

***U.S. Department of Education***  
***2022 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program***

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name Park Road Elementary School  
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 50 Park Road  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Pittsford State NY Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 14534-3639

County Monroe County

Telephone (585) 267-1502 Fax (585) 385-6356

Web site/URL https://www.pittsfordschools.org/Domain/344 E-mail mark\_balsamo@pittsford.monroe.edu

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.

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

Name of Superintendent\* Mr. Michael Pero E-mail michael\_pero@pittsford.monroe.edu  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Pittsford Central School District Tel. (585) 267-1000

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.

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

Name of School Board President/Chairperson Mr. Ted Aroesty  
(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.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

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**

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

1. 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 2016 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: 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 or 2021.
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. The nominated school has, or is subject to, a nondiscrimination policy (provide either a link to the policy or submit a text of the policy), is committed to equal opportunity for all students and all staff consistent with applicable law and does not have any outstanding findings of unlawful discrimination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s nomination and/or rescind a school’s award if unlawful discrimination is later discovered.

12. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

**The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's nomination and/or rescind a school's award if one of these eligibility requirements is later discovered to have not been met or otherwise been violated.**

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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Data should be provided for the current school year (2021-2022) unless otherwise stated.

**DISTRICT** (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools. For charter schools: If a charter school is part of the public school system, information should be provided for the public school district. If a charter school is considered its own district or part of a charter district, the information provided should reflect that.)

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

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

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 in the school as of October 1, 2021 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	0	0	0
K	28	37	65
1	32	38	70
2	33	30	63
3	48	27	75
4	39	34	73
5	45	32	77
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>	225	198	423

\*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
  - 4 % Black or African American
  - 4 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 77 % White
  - 8 % 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 2020 - 2021 school year: 4%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain:

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	14
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	3
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	17
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2020	412
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.04
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	4

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

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 0 %  
0 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 3 %

Total number students who qualify: 13

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504: 11 %  
48 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 with an IEP or 504 should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- |                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>5</u> Autism                  | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>16</u> Other Health Impaired                |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>2</u> Specific Learning Disability          |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>25</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: 7
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	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	20
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	20
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	21
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	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 21:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017
Daily student attendance	98%	96%	97%	94%	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 2021.

<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. 2007

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

The Pittsford Central School District community works collaboratively to inspire and prepare our students to be their best, do their best and make a difference in the lives of others.

16. Provide a URL link to or text of the school’s nondiscrimination policy.

<https://www.pittsfordschools.org/Page/19395>

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

## **PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW**

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Park Road Elementary School (PRE) is one of five elementary schools (and one of nine schools total) in the Pittsford Central School District (PCSD) in Pittsford, New York—a relatively affluent community located outside of Rochester, New York. PCSD has roughly 5,500 students, with the PRE student population typically falling between 425 to 450 students.

PRE, which is a kindergarten through fifth grade school, has a true “community” feel. Many of our students live close enough to walk or bike to school, and the school itself borders a county park. Our relatively small size of three to four class sections per grade level allows for rich academic and social-emotional programs for students. Additionally, this intimacy affords adults in the school (principal, counselor, main office staff, etc.) the opportunity to personally get to know students and families over the years.

One of PRE's efforts over the past few years has involved examining and implementing professional learning communities (PLCs). This has included adopting a school schedule with daily common planning time at each grade level, which provides opportunities to discuss curriculum (implementation, pacing), instructional strategies, and student needs. The schedule also provides each grade level with a distinct WIN (“What I Need”) response-to-intervention block for 40 minutes each day. Teachers offering resources such as reading support, math lab, and Instructional Challenge have schedules allocated to match each grade level's WIN block, allowing for the infusion of resources into grade-level WIN time in order to best meet all students' needs.

During the 2020-2021 school year, when many schools were hybrid or fully remote due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Park Road prided itself on its ability to have students learning in school 4½ days a week (with the exception of those students who chose to learn remotely). This was, in large part, due to creative use of space. We turned our gyms, library, and cafeteria into classrooms, and our Special Area teachers pushed into classrooms on carts. This learning model was also possible through collaborative efforts with the district's teachers' union, allowing for a teaching schedule that permitted socially distanced, in-person learning, when many other districts/schools were forced to adopt hybrid or fully remote models for their elementary students. In short, circumstances, planning, collaboration, and innovative thinking allowed PRE to fully commit to doing what is best for our students, despite potential limitations imposed on education as a whole by COVID-19.

This school year, we have transitioned to once again having 100 percent of our students in school with a “normal” schedule. We have been particularly focused on students' increased social-emotional needs as a result of the pandemic. Prior to COVID, PRE had begun phasing in the implementation of morning meetings and community circles within classrooms. Building on this, and considering social-emotional gaps and/or the need for extra support during these transitional times, PRE has increased its focus this academic year on such measures. We are spending increased staff meeting time dedicated to learning and discussions around best practices for morning meetings, community circles, and social-emotional health in general. Additionally, during the 2020-2021 school year, in anticipation of the social-emotional needs of our students, we implemented a “second recess” time in each grade level/class on a daily basis. Our teachers recognized the benefits on student learning and social-emotional health resulting from this less structured opportunity to “just play” (and practice social skills with peers); as such, we have continued our second recess this school year, noting continued student benefits.

There are many reasons Park Road is a successful school, but some of those reasons are not tangible or capable of description. To walk the halls of Park Road is potentially the only way to see the entire picture—to see our principal joking with students outside each morning as their buses arrive, to hear a teacher mindfully conducting a community circle with her class, to watch as students make the right choices on the playground or in the lunchroom—to feel the simple joy we all feel in seeing each other learn, work, smile, and grow.

That is Park Road. And we remind ourselves daily at the end of our morning announcements of the promise

we make to ourselves and to one another: "Park Road School works together. Please be kind, safe, and respectful today."

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

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

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

The mission of the Park Road (PRE) and Pittsford Central School District (PCSD) curricula is to engage all learners in authentic, rigorous learning experiences so that upon graduation, students will independently use their learning to achieve their goals and become contributing members of a global society. Our school and district prides itself in viewing our teaching staff as professionals and giving our teachers (and professional learning teams) a great deal of autonomy in analyzing the students in front of them and determining the best approaches to help students meet New York State (NYS) standards and expectations.

We value the expertise of our teachers, including their understanding of their content and standards, their knowledge of child and adolescent development, and their expertise in the craft of teaching. With very few exceptions, our school and district do not purchase or subscribe to curriculum or curriculum packages developed by outside organizations or third party vendors. The vast majority of the curriculum PRE and PCSD utilizes is developed by our own teaching staff; each year, many of our teachers across the district are involved in the writing of curriculum across all disciplines. Engaging our teachers in the development of curriculum that is aligned to NYS standards and reflects the needs of our students not only produces high quality curriculum, but also builds the capacity and commitment of our teachers to use that curriculum.

The process of writing curriculum is a significant and impactful form of professional learning for those involved. More recently, we have begun to use teacher teams to revise curriculum, particularly in English language arts (ELA) and social studies, with the guidance of the NYS Culturally Responsive Education Framework (CR-SE). This process has led to the piloting of modified units by curriculum writers in 2021-2022. Additionally, as a whole, the process is developing the capacity and mindset of our teachers to routinely, and both formally and informally, apply the CR-SE principles to their instruction.

#### **1b. Reading/English language arts curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:**

The goal of the study of English Language Arts (ELA) in the Pittsford Central School District is to cultivate literate citizens who think critically, write clearly, communicate effectively, and read with understanding and appreciation. We utilize theme-based, teacher-developed (at the district level) reading units. For example, fourth grade unit themes include Revolution (Independence or Treason); Immigration (Walk in their Shoes); Author's Craft; Mythology (Stories that Explain the World); and Transformation (Dynamic Characters).

At each grade level, these theme-based units focus on essential questions and incorporate a variety of fiction and nonfiction texts. These include common texts, but also individualized texts and authentic tasks (e.g. research projects, writing one's own story, analyzing text). We also engage students in small group guided reading, ensuring that they are reading text differentiated to their instructional level; in these small groups, teachers are able to effectively meet the reading and skills needs of individual students.

Given the importance of ELA at the elementary level, we prioritize instruction in this area in our schedules – building in at least 90 to 120 minutes daily. Additionally, we also prioritize ELA in our grade-level WIN ("What I Need") response-to-intervention blocks. In reading, we universally screen all student three times per year (Fall, Winter, Spring) using sight words (Grades K through 2), Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System reading levels (Grades K through 5), and oral reading fluency (Grades 1 through 5). For those students struggling to meet grade level expectations, we provide more frequent monitoring (e.g. running reading records, fluency checks).

Based on gaps we were seeing, several years ago, our district moved towards implementing Wilson Foundations (a rare instance of PCSD not developing its own in-house curriculum); we started implementing

this program in kindergarten 4 years ago, followed by first grade a year later, and second grade a year after that. Our goal in implementing Foundations is to incorporate a systematic approach to K-2 Tier I classroom instruction that integrates phonemic awareness, phonics and word study, handwriting, and spelling.

In the area of writing, we use teacher developed K-5 units in the areas of narrative, informational, and opinion writing. Each writing unit involves a pre-assessment on-demand writing piece scored with colleagues using a rubric. Following this pre-assessment, students are engaged in a series of teacher-designed mini lessons through which they complete a longer writing piece. Students use a checklist to guide them through the process, and the lessons themselves are designed based on student needs demonstrated through the on demand pre-assessment. There is a final on-demand assessment in each of the writing units that provides data regarding what skills students are able to transfer independently following instruction around and completion of their longer writing pieces.

Our writing units focus on production and volume expectations structured in learning progressions evolving from kindergarten through fifth grade. We utilize and focus on common K-5 elements (e.g. lead, transitions, endings, organization, elaboration, punctuation, spelling, craft) that promote consistency across and between grade levels. Teachers employ carefully selected mentor texts (that include diverse characters and authors) to support students in all of these areas.

### **1c. Mathematics curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:**

The mission of mathematics education in the Pittsford Central School District (PCSD) and at Park Road Elementary (PRE) is to develop mathematically literate students who have a conceptual understanding and procedural fluency that promotes their ability to problem solve, communicate their process of thinking and reasoning mathematically, and make ethical, well-informed decisions based on their mathematical insights. PRE's math curriculum was developed using the New York State Next Generation Mathematics Learning Standards (2017) as a guide; the district's math standards leader and teachers of that grade level broke down the concepts associated with the standards into separate units. These units include essential understandings, essential questions, and statements regarding what students are expected to both know and be able to do at the unit's conclusion.

To teach these units, PRE teachers are provided resources by the Pittsford Central School District; however, specific use of these materials is determined at the discretion of individual teachers based on their student population needs and teaching/learning styles. In terms of unit/grade level skills, at the K-2 level, the focus is on visual thinking using sensory perception (seeing, touching, working with models, sketching out ideas) to help students understand and remember mathematical concepts. Students in Grades 3-5 are introduced to new concepts with hands-on activities, then move to written activities, and finally, participate in classroom discussions.

The K-2 students have been using number corners for years. This year the district has included 3-5 in number corners. The lessons and routines revolve around the classroom calendar. The routines provide a basis for ongoing instruction in sorting, patterning, graphing, probability, comparing, number sense, money and time. In terms of assessment, students are pre-assessed at the start of each unit using district-created assessments to inform the teaching and learning process. Teachers also conduct formative assessments frequently throughout units to ensure student understanding; data from such assessments is used to differentiate lessons based on whole group or individual needs. In terms of differentiation, at PRE, individual students needing further exposure to a concept work with our building's math paraprofessional to obtain additional practice and eventual mastery. On the other end of the spectrum, those students who easily understand math instruction have the opportunity to extend their learning through work with PRE's Instructional Challenge teacher.

At the end of each unit, summative assessments of students determine the extent to which the most important outcomes of the instruction have been reached. Students are also given district-created assessments in the fall, winter, and spring each year to measure retention of concepts over time. Additionally, all K-5 students are universally screened in both the fall and winter so teachers can see where their students are nationally normed.

#### **1d. Science curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:**

PRE's science curriculum focuses on integrating science practices (e.g. asking questions and defining problems, analyzing and interpreting data) with concepts (e.g. cause and effect, stability and change, structure and function).

Our primary goal is to show students that science is fun and interesting. To that end, students are involved in observation, data collection, hypothesis development, and other hands-on scientific activities. We work to integrate opportunities for curriculum connections to the outdoors, and science teachers collaborate with general classroom teachers to allow for classroom enforcement of concepts learned in the science room (e.g., classroom teachers tailor materials for reading instruction/guided reading to compliment concepts currently under study in science). For example, when second graders study the lifecycles, structure, and function of butterflies, teachers use nonfiction text about butterflies during reading instruction to build background knowledge. This integration truly enhances students' understanding and interest in what they are studying in science.

In Grades K-3, science is taught in the classroom by the classroom teacher, and the curriculum is built around three to four hands-on units. These units involve investigation, observation, and critical thinking, and are taught with the use of kits developed and assembled by a regional consortium.

At fourth and fifth grades, students are taught by a dedicated science teacher in a dedicated science room (which greatly facilitates labs and experiments). Students at those grade levels go to science twice during a six-day cycle for 50 minutes.

When evaluating students in science, we focus less on “content” on the report card and more on skills (eg., analyzing data using drawings, models or writing).

#### **1e. Social studies/history/civic learning curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:**

The mission of social studies education in the Pittsford Central School District (PCSD) and at Park Road Elementary (PRE) is to develop responsible and productive citizens who strive for understanding of political, social, and economic issues; make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good; and participate as members of a culturally diverse society in an interdependent world. Our social studies curriculum is inquiry based and focused around essential questions. Examples of such questions include: “Do we have to have rules?” “Does where you live matter?” “Is sharing and trading across cultures always a good thing?” Additionally, we work to integrate social studies instruction into English language arts (ELA) instruction – finding natural opportunities to connect social studies concepts to the reading and analysis of nonfiction text as well as informational writing.

This past summer (2021), teams from each PCSD school (including six PRE teachers) worked to examine our K-5 social studies curriculum through the lenses of diversity and inclusivity; at each grade level, one unit of studied was revised. This academic year, teachers who were involved in this curriculum writing/revision are piloting these new units, and there is more work planned for additional revisions this upcoming summer (2022). An example of one of these revised units for second grade is called "Do we HAVE to have rules?" Teachers deconstructed and rebuilt this unit to align with the social justice standards (identify, diversity, justice, and action). During this inquiry, students analyze the importance of rules, consider the impact of not having rules, write a classroom compact that reflects shared values, and explore restorative practices to repair the classroom community when rules are not being followed.

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

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

## 2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Other curriculum areas at Park Road Elementary (PRE) include visual art, music, physical education, technology, and library. The teachers responsible for these curricular areas, the Special Areas Team, work cooperatively to meet the needs of all learners by collaborating with classroom teachers and related service providers, and meeting regularly to discuss best practices and student success. All Special Area lessons and units are differentiated and adapted to meet the needs of all learners through both whole group and individualized approaches informed by both formal data and observational assessments. As part of this, all lessons and units include components of social emotional learning and culturally responsive teaching.

In order to advance and evolve these programs, Special Area teachers participate in collaboration with department colleagues from other Pittsford Central School District (PCSD) schools as well as in professional development opportunities related to subject areas and district initiatives at the local, state, and national levels.

The Visual Arts Program at PRE encourages student artists to express themselves through exploration and experimentation, while offering opportunities for choice. Student artwork created with a wide variety of 2D and 3D materials is exhibited in the hallways of PRE as well as throughout the larger community, including the local public library, school board room, and budget voting locations.

Culturally and globally diverse artworks are included in the curriculum. Our art program focuses both on production (drawing, painting, ceramics) as well as art appreciation and interpretation. Art is offered to all students K-5. Kindergarten and first grade students have art instruction once in our 6 day cycle for 40 minutes. Second through fifth grade students have art instruction twice in our six day cycle, for 40 minutes each session.

The PRE Music Program includes a variety of musical styles and composers, as well as connections to music in modern society (i.e., music in film and video games, at events such as the Olympics and presidential inaugurations). Additionally, music instructors provide theater/musical theater curriculum and offer performing opportunities for all students. General Music instruction is offered during the day. Students at all grade levels have music instruction two forty minute art classes in our six day cycle.

Fifth graders may participate in afterschool chorus, band, or orchestra, and fourth graders are offered a choral program; weekly lessons are provided during the school day for instrumental students. Over 75% of our fifth graders participate in at least one of our music performing groups each year.

In the interest of real world application, students engage in multiple concert/performing opportunities (i.e., singing the National Anthem at local baseball games, performing for nursing home residents).

To enrich in-classroom learning and real-world understanding, students engage in performing arts workshops (such as learning to play the steel drums) and field trips (i.e., attendance at a performance by the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra).

The culture of the PE program at Park Road is based on respect for self and others. Tools for self-management and student-centered activities are provided daily in conjunction with academic content. Students at all grade levels (K-5) receive PE instruction three times for 40 minutes in our six day cycle.

Adapted Physical Education is provided to students with special needs through modification of activities with a goal of student success while maintaining a least-restrictive environment.

Park Road teaches and incorporates skills in support of digital fluency and cyber security. Students visit the school computer lab regularly, receive instruction relative to classroom curriculum for laptop and iPod use, and participate in critical evaluation of technology content and cyber security lessons. Over the next 2 years, Park Road will begin implementing the New York State Computer Science and Digital Fluency Learning Standards across all curricula and learning environments; pilot lessons/units are currently under way. Students at all grade levels, K-5, are scheduled for one 40 minute library class in our six day cycle. Separate

from their formal library class, our librarian and classroom teacher schedule additional times to work on research projects.

The Park Road library sparks curiosity through innovative experiences, connecting diverse learners with the world of information, ideas, and imagination. Lessons are based on the American Association of School Librarians' National School Library Standards and the PCSD Library Department's curriculum, scope, and sequence, with the flexibility to adapt and apply learning content to grade level curricula. Particular focus is placed on developing research skills and literature appreciation.

### **3. Academic Supports**

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

Our school universally screens students three times per year using nationally normed assessments (AIMS and Fountas and Pinnell). We utilize this data to provide more targeted instruction, particularly in the area of reading. In addition to universal screening, we probe those students not meeting grade level performance standards much more frequently, targeting areas identified as concerns (e.g. fluency, comprehension).

We hold “student success” meetings quarterly by grade level team; participants include reading, math, and Instructional Challenge staff, as well as PRE's counselor and principal. The team reviews the needs of students collectively across the grade to identify students requiring supports in reading, math, and social-emotional areas. Based on formal data along with discussion, we regroup students as needed for reading instruction, and our counselor forms temporary social skills groups as needed.

Student support services (e.g., reading, math, Instructional challenge teachers) are scheduled primarily during daily 40-minute response-to-intervention WIN ("What I Need") blocks. This allows a grade level that might have three classroom teachers, to double (or more) the amount of staff available to support students and best meet their needs. In the area of reading (our primary focus during WIN, and in staffing resources), we have the equivalent of 1.8 full time employees (FTEs). Their focus is determined by the data-identified needs of each group. We establish targeted (quantitative) goals for each student receiving reading support, which are provided to parents with progress updates on a trimester basis. Group size and frequency (e.g. daily, every other day) are based on student needs.

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

Park Road Elementary School (PRE) has many options for students working above grade level. In general, teachers plan differentiated learning opportunities based on readiness, interest, and learning styles, allowing students to work on varied tasks at different paces within the classroom. The teachers at PRE are also trained in Project Based Learning (PBL), where students work independently or in small groups to seek out and identify real-world problems while deepening their understanding of cause-and-effect relationships; PBL offers further opportunities for in-classroom differentiation geared towards students working above grade level.

Additionally, PRE's Instructional Challenge Program, led by our Instructional Challenge specialist, supports classroom teachers in best practices for high performing and gifted students. Our Instructional Challenge specialist shares appropriate instructional strategies and approaches for high-performing students and assists school staff in better understanding the cognitive and social-emotional development of gifted children.

Students who demonstrate advanced ability in a given topic or skill may participate in an enrichment experience led by the Instructional Challenge Specialist. These enrichment groups are fluid and flexible, based upon need. Student progress in these enrichment experiences is measured and monitored against the Common Learning Standards adopted by the New York State Department of Education; students participate in enrichment opportunities at PRE when criteria shows their present level of performance in relationship to the standards is advanced.

at the elementary level. This process, called Acceleration Review Process (ARP) , is followed when a possible need for acceleration or other radical modification is indicated through observation, classroom performance, performance on a high ceiling assessment, or other measures. As part of the process, data is collected and discussed by the building ARP Team, which includes students' parents. This team selects appropriate program options for the individual child.

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

The mission of the Special Education Department at Pittsford Schools—and at Park Road Elementary (PRE)— is to support diverse learners and foster an inclusive culture. Through a network of supports, students with disabilities are empowered to identify, pursue, and fulfill personal aspirations as they participate in our global society. PRE provides a range of supports for students with learning disabilities, with the goal of supporting students almost entirely within the general education setting. Almost all of our classified students receive supports via a consultant teacher model, where the special education teacher pushes into the general education setting. In this model, the special education and general education teachers collaborate with one another to make modifications and/or accommodations to support students' abilities to access grade level curriculum. This includes providing readings at different levels (but on the same content/topic), providing opportunities to pre-read or re-read materials, and scaffolding approaches to more challenging tasks (such as writing). Additionally, our special education teachers make use of our WIN ("What I Need") response-to-intervention block to provide supports so that students are not pulled from their classrooms during Tier I instructional times.

Additionally, Park Road houses two “district”-based 12:1:1 programs for students with higher-level, widely-varied needs—from having significant reading disabilities (more than 2 years below grade level) to having Down Syndrome to being on the autism spectrum. Students in these programs (one primary, one intermediate) come from PRE or any of the other four PCSD elementary schools. These programs are embedded with services such as speech, counseling, occupational therapy, and music therapy. Most importantly, none of the students served by these programs are in the self-contained setting for more than 3 hours per day, meaning they spend at least half the day with general education peers. Students who are home based in other elementary schools are considered Park Road students and attend general education classes at Park Road.

At PRE, we pride ourselves in supporting students, when possible, in moving out of these programs and returning to general education settings – either in our school or their home schools. This year, we are proud to have two fifth grade students at PRE who were once in one of these programs, but have now moved back to being in the general education setting 100 percent of the time. Additionally, as we plan for next year, we have three fourth graders and one kindergartener who will also exit this special education program and return to spending 100 percent of their day in the general education setting.

### **3d. English Language Learners, if a special program or intervention is offered:**

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

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

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

Park Road Elementary (PRE) is committed to cultivating students' social-emotional intelligence and fostering an environment of self-awareness, empathy, and curiosity through initiatives that promote engagement in our school community. Our goal in developing these attributes and this engagement is to allow students to feel supported in all areas, not only in academic spheres. With such support, students are more effectively able to practice problem-solving and self-regulation, as well as to develop positive peer relationships, all of which ultimately do allow for more focused on-task learning and academic success.

To start, PRE incorporates a diverse range of school community-building activities and events each year, serving to incentivize and engage our students. Some of these include Red Ribbon Week, Black History Month, Jump Rope for Heart, and Read Across America.

Another initiative involves students joining PRE's principal in scheduled, small group lunch sessions. These serve as both rapport-building strategies as well as opportunities for students to voice concerns or give feedback regarding PRE's culture and climate. PRE's social-emotional team is also currently working to build monthly themes revolving around social-emotional learning; these will connect to classroom lessons, monthly school-wide book selections, and activities designed to build pillars of emotional intelligence in conjunction with academics.

In reflecting on Spring 2020, when our school was physically closed due to COVID-19 and students learned remotely, PRE staff worked diligently to ensure engagement would not wane. For example, PRE's counselor created virtual classrooms with age-appropriate links to mindfulness resources, mental health providers/services, social-emotional activities, and deep breathing exercise videos. These efforts, in addition to similar efforts made every day by classroom teachers Zooming with their students, are evidence of the extent to which our school culture values connection.

In our return to in-person learning in Fall 2020, PRE staff demonstrated the same thoughtfulness and care in recognizing student needs in re-acclimating to school, especially considering that much of what was "normal" in previous years was significantly altered. Classroom teachers began each day with "soft start" activities that included breathing or mindfulness activities, and books and bulletin boards throughout PRE addressed current issues such as masking, social distancing, isolation, and anxiety. Because COVID restrictions required students to remain in their classrooms all day, PRE implemented two daily recess times so students could move their bodies and connect socially with peers. In reaching out to our students who opted for remote learning during this time, PRE's social worker created a virtual parent "class" to allow families to connect, ask questions, and receive feedback and support.

Today, as things move back towards "normal," PRE continues to engage students through typical social-emotional strategies employed previously. For example, every classroom is equipped with a designated "break" or "calm down" space; students are encouraged to utilize these spaces at their discretion to regulate emotions and maintain school-appropriate behavior. Additionally, every student continues to receive scaffolded instruction associated with PCSD's counseling and health curricula; these lessons help students develop self-esteem, empathy, and community responsibility.

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

At Park Road (PRE), we have tight-knit relationships with families and community members, which contribute to the overall success of our students. These relationships manifest in a number of different ways and include many different avenues of collaboration. One such relationship is with PRE's Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA). The PRE PTSA supports many programs and services for students and families, including afterschool enrichment (such as Art, Chess, and Lego clubs), in-school "art ambassador" and "science action" workshops, community service (such as having students create Valentine's cards for seniors at a local nursing home), Light the Loop (a Halloween pumpkin fundraiser display), events

surrounding fifth grade transition to the middle school, ice cream socials, Family Fun/Movie Nights, Parents on the Playground, Red Ribbon week, room parent coordination, teacher appreciation, author visits, a student talent show, and PRE's Welcome Back Picnic.

Through efforts of the PTSA, along with the PRE student council (consisting of third through fifth graders who provide student voice and help plan activities for their peers), PRE has also collaborated with community organizations to help others in need. Examples include students collecting and donating items to Ukrainian residents, medications to Doctors without Borders, and food and toiletry necessities to our local food cupboard. PRE students also create and sell red, white, and blue craft items in the lobby of our school prior to Flag Day; the proceeds from these sales are donated to a Veteran's Outreach Center. Additionally, PRE holds two Scholastic book fairs throughout the school year; these sales raise money for the Bivona Child Advocacy Center (which provides "child abuse response, healing and prevention through collaborative service, awareness, education and leadership."

In addition to philanthropic outreach, PRE prides itself on another major partnership—with the Monroe #1 BOCES Urban-Suburban Program, which is "the longest-running, voluntary, integrated multicultural educational program in the nation" . The purpose of this program is "to voluntarily decrease racial isolation, deconcentrate poverty and enhance opportunities for students in the Rochester City School District and in the suburban districts of the Greater Rochester Area" . Currently, in the 2021-2022 school year, PRE has 14 students who are part of this program. Pupils residing in the participating districts may apply for transfer from the Rochester City School District to suburban school districts or from suburban districts to the Rochester City School District.

PRE is also proud of our partnership with Best Buddies International, a non-profit organization "dedicated to establishing a global volunteer movement that creates opportunities for one-to-one friendships, integrated employment, and leadership development for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities" . Several years ago, when we began our PRE Best Buddies Club, we were one of the first in New York to start an elementary chapter. At our level, we have focused on providing all students with opportunities to participate in collaborative, inclusive team activities that encourage learning about and supporting one another.

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

At Park Road Elementary (PRE), all staff are committed to providing education that reflects the needs of individual students so that each child may achieve their greatest potential. In light of this, staff voice and input is valued and essential, and many processes are in place to ensure communication and collaboration.

For example, each grade level is a professional learning community (PLC) that sets goals and regularly meets to assess progress toward those goals, share lessons, and analyze student work, achievement, and engagement. Staff members also participate in Collegial Circles, which are professional learning communities made up of educators committed to enhancing or improving their professional practice and working towards a common goal, need, interest, or question. One example of a recent Pittsford Central School District (PCSD) Collegial Circle for primary grade educators explored how to effectively deliver instruction, assess student work, and provide feedback through the Seesaw (a classroom app) platform.

We utilize our staff meeting time (which includes regular staff meetings and Superintendent Conference Days) to focus on building our instructional knowledge based on district and building identified goals. One of our primary focus areas this school year has been supporting teachers in the implementation of culturally responsive teaching – and in particular utilizing class meetings and restorative circles in our classrooms. This work has been led by our own teachers who have developed expertise in these areas based on their own professional learning.

A second professional development focus has been on differentiation. The pandemic has impacted instructional practices the past two years, and, due to requirements around social distancing led to more "traditional" whole group instruction. Additionally, with students last school year experiencing different learning models, we have noted some significant gaps in achievement at each grade level between students

who were in school during 2020-2021 and those students who were remote. This has led us this Spring to refocus on differentiation – the “why” and the “how” in different standards areas.

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

Park Road has one building administrator, the school principal. Our school prides itself on its collaborative, decision-making approach. We have team leaders at each grade level that facilitate their respective professional learning communities (PLC’s). Each PLC meets weekly and works together to discuss curriculum and pacing, common assessments, and analysis of those assessments. These PLC’s also discuss how to structure their WIN (what I need) / Response to Intervention blocks, including discussions regarding what supports individual students within the grade level need.

We have an Instructional Leadership Team (ILT), facilitated by the building principal, which includes the grade level team leaders, and representatives from special areas, our mental health staff, our paraprofessionals, and is open to parent volunteers as well. The ILT discusses best uses of staff meeting time. This year, we have focused on examining NYS Culturally Responsive Teaching document, reviewed best practices in conducting class meetings and are ending the year discussing ways to better differentiate to meet our students’ needs. Members of ILT (and other staff members with expertise in different areas) always co-facilitate instructionally focused staff meetings. ILT also discusses organizational issues such as the development of the school schedule, and student transition and placement.

The school also has two other committees that have representation from each grade level. These include our Technology Committee, charged with reviewing needs and uses of technology, and supporting teachers in technology implementation. This committee is teacher chaired/facilitated and played a vital role during COVID in supporting teachers in the use of the platforms we used to provide synchronous and asynchronous at home learning.

We have a Social Emotional Learning (SEL) committee, facilitated by the school counselor that works to plan and structure ways to ensure students mental and social health. They have pushed us to incorporate class meetings across the board, and to use community circles to problem solve with students classroom issues that arise. They have spearheaded mindfulness practices, emphasized adopting a “second” recess, and adopting a “buddy classroom” (every class at every grade level is paired with another class so that older students can work with and serve as role models for younger students).

We have a teacher led Instructional Support Team (IST). Our IST is a multidisciplinary team that meets to review and discuss in depth students who are struggling in Tier I academic and behavioral systems. The goal of IST is to develop individualized plans to help students be successful (and to help support classroom teachers in their work with students), prior to, and in lieu of moving students towards special education classification.

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

Park Road Elementary School (PRE) is actively engaged in culturally responsive teaching and learning; our school addresses the diverse needs and backgrounds of students, families, and staff in a variety of ways, as described below. PRE promotes a welcoming and affirming environment through a collective commitment to learning about students' cultures and communities. We create opportunities for students and families to share their unique heritages, customs, traditions, and lifestyles. An example of this is the selection of a book that is read school-wide at the start of each academic year; books we have chosen previously include Teach Tell Us Your Name by Huda Essa and Your Name is a Song by Jamilah Thompkins-Bigelow. Both emphasize recognition and appreciation of the unique names of students, families, and staff. Another example of learning about our students and their families involves inviting family members in to speak about specific cultural celebrations (e.g., Diwali, Hanukkah).

PRE maintains close relationships with students and families through both formal (newsletters, principal's updates) and informal (phone calls home, counseling sessions with students) communications. Additionally, academics and the general school atmosphere at PRE are embedded with a social-emotional curriculum,

allowing for individual and collective student support that proactively promotes learning and academic success.

Various library programs at PRE also contribute to cultural responsiveness by ensuring students have access to materials that represent and affirm their identities—while allowing students insight into the identities of those around them. One example is Book-A-Day, in which the librarian distributes a weekly bag of five picture books to each classroom; books are grade level appropriate, relate to classroom curricula whenever possible, and include culturally and geographically diverse authors, characters, and stories.

Another example of cultural responsiveness includes the PRE library's diversity audit; this audit, started a few years ago, closely examines library titles to determine the percentage of diverse characters and authors within our fiction collection. Using data obtained through the audit, we have a deeper awareness of gaps within our collection, and are working towards increasing the diversity of our materials through focused collection development efforts.

Additionally, the school librarian creates resource lists of PRE-owned books for teachers and students that relate to current issues and/or events (i.e., lists for Black History or Asian American Pacific Islander months, a list related to countries in attendance at the Olympics, a list of books that explore protests and/or marching).

Our student council, comprised of student representatives in Grades 3 through 5, is also indicative of cultural responsiveness at PRE. It focuses on student-led civic engagement by offering leadership opportunities; it organizes and runs fundraising opportunities and activities to benefit both our school (i.e., roller-skating parties) and the wider community (i.e., Flag Day craft sale to benefit a Veteran's Outreach program, collection of nonperishables for Pittsford Food Cupboard).

All of this work towards a culturally responsive academic and social-emotional environment is a result of PRE's commitment to ongoing professional learning, in particular, recent and continuing in-house professional development related to differentiation and diversity, equity, and inclusion.

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

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A significant factor in the success of Park Road is our (and Pittsford philosophy) of providing significant professional autonomy to our teaching staff. While curriculum used at each grade level is consistent Park Road (and Pittsford Central Schools) provide a great deal of latitude to grade level teams and teachers in deciding how to best meet students' needs. We rarely purchase “programs” or resources that provide scripted plans for teachers to follow. Instead, we provide our teaching staff (working with their students and their professional learning teams) significant autonomy in their approaches to the students in front of them – who can change from year to year or even within an academic year. While we identify “essentials” in each curricular area and have suggested pacing charts, teachers do not work out of a "playbook" that dictates everyone teach the same thing at the same time. We teach to standards – but recognize there are many ways to address those standards, and believe that this flexibility allows for true cultural responsiveness and differentiation. We also have common rubrics and benchmark assessments to allow for data analysis of student needs, but there is choice, for example, within our reading and math units, and a recognition that there are different ways to support student understanding of essential skills and concepts.

The vast majority of all areas of our curriculum is developed “in-house” at the district and school levels and is created by our educators themselves. In addition to allowing for more responsiveness to student learning, it is our philosophy that in-house development of curriculum and assessments provides an important form of professional learning for staff as well as greater buy-in of the curriculum. Teachers have a voice and say—and there is flexibility to make modifications as needed. At PRE, our grade level “Professional Learning Teams” spend much of their planning time working together and collaborating, which allows staff to be flexible and creative in meeting students’ needs – which makes teaching and learning more effective—and more fun!

Similar to academics, we also pride ourselves in thinking creatively to address students' social-emotional needs. We have a school-developed compact and phrase (“Park Road School Works Together: we are Kind, Safe and Respectful), and every classroom develops their own unique compacts through collaborative discussions between students and teachers. Additionally, all students receive counseling and health instruction, curricula for which, again, are developed in-house. Counseling groups are curated based on discussions with grade level teams around student needs and are flexible in nature from year to year.