

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

---

[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name ICAHN Charter School 2  
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1640 Bronxdale Avenue  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Bronx                      State NY                      Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 10462-3302

County Bronx

Telephone (718) 828-6107                      Fax (718) 828-7308

Web site/URL http://www.icahncharterschool2.org    E-mail bcarrasquillo@ccics.org

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

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

Name of Superintendent\* Mr. Edward Tom                      E-mail etom@ccics.org  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name ICAHN Charter School 2                      Tel. (718) 828-0034

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

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

Name of School Board  
President/Chairperson Ms. Gail Golden  
(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 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

---

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):
- 1 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 0 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 0 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 1 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                     | 20         | 16           | 36          |
| 1                     | 19         | 25           | 44          |
| 2                     | 11         | 25           | 36          |
| 3                     | 19         | 16           | 35          |
| 4                     | 15         | 22           | 37          |
| 5                     | 14         | 19           | 33          |
| 6                     | 15         | 21           | 36          |
| 7                     | 13         | 21           | 34          |
| 8                     | 12         | 20           | 32          |
| 9                     | 0          | 0            | 0           |
| 10                    | 0          | 0            | 0           |
| 11                    | 0          | 0            | 0           |
| 12 or higher          | 0          | 0            | 0           |
| <b>Total Students</b> | 138        | 185          | 323         |

\*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):
- 2 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 4 % Asian
  - 33 % Black or African American
  - 55 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 4 % White
  - 1 % 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: 3%

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   | 4             |
| (2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year | 5             |
| (3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]                                                                | 9             |
| (4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2020                                                               | 323           |
| (5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)                                                 | 0.03          |
| (6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100                                                                                        | 3             |

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

Spanish, Twi

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 4 %  
13 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 59 %

Total number students who qualify: 190

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504: 9 %  
29 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>0</u> Autism                  | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>14</u> Other Health Impaired                |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>21</u> Specific Learning Disability         |
| <u>7</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>18</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: 14
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.                                                                  | 19                     |
| Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.                                                          | 10                     |
| Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.                                                                                                 | 4                      |
| Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc. | 2                      |

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 19:1

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

| <b>Required Information</b> | 2020-2021 | 2019-2020 | 2018-2019 | 2017-2018 | 2016-2017 |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Daily student attendance    | 94%       | 96%       | 92%       | 94%       | 95%       |
| High school graduation rate | 0%        | 0%        | 0%        | 0%        | 0%        |

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

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 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 X No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award. 2015

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

Carl C. Icahn Charter School #2, using the Core Knowledge curriculum developed by E.D. Hirsch, will provide students with a rigorous academic program offered in an extended day/year setting. Students will graduate armed with the skills and knowledge to participate successfully in the most rigorous academic environments and will have a sense of personal and community responsibility.

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

<http://www.icahncharterschool2.org/>

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

We are a charter school. Each year in spring an electronic lottery is conducted.

Application and selection process

In New York City, Icahn Charter School 2 is geographically located in School District 11, Bronx, New York. All applications for admission, including the common web application and the paper application, received on or before April 1, 2022, are entered into the lottery. A third-party lottery software application randomly selects applications for the lottery placement. During the lottery selection, the software will use a prefix before the placement number. A prefix with the letter A guarantees the child a seat, for example A22. A prefix with the letter W signifies a waitlist, for example W12A selection preference is applied to the lottery process. Lottery Preference by order: 1st Preference: Sibling- the student entering the school has a sibling registered at the school. 2nd Preference: Employee- an employee is enrolling their child to the school. The employee preference is limited to 15% of the charter school’s total enrollment and the child must reside in NY. 3rd Preference: District- The child must reside within the school district on the date of the lottery. The school district is determined by the home address on the application.

## **PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW**

---

Icahn Charter School # 2 is a Kindergarten through grade 8 school located in the northeast section of the Bronx, New York. We are on a main road, facing four traffic lanes, with a series of small businesses. Our only outdoor space is a small rooftop play area which accommodates two classes at a time. We are a Title I eligible school and serve a diverse population with a 96% minority student body. Our average class size is 19. We originally based the size of each class on the Tennessee Class Size Study of 1988. The research in that study concluded that if children are in small classes, the derived benefits of the early small class will remain throughout their education. This research holds true even today. Smaller class sizes allow for much more effective differentiated instruction. This model has allowed staff, students and parents to really get to know each other. Each person's success is a school success. Everyone is a stakeholder.

The success of the school is largely attributed to the culture of the school. Teachers work in teams, and there is consistent parent outreach, coupled with a strong social emotional component for the students, that includes two (2) counselors on staff. One counselor services K-4 and the second services 5-8. Intensive professional development is a key component of our school culture, as is our belief in standards based instruction. Our instructional program is data driven and combines Core Knowledge units of study with ongoing assessments. We maximize available resources, both financial and human capital (namely, staff with special talents). We apportion the schools' budget allocation according to student needs. Weekly grade meetings to review data and devise next steps allow our staff and administration to share strategies, ideas, and best practices. Communication with parents through parent workshops centered around how they can best support their children, as well as providing individual family meetings, have been successful strategies for student growth and achievement. In short, having clear expectations wherein all stakeholders buy into a common vision has been invaluable.

The 2020-2021 Pandemic Experience - Our school transitioned to remote learning on March 16, 2020, expecting to be back in two weeks, but didn't return for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year. All students received packets, either in person or by mail. On March 15 the Governor's Office issued an executive order indicating schools would be closed for the next few weeks with an opening date uncertain. On March 17 and 18, we distributed Chromebooks to families and ended the year with remote learning. With the start of the 2020-2021 school year, during the month of September we were fully remote. However, on October the 4th, we went hybrid. Throughout the year, there were entry periods for students to reenter the building following a hybrid model. Each re-entry period was centered around each marking period. We continued to forge ahead not knowing what bumps we would find on the road. Attendance remained our priority. Daily outreach to families of students not online were conducted.

The pandemic experience has stimulated a learning curve for all school personnel and students. Teachers have become increasingly creative in their delivery of online lessons and have mastered the use of different interactive websites. In turn, these sites were used to enhance their teaching and student engagement. Teachers now have an increasingly effective method to deliver remote and hybrid teaching. As we returned in September of 2021 to our brick-and-mortar building, without a remote learning option, what we learned has become an integral part of school life as it has revolutionized our approach to education with the effective use of technology.

Another component of lessons learned was the ability to integrate Social-emotional support within a strong academic program. Counselors now partner with classroom teachers in providing weekly social / emotional lessons; small groups help support students through adversities, traumas, or other experiences that are affecting their interpersonal relationships in school and/or in their personal lives.

We continue to provide on-going communication with parents and referrals to outside services as needed. We have relied heavily on this component, especially throughout this pandemic, as we went through the phases of remote learning, hybrid learning and this year's in-person learning. We have learned to focus heavily on developing our student's skills related to their own self-management, and their relationships with others. As a community we work together to brainstorm ideas that will increase student motivation, i.e. realistic/achievable goal setting for students, that build self-confidence; responsible decision-making that

leads to improved student achievement and school/ classroom climate.

Training for teachers and enhanced training for counselors in mindfulness have helped us to move forward as we come out of this pandemic. It has become extremely important for our school community to identify strong emotions; learn to reduce reactive stress responses in students; with the goal to equip them with coping skills for emotional management. Techniques, i.e. counting slowly up to 10, identifying when they need a break, mindful breathing, using positive self-talk and being assertive when communicating their feelings, so they can learn to best express them in a safe and positive manner. Our expectation is that we are on the right track in preparing students for a healthy and successful life well beyond school.

In 2015 the distinguished honor of being the recipient of the National Blue Ribbon Schools award was earned by and awarded to our school. The students, their families, teachers, and entire community rejoiced, feeling elation and pride. Everyone pledged to maintain the high standards and expectations which were evident by the school's success.

This honor has been one of the most memorable, empowering, and distinguishing events, as it clearly established that our students are capable of great achievement through their commitment to excellence. We all felt a tremendous sense of pride and vowed to maintain the momentum, and we have. Our graduates continue to gain acceptance, coupled with scholarships, into some of the most prestigious high schools in the region.

Today, we proudly continue to display our banner of excellence for all to see. It is a constant reminder of our community's accomplishment, partly due to the power of overcoming the many obstacles and adversities our students and their families face. It encourages us all to persevere in our quest to make a difference in the lives of future leaders and professionals being educated here in our beloved school. The banner is a symbol of our perseverance, commitment, and capabilities, as we continue to prepare each and every student for triumph in this complex and competitive world.

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

---

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

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

As a school community, we provide acute attention to our students' learning styles, individual needs, personal interests, and emotional wellness in order to promote a learning environment that supports their intellectual and personal development. We foster a democratic environment that redefines and shapes a student-centered learning experience, adopts a holistic approach to teaching and learning, transforms instructional practices through innovation and creativity, and builds a nurturing community through a strategic partnership among stakeholders. We cultivate a climate of collaborative excellence among all students, staff, families, and the community.

Teachers are strongly aligned with student-centered learning that embraces exploration, discovery, experiential learning, and the production of academically sound products. Children are exposed to hands-on learning activities that help them develop as global citizens and mature into responsible, compassionate young adults. We seek to not only educate students, but to inspire them to become life-long learners. It is imperative that our students are involved in their learning and participate in classroom activities and discussions. The development of public speaking, self-confidence, and advocacy are essential for our students to develop through our support. Our goal is to ensure that upon graduation our students leave our school walls with the skills, knowledge, and personal confidence to succeed in the most rigorous academic environments while also demonstrating a sense of personal and community responsibility as global citizens.

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

Our Reading/ English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum includes a syllabus so teachers know what to teach and when to teach it. In conjunction with NYS Learning Standards, our school utilizes the rigorous Core Knowledge Curriculum developed by E.D. Hirsch. The Core Knowledge Sequence is a detailed outline of recommended content knowledge and skills to be taught in language arts, history and geography, visual arts, music, mathematics, and science from preschool through grade eight. For each grade level, there is a range of titles that is covered during the school year with each year scaffolding or building upon the knowledge acquired in the previous year. Our students are introduced to a specific body of knowledge necessary for cultural literacy. The curriculum follows the Core Knowledge Sequence to help students build knowledge of diverse civilizations, cultures, and concepts. To promote both excellence and equity in education, knowledge-based learning is critical for all children, regardless of race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status.

We use a quality nationally recognized textbook program called Wonders. Wonders is supplemented with Core Knowledge Literature, which is referenced on the New York State recommended grade reading lists. The program has assessments which are used to determine next steps. These regular assessments provide a feedback loop. The comprehensive utilization of assessment data at our school enhances instructional effectiveness and student learning. Teachers use a variety of diagnostic, formative, summative, ipsative, norm-referenced, and criterion referenced assessments to drive instruction, adjust lesson plans accordingly, and to plan and prepare for remediation. Small group instruction is more important than ever for our students. It's a critical lever in ensuring that our students have the ability to acquire and comprehend knowledge at their own pace. This approach allows us to make sure that we fill in any learning gaps before students learn new content and skills.

Our ELA program goal is that our 8th graders leave the school having read some of the best literature and are prepared for the most rigorous secondary schools within the New York tri-state area. Accordingly, our ELA syllabus includes a Novel Study program that integrates the study of classic texts such as the Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, A Tale of Two Cities by Charles Dickens, Prince, and the Pauper by Mark Twain, selected short stories by Langston Hughes and Guy de Maupassant, and The Arabian Nights, among others. We have found that taking the time to read challenging works in their original form and in

their entirety over the course of a semester has deepened reader engagement with literature and fostered a stronger sense of the classroom as a reading and thinking community. Our use of Junior Grade Books which uses a close reading and shared inquiry approach is also very valuable.

Writing is incorporated as an interdisciplinary component. Nevertheless, we have dedicated writing periods. This approach ensures that our students get plenty of practice in understanding the writing process. Students are taught to write in a wide range of genres, including personal narratives, how-to pieces, persuasive essays, response to literature essays, expository writing and more. In all genres of writing, students take their work through the multi-step outline/draft/revise/edit/proofread/publish process, and the use of peer editing so that the final refined product is something that represents a true accomplishment. Our active learning environment empowers students to take ownership of their education, where teachers become the facilitators and students become independent critical thinkers and problem solvers.

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

In grades K-8, the math program at our school provides a balanced math curriculum that allows students to explore conceptual activities, apply what they have learned to new problems, and build number sense in the early grades as a main foundational skill. Our scope and sequence utilize Illustrative Mathematics that is rigorous, problem-based, and fully aligned to the standards of NYS, with coherence across grade bands. We supplement by using Eureka Math, which is NY State recommended, NY Ready, and i-Ready. The state learning standards define the objectives for which our educators must strive and which our students must achieve.

Through discourse, (discussions on different strategies students use) starting in kindergarten and continuing through grade 8, students take ownership of their learning experience, where they discuss and defend their reasoning. Every lesson drives towards assisting students in making meaning of mathematics and every lesson is grounded in the conceptual "why" behind the math concept and strategy that students are learning. Each session provides students with several opportunities to explore and justify their responses and work. Students do the bulk of the thinking and talking during every math lesson. To make this possible, we are incredibly intentional about how we engage students during each lesson. Teachers incorporate frequent turn and talks, opportunities for small group discussions, and whole class discourse. Rigor is the straightest path to independence. To develop independent mathematicians, we engage students in rigorous problem solving that challenges them in productive ways while also offering support, like math tools and manipulatives and the Mathematician's Plan, to help them make sense of the problem and persevere in solving.

To build and encourage students' mathematical thinking we use network-wide story problems. Cognitively guided instruction (K-5) and the orchestration of productive mathematics discussions (6-8) further assists students to "make sense" of mathematical concepts and to build a solid foundation. During story problem sessions, students analyze one cognitively appropriate story problem to determine the mathematical demand of the problem at hand. Through thoughtful questioning, teachers facilitate discussions that provide a window into their students' thinking and articulation of their strategic approach. This helps students strengthen their mathematical thinking to develop their capacity for algebraic reasoning. The purpose of practicing fact fluency is to help students learn the relationships between numbers, and develop automaticity. This helps students perform computations more accurately.

Our teachers intellectually prepare for math lessons by focusing on the big ideas that students will be taught in each lesson, the strategies that students may use to solve each problem, the anticipated misconceptions that students may have, and the questions that they will use to guide students through a discourse to discover or solidify understanding of the big ideas of the lesson. After each lesson, teachers review student work to identify how many students mastered the lesson goal, the errors students made, and reflect on the instructional modification that can be made in tomorrow's lesson to improve student learning.

The principal and the staff developer supervise the Mathematics program, which is also supported by a Mathematics Consultant from the Lavinia Math Group and by the Network Curriculum and Instruction Team. We collaborate to carry out work coaching cycles, lead unit launch deep dives, provide live-instruction coaching, lead and support in student work study sessions, and support school-wide action

planning. At the school level and across the network, the team is responsible for assisting staff by modeling lessons, developing, and enhancing best practices, and providing differentiated professional development.

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

The science curriculum followed in our school is a blended approach incorporating traditional instructional materials and lessons, scientific hands-on experimentation, and virtual components. Additionally, planned trips to science museums, lectures, and presentations by consultants, both for students and professional development for teachers, are an integral part of the curriculum. A means for promoting student motivation, healthy competition, and independent work is the annual science fair in which teaching staff become facilitators and students take control of their own learning. This involves the application of the scientific method requiring the design of an experiment, related research, writing a comprehensive report and oral presentation emphasizing public speaking skills. "Learning by doing", as proposed by John Dewey when emphasizing the value of Project Based Learning, holds true in every subject area. The winners within our school for each grade, then compete in the network science fair.

Related to lesson planning, as well as the delivery of lessons, teachers are required, and comply with, the aligning of lessons with the New York State Science Learning Standards and our Core Knowledge curriculum. For the purpose of consistency, the Icahn Charter Schools Network provides all seven of its schools with the science scope and sequence chart for each grade setting forth the order and length of time dedicated to each unit. Various assessments, formative and summative, are used to monitor student understanding in the subject area. In addition to assessments embedded in the instructional materials, the 4th and 8th graders must take mandated state test; 4th Grade Science Performance Test (ESPE), 8th Grade Intermediate Level Science Performance Test (ILSEPT), and Living Environment for high-school credit.

Some of the resources used for science are the Amplify Science Program which incorporates materials for differentiated instruction, Core Knowledge science unit, and Measuring Up to the New York State Learning Standards test preparation book. As virtual resources we include Discovery Education and Amplify's virtual component.

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

All teachers throughout grades K-8 follow a Network generated syllabus and pacing chart in social studies which delineates the topics to be covered and a timeline to be followed. We have aligned our Core Knowledge Curriculum with the New York State social studies standards into our syllabus. Units of study represent the following: Ancient Civilizations, Native American Tribes, History of the United States and New York, Geography, Economics, Civics, Citizenship, and Government. Additional resources we use in our K-8 classes is My World interactive. Throughout our school students engage in project-based learning modules. This allows our students to gain knowledge and skills by working with units of study. Students decide on sub-topics that they are interested in and they work over the period of six to eight weeks on investigating, conducting research on a complex question, challenge or problem. They begin with the driving question, they brainstorm, teachers monitor student progress of the project, provide support, students create an artifact that is directly related to their project with the support of their parents. This home/school connection has been very successful for us. The students then engage in an oral presentation within their grade, or schoolwide, where their peers can give stars and wishes. Stars are elements that are noteworthy, and wishes are feedback to the student. This activity reinforces historical thinking skills that help students prepare for civic engagement. All projects are graded via rubrics.

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

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

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

Arts: Our school has a strong commitment to infusing arts into our curriculum programs. We support both school-wide and class-wide artistic agendas. Each year our school has two main assembly programs, one at the end of the calendar year, and one culminating performance at the end of the academic year. Capitalizing on the skill sets of our own in-house teachers, we begin to orchestrate programs involving song, dance, and theatrical acting. Towards the end of each academic year, we work with outside companies such as SEA and Ballroom Basix to create an original program for parents and our entire school community. We use our student capital to create shows that integrate students' ideas, writing, and set production to produce performances that are incredibly fulfilling for our students.

Throughout the year on a daily basis, we encourage the use of arts to supplement instruction. Teachers use artistic projects to enhance instruction in social studies, as well as other curriculum areas. Artwork to accompany student writing is consistently displayed on bulletin boards. Our school also works with a company called LEAP (Learning through an Expanded Arts Program) that provides teaching artists to work in each one of our classrooms. The teaching artists implement long term projects based on a wide variety of artistic skills drawing from both visual and performance art. Students learn technique and are given choice with regard to what they are creating.

Physical Ed: Kindergarten through Grade 8 students all participate in a physical education program that meets the criteria set forth in New York State. Beginning in kindergarten we emphasize gross motor in our gymnasium, as well as fine motor coordination within the classrooms. Basic recommended drills are established throughout the grades throughout the year, age and grade appropriate. Students engage in basketball, tennis, volleyball, which are the most popular and compete in basketball and tennis. We also include personal health as part of the fitness program. We want our children to have the knowledge and skills to establish and maintain physical fitness as a main reason for personal health. Health Lessons on good nutrition for appropriate diets, the importance of eating a healthy breakfast and other nutritious meals, food handling practices and how this affects the safety and quality of foods, understanding changes, such as physical changes, changes in voice during puberty.

Foreign Language: In grades 7 and 8, students are required to attend a foreign language class. The language is Spanish. We use published materials such as the Holt McDougal Avancemos Curriculum which incorporates vocabulary, spelling, grammar, literature, and conversational engagement. The program teaches the Spanish language using world- readiness standards for learning languages. Students learn to read, write and how to communicate in the target language. They also learn about the various and distinct cultures of Spanish speaking countries throughout the world. Students engage in projects representing different cultures that speak the language. Online applications such as IXL, Goformative, and Duolingo are also incorporated into lessons.

Technology: Our school library runs through a comprehensive interface provided by Destiny Discover. Historically, we have provided traditional library resources by generating student barcodes and library cards allowing check out privileges and access to thousands of current titles. During the past few years, we have developed our online library system to connect students to several online Ebook outlets and research platforms. Students are given passcodes to check out books online through apps like Simply E, or through academically centered programs such as LightSail. Additionally, students have access to periodicals, online reference materials, and video content to support their research assignments and interests. Classes report to the library at dedicated times throughout the day for students to work on independent projects.

The use and availability of technology has allowed the library to grow into an extensive collection. While online resources are useful and abundant, we remain committed to providing hard copies of books for our students to use and enjoy. When popular titles are discovered, the library purchases multiple copies. We continue to believe that every student deserves a book in their hands.

## **3. Academic Supports**

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

A strong academic program with early intervention and a nurturing school environment are the basic tenets our school is based upon. The elements that are key in our program include longer school days and a longer school year. Students that are at risk of academic failure are provided with a targeted assistance program, which is an individualized tutoring for students whose testing results indicate they need extra support with additional differentiated instruction. We provide targeted assistance as part of our remedial program. This is one teacher with a small group of students. This may occur throughout the school day, during the AM before school starts or during the PM hours. We also have an intensely focused ELA/Math Saturday Academy Program from 9:00-12:00 to help them “catch up”. Every program is geared to maximize impact for each child, including special education children and ELL children.

In the early childhood grades we use mCLASS with Amplify Reading, a K–5 adaptive early literacy assessment and instructional solution that makes identification of students in need immediate. The program helps educators reach each child, and provide an individualized, student-led instructional path to continue their literacy growth. A secondary assessment tool we use is I-Ready. This is an online program for reading and mathematics that helps our teachers identify student needs, personalize their learning, and monitor progress throughout the school year.

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

An important goal in our school is to have every child reach and, when possible, exceed their maximum potential. Students who excel and are performing at a higher grade level, must be positively challenged, encouraged, and guided into the next phase of knowledge acquisition. In the spirit of and philosophy explicitly related to differentiated instruction, our school makes every effort to identify, as early as feasible, students who excel academically. The evaluation and analysis of the regularly collected data from the various assessments used in our school is partially used, combined with teacher input, to recognize which students must be “pushed beyond their comfort zone.”

In addition to instructional resources used by teachers, in both lesson planning and lesson execution, and which already include differentiating materials, we assign classic literature rich in content and context for reading and discussion. The recommended literature incorporates challenging vocabulary and reflects a higher Lexile level. Teachers are encouraged to use supplemental materials such as Scholastic magazines which primarily contain non-fiction articles on topics of interest for the students. Also incorporated into our advanced learning component is the 100 Book Challenge Program which offers an entire leveled library filled with different genres and varying degrees of levels of difficulty. Students who successfully take and complete the challenge are rewarded with prizes and special recognition. Likewise, available are two citywide programs which we promote and support: The Debate Team and Mock Court competitions. These options promote student preparation and stimulate the deeper analysis of current and relevant topics and issues. Student enthusiasm and commitment has been evident by the number of trophies and awards earned by the participants.

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

The Special Education Teacher Support Services and related service providers follow the student’s IEP. There is ongoing articulation, either weekly and/or daily if needed, between the special education teacher and the general education teacher. It is required that the special education providers participate in grade-level meetings to ensure continuity and consistency. They also provide specially designed and/or supplemental instruction to support the participation of the special education student in the general education classroom. There are times when the services are in class, at other times, it is a pull-out program. The direct services address educational needs directly related to the student’s deficiencies. The collaboration between the general education and the special education teachers focus on adjusting the learning environment and/or modifying or adapting instructional methods to meet the individual needs of students. Supplementary aids and supports, depending on the student’s IEP, include materials, devices and instructional adaptations such as: Instructional practices that are cross-age tutoring and heterogeneous grouping; behavior intervention/support plans to address behavior that impedes learning; Instructional adaptations including the manner in which information is presented, paced or sequenced; Curriculum accommodation that changes how a student accesses information and demonstrates learning, i.e. the use of

interactive technology because each student has access to a personal Chromebook, for read alouds, etc. We also engage in Curriculum modifications by having the service provider review material that will be coming up in class in order to foster engagement when the material is presented in class. This might include redesigning the focus or size of the assignment into small chunks; individualized supports such as the rephrasing of a question or instructions, special seating arrangements (within the classroom), testing modifications, etc., as per the IEP.

Additionally, we have a Pupil Personnel Committee (PPC) also known as a Child Study Team. The committee is composed of the special education teacher, general education teacher, an administrator, and a related service provider. The PPC meets monthly and as needed to review a) any IEP modifications that might be necessary, or deletion of services because students are making sustained improvement, as well as the needs of at-risk students, and their support interventions. In addition, the PPC will discuss, screen, and make recommendations of alternative models that will meet the needs of these students in a regular education setting prior to establishing the need to make a referral to special education.

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

We follow the guidelines stipulated by the New York City Department of Education for the identification of ELL student upon admission to our school. Once a student is identified, students receive intervention services from a provider. Depending on their Level, the service provider incorporates into the schedule the mandated services to meet student needs. The levels are Level 1-Starting, Level 2-Emerging, Level 3-Developing, Level 4-Expanding.

Once a student is identified, students receive intervention services from a provider. Depending on their Level, appropriate schedules are created in order to meet the needs of these students. ELL students participate in all school activities. We also support home language in the classroom. We encourage students to share greetings in their home language and we seek to provide opportunities for students to incorporate the language within some of the projects, celebrations, and greetings of special visitors to the school. Oral language development is a key component of the curriculum. All of our purchased materials from vendors have an ELL component that is used by the provider in order to continue seamless instruction. On going articulation with classroom teachers is frequent, mutually informative, and beneficial for the students. The provider is encouraged to intergrade supplemental resources to help ELL students achieve the proficiency level to master the required skill.

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

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

---

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

The staff, teachers and administration of our school continually strive to promote a healthy, positive, and productive atmosphere to support and engage all of our students. Throughout the covid pandemic crisis, ICS2 staff continued to provide both academic and social emotional support services. Two school councilors provide services to our students.

During the initial phases of the covid crisis when school buildings were physically closed, all teachers were trained on how to use online learning tools to develop and deliver classroom lessons to our students. The transition to online learning was an ongoing process as new platforms were developing rapidly. Our staff had to adapt to those platforms that would allow them to deliver the best practices of teaching a standards-based curriculum to students.

Every student was provided with a Chromebook for home use to enable participation in remote class sessions held virtually throughout the weekdays. Chromebook pick-up times were coordinated in intervals in front of the school building, and parents had the opportunity to ask questions on how to log into the class session which were held by their teacher using the google meet and google classroom platform. When parents had internet issues, support staff were assigned to identify families' needs and work with the City of New York in providing them with internet service. Teachers used interactive platforms promoting student engagement with the text and related materials directly online during the class session. Teachers were able to adjust and assess student learning in real time by observing their online work product during the class. Teachers used the “school from home” environment to strengthen the home/ school connection by communicating with parents and offering assignments and projects that would support the online lessons.

The overall atmosphere within the school gives the students a holistic approach to building college and career readiness through a motivating and engaging environment. The curriculum is brought to life through its application to relevant practical concerns that students can relate to and understand. For example, a lesson about thermal energy would apply to a real life scenario if our school’s heating system were to break down. A lesson on dividing fractions would connect to how to distribute food for a student party. Historical lessons are taught in relation to their connection to current events that students are impacted by. This allows our students to have a broader understanding about how the concepts they are learning apply to their lives and their desires for the future.

Project based learning is an important component of our curriculum and gives insight into the holistic approach that is delivered. Our students are asked to research deeper into a topic covered by the curriculum and develop a 3D model to represent an aspect of their learning. Recently, projects were gathered for a display, and a museum experience was created for the school. Students were asked to curate the museum, guiding others on tours and explaining projects from different grades. Featured artists of the museum stood by to present their projects and learning discoveries. Students who have been studying photography were asked to photograph the museum while students interested in journalism interviewed student artists with projects in the museum as well as patrons who went on the tour. This one integrated experience kept students engaged, developed their public speaking skills, gave them a sense of pride and accomplishment to boost their social emotional needs, and allowed them to learn from one another. The strong expectations and supportive structure offered by the teachers and staff continues to create a positive environment for our students to thrive.

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

The school offers multiple parent workshops throughout the year. During the pandemic the meetings were offered during the evening hours via ZOOM. We are continuing this practice until it is over. This enables parents to attend without adding inconvenience to already hectic school nights. We have found that parents appreciate this. Many parents find it difficult to attend in-person workshops due to childcare/ infant care and work hours. ZOOM workshops show sensitivity to these issues and are timed at 7:30 PM when parents have

completed dinner/ homework supervision. They can relax while learning about strategies for supporting their children's success and share their ideas, experiences and challenges with the workshop speaker and other parents.

Families are invited to performances and celebrations of learning throughout the year. The end of year always culminates in full dramatic stage productions based on the Core Knowledge curriculum, which will be reinstated this academic year. Due to the pandemic, we were not conducting assembly performances. Each grade puts on a play based on a historical topic/ period they have studied in our Core Knowledge curriculum. The plays include songs and showcases, historical facts, and the many talents of the children: from singing, to acting, to stage production and costuming. The pride, joy and laughter these plays generate are a defining moment for our student/teacher parent/guardian community—ending the year on a high note.

At the middle school level, we partner with a Community Based Organization entitled, New York Junior Tennis League to offer an after-school program that provides a wide range of activities including tennis instruction, basketball, soccer, baking/cooking, art and homework support open to our Middle School students. This program supports our working families by keeping tweens active and productive during after school hours. On occasions they get the opportunity to see Broadway Shows. It also runs during the summer months offering full-day trips and activities.

Our partnership with NYJTL, (New York Junior Tennis League), provides many benefits to our tweens. The afterschool and summer programs limit screen time for this vulnerable age group. The deleterious effects of excessive screen time are well established. Furthermore, the partnership ensures positive social interaction, mentorship, physical activity, and artistic outlets. These balance out the tumult of early adolescence and keep our middle school students moving in a positive direction. Given that we are located in the nation's poorest congressional district, the out-of-school time programs are especially important to our students' ongoing success and wellbeing.

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

We continue to create a community that engages in teamwork and camaraderie. Teachers of the same grade level are given their planning period simultaneously to allow for collaborative planning and communication. This team planning can make teachers feel supported as they can share responsibility for developing lessons and activities for the students. They benefit from the insight that they have to offer about what is working well, and what needs modification. Discussing stumbling blocks and brainstorming ideas, strategies that can be employed for student success are always a key component of the meetings. Successes are also shared during these meetings, as teachers share exemplary student work, growth of students, etc.

Professional Development is given every other week for a half a day on Fridays. This allows teachers the opportunity to clarify areas of concern and learn more about our school's strategies for curriculum delivery, data assessment, use of technology, etc. This also fosters a teamwork approach as teachers learn together jointly, and from one another, as well as from the administration. During the transition to online learning, teachers were provided with real-time professional development through Tech consultants and support staff who turnkey the tech professional development they received. After students came online, teachers continued with professional development multiple times a week to keep up to date with the latest technology and for support for issues that came up during online instruction. Tech consultant/coach and in school support staff continued to join in on google meet, making sure the staff were gaining confidence and competence in the use of online applications, such as "break out" rooms, for small group instruction. Teachers learned how to use features of various online platforms, along with additional lesson building and assessment platforms, that could be used to engage students as well.

During the covid crisis, our staff met every morning before online instruction began, and every afternoon after instruction was completed. At this time, the administration as well as other staff members would give each other "shout outs" which were warm compliments about what they did to help another staff member, or something exemplary that they did throughout the day. This helped teachers feel supported during a difficult time. Staff also used the online meeting platforms to meet socially to relax which also helped to contribute to a culture of teamwork and camaraderie. On-line spirit weeks were conducted with students and families,

the teaching artist in music continued to work with the students off hours and created videos that were shared with parents.

In short, no time was wasted in getting students online. It was a learning curve for everyone, but the dedication and commitment to providing our students with the best possible experience was always in the forefront. We learned much and continue to use many of the digital applications that we used during our remote learning experiences. Education is forever changed, as we feel for the better.

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

The principal maintains the focus and mission of the school. Daily rounds to ensure the smooth operation of the school are conducted by the principal. The principal believes in standards-based instruction. Therefore, the instructional program is data driven and aligns the Core Knowledge curriculum with state standards. Student performance is monitored through ongoing assessments as well as teacher observation. The principal maximizes available resources, both financial (Before school, after school and Saturday tutorial sessions are also provided depending on need throughout the year.) and human capital such as staff talents. The principal identifies areas of expertise, where master teachers can mentor new teachers while providing continued professional development for more experienced staff and providing them with opportunities to conduct workshops, and take on various leadership roles as the opportunities arise.

The principal aligns the school's allocation to the student needs. Children who have demonstrated a deficiency in reading or math, as evidenced by assessment results and teacher observation are placed in a Targeted Assistance Program (TAP) which is a small group size, daily intervention period, either in class or as a pull out, depending on the need. This TA teacher plans collaboratively with the classroom teacher and has access to all data. IEP driven and ENL students even though they are serviced through the special education or ENL teachers, also receive additional support from TA teachers. The principal believes in a team approach when implementing support services and small group instruction in order to differentiate and address student needs.

Students identified for enrichment are also provided with differentiated group instruction that challenge them in their area of strength.

The school doesn't have an assistant principal but has a staff developer. The role of the staff developer is to provide coaching, mentoring, professional development to all staff to ensure the implementation of a standards-based curriculum. The staff developer also leverages along with the principal key staff that volunteer for classroom inter-visitation by less experienced faculty, then allowing for debriefing time to discuss what was observed and the opportunity to ask questions.

Throughout the pandemic the administrative roles of the principal and staff developer, guidance counselors, changed to incorporate being the "cheerleaders" for teachers, and students. Everyone was experiencing a new learning curve. Pushing through gaining competencies with digital applications were challenging, however the resilience of leadership and teaching staff was exemplary. The children adapted rather quickly to the digital applications which made the transition smoother. Maintaining student interest/ motivation was challenging. Accordingly, short breaks, physical education activities, interactive digital applications with instructional games, were used to a greater degree during the remote learning periods we experienced. We are now in person and back to normal. We still use what we learned that worked best from the digital applications, and they have become part of our lessons. Our school building doors are once again open, and we are now in person and back to normal. We have incorporated what we determined worked best from the digital application used during remote learning, and continue to use the new resources in our never ending quest to improve our lessons.

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

We are and have always been committed to ensuring that the cultural diversity of our students, families and staff are respected and celebrated. We promote an environment of culturally responsive teaching and learning by training staff on the delivery of a curriculum that honors the global achievements from a wide

variety of perspectives. We utilize the core Knowledge curriculum as well as other supplemental components to ensure representation and insight into cultures that are reflected in our own student body and staff. In addition to learning about the historical contributions from diverse communities throughout the world, our students and staff are given the opportunity to share their modern traditions and practices with their school community. Teachers consistently celebrate diversity and cultural representation within class sessions where students share unique aspects of their culture when relevant to a class instruction. For example, while teaching a first-grade core knowledge unit about the culture of Mexico, teachers will connect the students to material by asking them to share a personal artifact, or representation of cultural significance from their own culture. Throughout the academic year, all holidays, special months, or important dates of cultural significance are fully promoted with meaningful reflection about their historical context. The school halls are decorated with culturally relevant reflections that reinforce models of diversity for students and bulletin boards showcase student work and understanding. The school library features texts with characters and authors from a diverse range of demographic backgrounds that engender feelings of cultural inclusion and insight.

Our school promotes an atmosphere of respect through our community-oriented approach. Prior to the pandemic, the entire school would gather in the cafeteria where the school principal would welcome them with a morning greeting and a consistent morning message. “Good, better best, never let it rest until your good is better and your better is best” was the morning refrain spoken in unison, by all students in all grades with one voice. This togetherness created a shared environment of respect and belonging that framed the daily instruction.

In the classrooms the teachers create an environment of respect by maintaining high expectations with strong support. Teachers focus on the needs of each student and utilize programming that allows for student choice. Teachers provide an environment of increasing responsibility and autonomy where students learn to use teamwork with a relatively diverse group of their peers to accomplish tasks. With an established environment of trust, students are able to share aspects of themselves and elements of their culture that are a part of their life, and open dialogue is welcomed.

To address current events, our school administration sends out memos to organize our school community to rally around certain current events of cultural importance. Current events are shared experiences and treated as opportunities for learning and reflection. On the day of the presidential swearing in ceremony, teachers were instructed with regard to the specific timing to connect to the live broadcast which allows students to observe the first Black woman in history inducted into the White House as VP. Meaningful historical moments are shared in and addressed by the school community as a whole.

Our administration continues to support our school community and the needs of our students, staff, and families. We make accommodations for diverse needs including spaces to pray in private. Counseling support services are offered to students that may be having adjustment challenges or feeling isolated. Our school counselors conduct classroom lessons with regard to respect, tolerance and inclusion.

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

---

The continuous and consistent community building spirit in our school, has and continues to be a proven strategy for success which positively impacts the overall achievements of our students. As the lyrics goes, “We’re all in this together”. Working collectively toward common goals, be it a student’s individual aspiration to succeed in an assessment by receiving extra support from teachers, or communal objectives such as teachers and support staff participating in professional development to devise teaching strategies and best practices to bring lessons to life for all to learn. We, the entire school community, provide a safe environment which promotes learning and academic excellence through discourse, motivation, support through collaboration, mentoring and coaching in an atmosphere free from unproductive and devaluing criticism. Our community is a safe intellectual haven where our students, the recipients of knowledge, and teachers that impart their expertise, continuously work jointly to ensure everyone’s success in this rigorous and challenging learning environment. When each member feels appreciated and sees their work and efforts validated, encouragement and responsibility is promoted. Therefore, students become much more involved with their academic achievement leaving very little room for disciplinary issues.

Our community’s formation is designed to meet the needs of its members. Special care and effort are made to quickly incorporate newly admitted transfer students and teaching staff into our community. Transfer students find the buddy system helpful and readily adapt to the school’s culture. The school community includes and involves everyone within the building as well as families. Starting with the principal whose vision, encouragement and support impacts us all. Next, the students who commit themselves to daily improvements in both academics and social/emotional development. Followed by the teaching staff who freely contribute time and energy to continue their acquisition of knowledge, assist any student within our community and communicate with families. Lastly, our food service and janitorial personnel who lovingly provide nourishment and a clean environment for us all.

Community building, complex as it may seem, can be accomplished. It must include an environment in which there is trust within its members and everyone’s accomplishments are acknowledged and celebrated. All community members must be included as we share and work towards common goals and objectives.