of committee work. Colleagues rotate leading sessions which boosts collaboration and engagement.

Since the pandemic began, we knew we had to be very visible and communicative with staff and families. We sent daily emails to staff, and weekly updates to families (more as needed). In addition to the monthly PTA meetings, the principal and assistant principal led monthly community updates for all families; during these updates, safety protocols, and other items, were addressed. The assistant principal and upper grade literacy coach have communicated regularly with families and with staff regarding necessary COVID protocols, including when classroom closures or building-wide closure had to take place. The upper grade literacy coach has met with class parents weekly to answer questions and address any concerns. While email is a quick and preferred method of communication, phone calls provided a personal touch and were sometimes quicker in resolving misunderstandings.

The success and growth of the school come from building leaders believing in empowering faculty and the community in every facet of the school experience.

#### **5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:**

PS 41 is a welcoming and collaborative community that reflects the rich cultural diversity of our historic Greenwich Village neighborhood, including ethnicity, race, family structure, and socio-

economic background. We believe that each child brings a unique set of experiences, perspectives, and abilities that enrich our diverse and inclusive classrooms.

Our school is built on an understanding of and respect for others. Intentional curricular decisions, targeted community-building activities, and a purposeful social-emotional approach ensure that equity and social justice remain at the heart of our teaching and learning. Teachers use the “Windows and Mirrors” concept in text selections to allow students to both see themselves and better understand others. Classroom libraries now reflect diverse perspectives and spark thoughtful conversations about social issues. Teachers have reframed curricula to examine the impact of inequity and injustice on different communities, while also uplifting the narratives and achievements of the traditionally marginalized. We help students understand the significant challenges oppressed populations continue to face, but also how we all have a collective responsibility to seek justice and bring about change.

With equity and social justice at the forefront of our work, we engage in critical conversations with students and families throughout our academics. From evaluating representation in our classroom libraries to examining gender norms and stereotypes, we create opportunities for our students to stop and think. This classroom practice allows us to maintain a proactive approach in addressing current events and social movements in an organic way. When a significant event occurs, our faculty meets to process and plan how to discuss the news in a sensitive, objective manner with our students. In each of our classrooms, we create a brave space for our students to understand, ask questions, and make sense of the world in a way that is age-appropriate. Further, we inform families of these vital conversations so that they are aware of the points raised by students and can continue the discussion at home.

PS 41 brings together educators, students and families as allies to foster meaningful dialogue around identity, diversity, representation, and inequity. Our faculty engages in continuous professional learning. Some initiatives include monthly equity committee meetings and ongoing anti-racist training with external organizations, such as Critically Conscious Educators Rising (CCER), Center for Racial Justice in Education (CRJE), and The Minor Collective. In addition, the PS41 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion committee, established by parents/guardians, works with families and teachers to confront racism and reinforce principles of equity throughout our community.

At PS 41 we nurture justice-seeking citizens who will navigate the world with an equitable, anti-bias and anti-racist perspective and serve as lifelong agents of change in our multicultural world.



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

---

Prior to the pandemic, our teachers had been collaborative, planning during weekly grade meetings. We had also often spoken with teachers about the need for a shared responsibility for students. But once school buildings closed in March 2020, the need for true collaboration became a necessity.

During the spring of 2020, classroom teachers departmentalized their planning, with each teacher responsible for planning one content area. Teachers shared their plans and teaching videos with each other and posted them in Google Classroom.

During the summer of 2020, our Reimagining Education Committee met multiple times, and the teachers reiterated the need for team planning since different teachers would have different roles (part-time in-person, part-time remote, full-time remote). All of the teachers on a grade would work together to support all of the students on the grade, whether the students were in blended learning (hybrid of in-person and remote instruction) or fully remote.

In the fall of 2020, all teacher teams had dedicated planning time built into their daily schedule. This daily Instruction Coordination period was to ensure continuity of learning for students. During these daily grade meetings, teachers discussed departmentalized planning and individual students.

Teachers had to trust each other to create the content. This created a deeper sense of community and collaboration.

Students got to know teachers across the grade as they watched videos each teacher created. Many blended learning students had one teacher when they were in-person and another teacher when they were remote. Full-time remote students also saw videos with in-person teachers. This allowed students to experience different teachers with different styles.

As we shifted the number of in-person cohorts, students had to be placed with different in-person teachers. Because students already knew all the teachers on the grade, this transition was easier.

In this most challenging school year, teachers have truly felt that they are responsible for all of the students on a grade. Students have felt they have an entire team of teachers taking care of them. This level of support was an added comfort to students this year.