

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

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

School Mailing Address 177 Pondfield Road
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Bronxville State NY Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 10708-4829

County Westchester

Telephone (914) 395-0500 Fax (914) 337-6827

Web site/URL https://www.bronxvilleschool.org E-mail jmercora@bronxvilleschool.org

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* Dr. Roy Montesano E-mail rmontesano@bronxvilleschool.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Bronxville Union Free School District Tel. (914) 395-0500

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. Susan Conniff
(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)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 3 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	47	46	93
1	52	48	100
2	64	56	120
3	59	48	107
4	52	57	109
5	56	51	107
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
Total Students	330	306	636

*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):
- 0.2 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 6.8 % Asian
 - 0.1 % Black or African American
 - 7.6 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0.1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 85.2 % White
 - 0 % 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.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	11
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	17
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	28
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2020	664
(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):

Japanese and Russian

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 1 %

4 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 2 %

Total number students who qualify: 12

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504: 8 %
49 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>9</u> Autism | <u>2</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>17</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>0</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>7</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>14</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: 1
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.

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	31
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.	24
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	10

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 20:1

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

Required Information	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017
Daily student attendance	98%	97%	94%	98%	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.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes No

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

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

The guiding mission of our school is The Bronxville Promise. The tenants of that mission are to enable students to: Lead, Innovate, Engage The World, and Think Critically.

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

<https://www.bronxvilleschool.org/district/annual-policies-to-be-reviewed>

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

Celebrating our one hundredth year, Bronxville Elementary School is part of the Bronxville Union Free School District. This is our first nomination for a Blue-Ribbon award, and we are honored. Since opening its doors in 1922, the Bronxville School has been a leading, progressive district committed to providing an excellent education. We hold ourselves to a high standard of excellence about our students' achievement. This standard is guided by the tenets of the Bronxville Promise, the school's mission, and vision, to teach our students to lead, think critically, innovate, and engage the world.

The Bronxville Promise is truly our North Star. In 2015, we came together as a community to discuss what a Bronxville education truly means, and we used exemplary student work, much of which came from Bronxville Elementary School, to guide our thinking. We described the characteristics evidenced in the work and categorized them into the four dispositions of the Bronxville Promise--to lead, to innovate, to think critically, and to engage the world. As a community of learners, we further defined each of the dispositions and identified indicators and outcomes that are part of each of the tenets of the Bronxville Promise.

To lead is to act and inspire others toward a positive outcome. To innovate is to take risks to design or create solutions to add value or serve a need. To engage the world means to understand, develop empathy, and act in ways that will make a positive impact either large or small. Lastly, to think critically means to be disciplined to deepen one's understanding of issues and problems and have the courage to change one's mind.

To make the Bronxville Promise a reality for our students, Bronxville Elementary School faculty took part in professional development with the Buck Institute. They wrote a project-based learning curriculum built on the tenets of the Bronxville Promise. Two wonderful examples include, our fifth-grade unit, Be the Change, and our first-grade unit on recess. Fifth grade students participate in a unit entitled, Be the Change. Students choose an issue they want to explore further, conduct research, and advocate for social change. In the past, students have questioned whether the school's budget allocates enough funds for arts education and advocated for the school to develop stricter guidelines on the use of social media. Likewise, in our first grade, students identify a problem that occurs repeatedly at recess and attempt a solution. They study what recess looks like in neighboring communities and across the globe. In the past, students have placed a "Buddy Bench" on the playground where students can go if they need a friend to play with and others can come over to the bench and encourage them to join their group.

In addition to the Project Based Learning curriculum, our students take part in a rigorous English Language Arts curriculum that is grounded in the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, utilizing a workshop model that mimics the work of published authors. We utilize the Singapore Math curriculum, and our teachers participate in extensive professional development with renowned mathematician, Greg Tang. Bronxville Elementary School utilizes a concrete, pictorial, abstract approach to learning mathematics. Students not only learn mathematical procedures, but also why they work. Our students enjoy rigorous special classes in physical education, music, art and library. In addition, our students learn to code through a curriculum that begins in kindergarten and continues through the fifth grade. Our students also take part in a rigorous, science curriculum that is completely hands-on. As an example, we have students throughout the district studying our Bronx River to make it a cleaner, safer river. Each grade in the elementary school collects data about the Bronx River to pass on to our high school student principal investigators and assists them in analysis and recommendations. Our students relish being a part of Citizen Science, where learning can result in true change.

As did all schools, Bronxville Elementary experienced a difficult few years as we pivoted to keep our students engaged and learning through a global pandemic. Our resilient faculty saw this as an opportunity. As part of a series of well-designed faculty meetings, coordinated by Enrusk, a design thinking firm for education, teachers reflected on the experience of teaching through that period. One teacher shared her experience of teaching during the pandemic. Upon reflecting, she wrote herself a note. In that note, she explained she would never have thought that she could spend a year teaching kids how to read and write, all

the while, wearing a mask, staying 6 feet apart from them, and even teaching them through a screen. She went on to say she would have never thought that she could build relationships without giving her students actual high fives and hugs. In the end, what she thought was impossible, became possible. At the end of the year, despite all these challenges, the students DID learn! They became strong readers, writers, and mathematicians. The teacher reflected that no matter how hard it seemed, she managed to persevere.

This sentiment is at the heart of Bronxville Elementary School and the Bronxville Promise. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to our teaching staff for their leadership and innovative spirit that was so evident during those challenging times. Over the summer of 2020, preparations were made to safely allow all students the opportunity to return to school for five days a week of in person instruction. As a result, in September of 2020, Bronxville Elementary was one of the only schools in the state that reopened and remained open for the entire school year.

Our Bronxville Promise continues to evolve. Most recently, our elementary school faculty and other constituents across the district have been developing what we call the heart of the Promise which identifies and addresses our students' social and emotional needs. These skills are addressed through our elementary school's CARE (Community, Awareness, Responsibility and Empathy) Program and The Bronxville Elementary School B3 program, where students learn to Be Respectful, Be Responsible, and Be Safe.

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:

Based on the dispositions of the Bronxville Promise, the overarching approach to curriculum at Bronxville Elementary includes opportunity for authentic learning experiences. Students are often encouraged to learn information to solve real world problems, make an argument, advocate for change, and serve a need.

The curriculum includes many opportunities for problem based and project-based learning. The Bronxville Elementary School faculty strongly believes that this type of curriculum supports students' growth in the dispositions of the Promise- to lead, to innovate, to engage the world, and to think critically. The faculty finds the students are most engaged when they understand they are expected to apply their knowledge to make a difference in the community, and in some cases, the world. In addition, our curriculum also focuses on the development of executive functioning skills through our work with IDE, Innovative Designs for Education. IDE's curricular framework focuses on efficacy and engagement. Students begin with a "felt need" in which they learn skills and concepts to solve a real-world problem through what IDE has identified as a Learner-Active, Technology- Infused Classroom™. In the IDE model students learn independently and collaboratively. They use technology seamlessly as a tool for learning.

Bronxville Elementary School curriculum aligns to New York State Next Generation Learning Standards in English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Social Studies, NGSS Science Standards, and New York State Social and Emotional Benchmarks. When creating problem or project-based units of study, teachers reference New York State learning standards and indicators and outcomes of the Bronxville Promise that will be addressed as part of any unit. Students in grades three, four, and five also participate in New York State testing in English Language Arts and Mathematics. Students in grade four take a New York State Science test, which will transition to grade five in the coming years. There is currently no standardized test for Social Studies.

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

In English Language Arts, Bronxville Elementary follows the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, TCRWP. Founded in 1981 by Lucy Calkins, the TCRWP follows a workshop model of instruction, where students are taught a mini lesson, approximately 8-12 minutes in length, then have the opportunity to practice the skill modeled by the teacher in reading or writing. During independent work time, it is typical that the teacher will be teaching small groups or offering one on one support, including, but not limited to, guided reading and writing conferences. At the conclusion of the workshop, students come together as a class to share their work and reflect on their learning. Reading units of study focus on fiction and nonfiction in every grade. In writing, students learn to write narratives, literary essays, argument based writing, and informational writing. In addition to reading and writing workshops, students in grades K-2 participate in a phonics curriculum that focuses on CVC patterns, blends and digraphs, vowel teams, silent e, and endings including es, Ing, and ed. Finally, grammar instruction is provided in every grade at Bronxville Elementary. As part of our curriculum design for grammar, teachers in grades K-5 came together to identify the most urgent grammar conventions necessary for each grade. Teachers then utilize the following strategies to teach grammar rules: direct instruction through modeling in their own writing; inquiry, where students look at text and try to deduce the grammar rule, for example, they would read a text that utilizes commas in a series and try to deduce the grammar rule; apprenticeship, where they study authors that use grammar to bring power and voice to their writing; and extravaganza, where students make fun videos or skits to remember the rule. Literacy assessments include phonics assessments up to four times per year in primary grades, Running Records, Renaissance STAR assessments, a nationally normed assessment that measures proficiency and is given three times per year, and pre and post writing assessments based on TCRWP rubrics for evaluating writers.

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

In Mathematics, Bronxville Elementary School utilizes the Singapore Math curriculum. The curriculum emphasizes a concrete, pictorial, and abstract approach to learning. Math manipulatives and pictorial representations are extensively incorporated in our math classrooms. Students not only learn how to do mathematical procedures, but why they work. Students are very familiar with bar models, ten frames, and base 10 blocks. There is a great deal of accountable talk in our math classroom and students are often encouraged to solve a problem with a variety of strategies and discuss which strategy is the most efficient and why. Students take unit tests as part of the Singapore curriculum and take a formative Renaissance STAR math assessment three times per year. The after-school program offers Math Olympiads for students interested in a competition style challenge in mathematics. Additionally, a growth mindset is celebrated in our math program. Mistakes are expected, corrected, and celebrated as a way of growing our mathematical capabilities.

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

The Bronxville Elementary School Science curriculum is designed by our two dedicated science teachers and is very hands on. Units include but are not limited to Insects and Plants; Soils, Rocks, and Landforms; Weather; and Sound and Light. Students also study soils, erosion, sediments, and pollution as part of our K-12 study of the Bronx River, the only freshwater river in New York City. In addition to units of study, cross-cutting concepts that occur across physical, life, and earth science are emphasized. Examples of cross-cutting concepts include patterns, cause and effect, structure and function, and stability and change. Science and engineering practices are also embedded in both the science and technology curriculum and students are often encouraged to create models or prototypes as part of the curriculum. Our elementary school students also have access to Z-space technology, an advanced virtual reality technology, that allows students to explore in three dimensions. For example, students can view the inside of a flower or the skeleton system from the inside out. Science assessment is often lab based and measures students' ability to collect and analyze data as well as identify and explain cross-cutting concepts represented in the scientific phenomenon under study.

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

The Social Studies curriculum at Bronxville Elementary School is guided by the New York State Social Studies Standards and The College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for State Standards in Social Studies which was published by the National Council for Social Studies. The C3 Framework emphasizes evaluating sources, using evidence, communicating findings, and taking informed action which aligns with our project-based learning work as well as the dispositions of Leadership, Critical Thinking and Engaged Citizenship from our Bronxville Promise.

Nonfiction reading and research skills are incorporated throughout Social Studies. Students learn about themselves and others, including local and global communities. They study the US Constitution and propose possible amendments, they study the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, and Colonial America. Currently, teachers are planning a trip to lower Manhattan to visit the African Burial Ground National Monument, which honors the often-overlooked history of enslaved Africans in colonial New York City, which played an important role in the city's development. The Social Studies curriculum has a focus on learning content, and students are challenged to think critically about enduring issues of history including but not limited to human rights violations, scarcity, power, and the impact of technology and immigration. Students are also encouraged to take informed action for social change when they see an injustice after ensuring that they understand the situation thoroughly and from trusted sources. As such, our Social Studies curriculum has often included the opportunity to write to local politicians and create Public Service Announcements.

1f. For secondary schools:

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Bronxville Elementary School offers several additional programs that not only enrich the students' learning experience, but also support their acquisition of essential skills and knowledge. All students K-5 participate in art, general music, physical education, library, technology, and science. Fourth and fifth grade students can play an instrument.

The General Music classroom is a class that involves singing throughout most of the period from the time they walk into the room to when they line up to go back to their classrooms. Music class begins with a listening activity focusing on the great classical composers, as well as music from cultures where students are learning to identify different elements of music. In grades K-2, proper vocal techniques are developed by encouraging students to sing alone and as a group using authentic folk songs and circle games. In grades three and four, singing continues to be an important part of learning music literacy with the implementation of xylophones and other classroom instruments. The encouragement of music making and having fun throughout all our general music classes is of the utmost importance in our music department.

Fourth and fifth grade band lessons are a mix of learning both music literacy and instrumental skills. Students learn how to read music to learn about music from around the world and put our instrumental knowledge into historical context. Students gradually acquire instrumental technique, as well as learn the importance of perseverance, consistent effort, and collaborative work.

The Bronxville School Arts Program gives students the opportunity for creative self-expression through exploration, discovery, observation, reflection, innovation, and collaboration. Individual creativity is a cornerstone of the program, giving each child the opportunity to develop their authentic voice and to be celebrated. The curriculum develops the child's potential for fluency in artistic expression and skills; originality and elaboration of ideas; risk taking, problem solving and critical thinking; curiosity and imagination. An education in the visual arts provides a venue for children to construct meaning of their world and to engage in a greater understanding of the global community.

In physical education, Bronxville Elementary faculty strive to empower students with the knowledge and skills necessary to think critically about their physical and mental health to live a healthy lifestyle. The goal of the physical education program is to sustain positive, lifelong habits as a foundation for a healthy, productive, and fulfilling life. Students are exposed to a wide range of physical activities in multiple environments that benefit the healthy development of the whole student. Students integrate and apply the skills learned in physical education to their everyday life. There are numerous benefits that result from a quality physical education program such as: learning how to live an active and healthy lifestyle, proper nutrition, skill development, improved physical fitness, group work, goal setting, leadership, cooperation, stress reduction, mindfulness, and strengthened peer relationships.

In the library, Bronxville students learn how to care for a book, how the library is organized, and how to determine the validity of websites and information as well as basic technology skills. The elementary library curriculum is intended to prepare the students for being responsible with cell phones, social media, and conducting research in middle school. Being able to locate information and determine its validity is paramount as students get older. Students are also taught digital citizenship skills, so they understand the importance of acting responsibly in the digital world.

Bronxville Elementary proudly offers a technology program for students beginning in kindergarten and lasting through fifth grade. The program begins with students being able to use devices such as I-Pads and Chromebooks efficiently. As a Google school for over ten years, students also learn to utilize Google documents, slides, and sites. Learning to code is a major emphasis of the technology curriculum. The trajectory of coding begins with tangible hands-on experiences, including unplugged activities. The students then apply those skills to code and eventually apply coding skills to robotics.

Bronxville Elementary School's Science program focuses on theory and hands-on science application. The

students work in a lab setting from kindergarten through fifth grade. The students work on simple concepts and applications in the lower grades and work up to complicated scientific issues by fifth grade. In kindergarten, our student's study trees and weather, materials and motion and animals. In first grade, our student's study insects, pebbles, sand, and salt. In second grade, our student's study habitats, air, water, sound, and light. In third grade, our student's study structures of life, soils, rocks, landforms, and motion. Our fourth-grade curriculum focuses on plant growth and development, water and climate and energy. Our fifth grade science curriculum focuses on variables, mixtures and solutions and ecosystems.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

At Bronxville Elementary School, our school takes a proactive approach towards proper interventions. RTI, Response to Intervention, is a multi-tiered approach for the early identification and support for students with learning and behavioral needs. RTI provides a framework for efficiently allocating resources to improve student outcomes. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2004) shifted resources from a discrepancy model of identifying students with disabilities to a response to intervention model. The premise of RTI is that if you provide high quality instruction and keep track of progress, ALL children will succeed and achieve high standards. In the RTI model, tier 1 interventions represent strategies employed in the classroom, tier two interventions represent those that would occur in small groups, tier three interventions may include more intensive support, including but not limited to an increase in the frequency of support. Special education teachers, psychologists and administrators meet quarterly to review formative assessment data. In these meetings, K-5 data is reviewed for ALL students, including students receiving tier two interventions, as well as classroom reading levels and STAR assessment scores in reading and math. The team looks for students who need support, AND reviews who qualifies to enter or exit tier two support, which is referred to as "Skills", or needs an increase in frequency of support, for example, from three times per week to daily.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

Through our school's rich professional development program, we can differentiate instruction at all levels. Students performing above grade level are challenged through this differentiation of practice. Working with Greg Tang in mathematics has enabled a high level of differentiation in math. Higher order mathematical concepts are introduced with an emphasis on depth over breadth in solving complex problems. This is also true in English Language Arts through our work with TCRWP. Students are challenged to write highly sophisticated research-based arguments that take on complicated real-world issues and take a position which they can defend. A high level of rigor can also be seen in our science curriculum with our work studying the Bronx River.

3c. Special education:

Bronxville Elementary School runs an inclusive special education model where each grade level has a special education teacher assigned to that grade. Our model involves students being pulled out of class into a smaller group setting. We also feature two self-contained classrooms for students who require highly individualized instruction and are alternately assessed by New York State. Opportunities exist for every student to mainstream into the general education setting for every student enrolled in one of our two self-contained classes.

Any children who are 3 to 5 years of age and are suspected of having a disability and live within the Bronxville School District can be referred for a preschool evaluation. These pre-school evaluations are conducted by Westchester County approved preschool evaluation sites. The CPSE, Committee on Preschool Special Education, is a multi-disciplinary team that convenes to determine if a preschool child is eligible for special education as outlined by New York State regulations.

As required by the New York State Education Department, if a school age student (ages 5 to 21) is suspected of having a disability, the Bronxville School conducts multidisciplinary evaluations. Once the

evaluations are complete, the student will be reviewed by the CSE, Committee on Special Education, to determine if they have a disability and are eligible for special education. Students with disabilities are provided Individualized Education Plans (IEP's), once Tier 3 interventions are exhausted as part of the RTI model, which can include special classes, resource room, consultant teacher, related services, assistive technology, as well as classroom accommodations and testing modifications. The Bronxville School is committed to offering special education in the least restrictive environment. To that end, we provide education to our students with disabilities alongside their typically developing peers to the maximum extent appropriate.

The Bronxville School's Pupil Personnel Department is also involved in determining if a student requires a Section 504 Accommodation Plan in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Students who have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities may be eligible for a Section 504 Accommodation Plan.

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

All English Language Learners enjoy immediate services from a qualified, experienced, and certified staff. Students are given pullout services that allow for quick and meaningful language acquisition.

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

Bronxville works to assist all students and families in any hardship situation. Any student/family in need will be met with all available school and community resources to assist them. We are prepared to assist families going through any type of hardship. We will provide care to students who have social emotional needs, academic needs, and whatever other personal concerns they require assistance in. We also open all school and community resources to our families that have any need as well. Through our school, community, and foundations resources we can provide hope and solutions towards helping a member of our school community in need.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

We celebrate students every single day at Bronxville Elementary School. Our goal is to always maintain an environment of care and concern for our students. Most importantly we want students to always know that they are loved. There are two formal programs worth noting in terms of school climate and culture. The CARE, Community, Awareness, Responsibility and Empathy Program teaches skills for life, focusing on mindfulness, dealing with distress, emotion regulation, and having good relationships. The CARE program is implemented weekly to all grades. There is an emphasis on learning about the three states of mind we all experience. An Emotional Mind is when our thoughts and behaviors are controlled only by our feelings, and we do not pay attention to the facts. The Rational or Logical mind is when a student looks at what is happening, without emotions, and just focuses on the facts and causes and effects. When students are in a Wise Mind, they make decisions based on both their feelings and the facts. The students are given a variety of scenarios as part of the program, share experiences, and actively work towards using their Wise Mind. During the pandemic, the CARE program was instrumental in helping students deal with distress and staying positive. The CARE program is based on skills associated with Dialectical Behavior Therapy, DBT, and is led by a school psychologist.

The Bronxville Elementary School B3 program focuses on the premise that all students will become leaders and engaged citizens. The students will work to, Be Respectful, Be Responsible and Be Safe. Our students act respectfully when they show kindness and consideration for others. Our students are given strategies on how to act responsibly such as coming to school ready to learn. Students also demonstrate acting safely when they behave in ways that keep themselves and others from harm. Each month our school has a theme. These themes are discussed throughout the month and end with a culminating activity and B3 Assembly. This year's monthly themes have included identity, courage, gratitude, generosity, perseverance, empathy, creativity, engaged citizenship, friendship and leadership. To accommodate social distances requirements, these assemblies have taken place virtually. Students take a vital role in leading and facilitating the assemblies.

In terms of maintaining student interest during school closures, our school maintained a rigorous and engaging online learning environment for all students. Within a day of the shutdown in March of 2020, the students were online and learning live from their teachers. They followed their regular school schedule and took part in all special classes as well. Community events such as P.T.A. meetings, assemblies and moving up ceremonies were held via Zoom during the end of the 2020 school year. In addition, Bronxville Elementary School opened its doors in September of 2020 for five days a week of in person learning. Using every square inch of each classroom and hiring needed staff to ensure the safety of our students and staff, our school has remained open for full time, in person instruction throughout the pandemic. This is one of many things that we are extremely proud of!

Our Bronxville Elementary School Culture Committee focuses on creating an environment where students and staff work together on a theme that supports a positive school climate. Each month has a culminating experience and assembly that celebrates the theme of that month. In September we look into the theme of Identity. In this exploration, the students took some time to work with their teacher and then decorated their door or bulletin board with a theme that unites them. Each student makes a decoration to add to the door or board. In October we speak about Courage. This year, our school did a whole school read of the book, *I Am Courage - A book of Resilience* by Susan Verde. In November we explore gratitude. This year our students created a leaf stating what they are thankful for. This was placed on our school's Tree of Thanks. Students also took part in a food drive for people in need. In December we explored the concept of generosity. The students worked as a class to display a large snowflake and offer thoughts on how they can be generous with kindness towards others. The students also took part in a food drive. In January our students explore the concept of perseverance. Our students developed ideas and shared how they will not be afraid to fail. We also celebrated and shared what we learned that came as a result of failure. In February we explore empathy. Our students worked to prepare to be readers for Alzheimer's patients. This will become a yearly activity. In March we celebrated innovation. The students worked at maker space tables at recess to experiment with

innovations and creations of all kinds. In April we will explore the concept engaged citizenship. Our students will take part in various activities surrounding Earth Day. One such activity will be collecting plastic for recycling. In May we will explore and celebrate friendship. The students will develop weekly themes to show ways that they are good friends to one another and demonstrated this at lunch time and other opportunities throughout the day. In June, we will end the year by exploring what leadership is. The students will take part in a project that asks the question, "How can I become a leader?"

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Bronxville Elementary School runs a very robust Elementary Council, also known as the PTA, which meets monthly. Due to COVID restrictions, the meetings have taken place virtually which have increased participation in the meetings. The average attendance is now one hundred people per meeting. These meetings serve to communicate school initiatives, community happenings, as well as understand the needs of the school and community.

Partnerships and presentations are made by local officials such as the Bronxville Police Department and other community organizations. At each meeting, the principal and staff speak about a topic of interest for families so that they can develop a deeper understanding of school pedagogy and philosophy. In addition, there are weekly communications emails to parents and families by the Principal and Superintendent's office.

In response to the needs of the school, the community has formed the Bronxville Foundation. This is a nonprofit organization. The Foundation exists to fund important and innovative projects the district budget is unable to support. These enhancements are vital to creating an excellent overall educational experience for our children and keeping our school competitive. The Foundation is made up of a thirty-member volunteer board. They work with teachers, the administration, students, and parents to identify innovative ideas that will have the greatest impact on the most students. The Foundation board performs extensive due diligence on grant proposals. To fund those ideas, the Foundation raises money each year from school families, alumni, and community members.

The Foundation positively impacts Bronxville Elementary School by supporting academics, arts, athletics, student support services, and faculty. By maintaining vital connections with alumni and the broader Bronxville community, the Foundation provides a means for all constituents to partner with the Bronxville School and ensure its continued success. The Foundation and the PTA play different, but complementary, roles at Bronxville School. The Foundation funds grant requests, primarily from teachers and administrators, for faculty training, curriculum enhancements, and upgrades to equipment and facilities. The PTA serves as a vital link between the school and parents to support communication, after-school enrichment programs, and athletic and community traditions.

This year, in addition to having Enrusk, the design thinking firm, help our faculty reflect on teaching through a pandemic, we also worked with a group of parents to unpack their pandemic experience. For parents, the pandemic brought unprecedented challenges, like those educators faced, in trying to move children forward in their learning. What was uncovered as part of the process was that both parents and educators faced incredible challenges. It was that realization that produced greater empathy and understanding between the parents and the teachers. This benefited and improved the family to school connection and allowed us to move forward to the next phase of our important work together.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Throughout the pandemic, our school has worked with our Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction and Director of Technology to modify instruction and support teachers. This included online locally produced tutorials on how to use resources such as ZOOM, Screencast and Google Suite with daily Zoom "office hours" for assistance. As we returned to in person learning, we continued to design a curriculum that explores the "big ideas" behind content standards to help students understand the usefulness and application of what they are learning. We provided students with opportunities to use real data to understand concepts and encouraged students to understand history as it relates to current events that impact

their world.

Students continue to use technology-based tools to promote collaboration. We design instruction that replicates the work of historians, artists, musicians, athletes, sociologists, engineers, researchers, writers, mathematicians, filmmakers, and scientists. Sharing one's work through display or presentation engages students and makes for better products. When possible, we encourage our students to present learning to experts in the field who can advise their work. Telling one's growth story through his or her own work is a powerful assessment for students.

Having our faculty be so skilled in using Zoom, we have been able to open up opportunities for our students to share their work with outside experts more frequently. We introduce students to the iterative process of design and encourage students to prototype solutions to authentic problems and engage in a cyclical process of iteration. We provide students with opportunities to reflect on learning using student facing checklists and rubrics to celebrate growth and identify opportunities for improvement. The process helps to build students' skills for leadership, critical thinking, and innovation. We encourage students to study exemplar pieces of writing, the process of writers, the thoughts of leaders, the great innovations of history, and reflect on their own work through these lenses. These experiences allow them to benchmark and adapt their own work accordingly and to consider variations on existing discoveries that contribute to further iterations. Examples can come from peers as well. Students identify what they do well and what they need to work on, own difficult tasks, and wrestle with ambiguity until solutions can be obtained. The assistance of the teacher or a peer is most helpful when a student has pinpointed an area of struggle with specificity. Teaching in new and innovative spaces has helped us to achieve this to a greater degree.

Professional development that is offered to our Bronxville Elementary School teaching staff includes monthly meetings with Teachers College Reading and Writing Project consultants, attendance at one-day or multi-day institutes at Teachers College that support literacy instruction, and an in-house Literacy Coach that is part of our staff and works to support teachers through modeling, collaboratively planning, looking at student work, and observing and providing feedback. Additionally, our teachers work with Greg Tang on implementing math curriculum, he has also provided parent workshops on understanding “conceptual math” and has worked directly with our students to model instruction for our teachers. IDE, Innovative Designs for Education, has helped our elementary teachers to purposely use technology in the classroom and establish a “felt need” as to why students are learning content and skills. We have also worked with Diane Cunningham, a well-known curriculum consultant in the New York area, on creating units of study that address the dispositions of our Bronxville Promise. In addition, teachers could individually apply to take courses, attend conferences, or workshops that they feel will enhance their practice. The Bronxville Union Free School District also has a teacher Center that provides afterschool professional development including workshops and book studies led by our own faculty.

Lastly, as mentioned, we have taken some time to unpack our experiences with the pandemic. We gave the teachers an opportunity to share their experiences. This was, for many, an emotional journey. Reflection was necessary for their own emotional well-being. From that experience we then began to look at all of the innovations that were developed as a result of the pandemic experience. This was key in developing a strategic plan for our future. In our elementary school, instead of using a mindset of back to normal, we developed a new phrase which states, forward to normal.

4. School Leadership:

The Bronxville Elementary School Leadership Team is made up of the Principal and Assistant Principal. The role of the leadership team is to work to fulfill the Bronxville Promise for students. We strive to have students that will lead, innovate, engage the world, and think critically. We subscribe to the servant leadership model which means our focus is on the growth and well-being of the community and students we serve. This includes our teaching staff. Our leadership team understands all the inner workings of the school and are capable and committed to assisting and filling in for the others when needed. The Principal and Assistant Principal also approach leading the school as a collaborative effort. This creates a synergy in the building that is seamless for all.

The vision to lead includes that we, as leaders, must share leadership in order for the organization to be successful. Each grade has a Team Leader that communicates and works with the Principal and Assistant Principal on overall grade level concerns. Each grade also has a Curriculum Leader who works with the building level and the district leadership team on developing curriculum. The core values of our leadership model are to encourage diversity of thought among our staff. We encourage our staff and students to think outside of the box. Final decisions are essentially a byproduct of the collaboration of ideas. Everyone on the team works towards resolving issues of concern. If a final decision needs to be made, then it is made based on the information given and what will best serve our students.

Building trust is another key part of our philosophy. Trust needs to occur with our students, staff, and families in our community. We do this by listening, supporting, and, most importantly, communicating with all our stakeholders. Our mission remains to fulfill the Bronxville Promise. We want to foster students who will lead, engage the world, critically think, and innovate positive change. It is this guiding principle and complete transparency that make us a special school.

Having a mindset that puts the needs of our students first, along with the vision of the Bronxville Promise, is a key component to our leadership model. It is never about what we want, rather, what is best for our students. We strive to make every person in our school community feel valued and appreciated in the work they do. As part of that mindset, it is the role of every leader to foster leadership in their staff. It is our job to bring along a new generation of leaders that will, one day, own the work of the Bronxville Promise.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

As previously mentioned, the Bronxville Elementary School Care program focuses on social emotional learning. CARE stands for Community, Awareness, Responsibility and Empathy. The world can be a very stressful place for a child. We teach students to be mindful, tolerate stress, regulate their emotions, and learn interpersonal effectiveness. Each class begins with a brief mindfulness activity which helps our students understand where they are in the moment. They determine what they are feeling, what they are thinking, and how they are going to manage their emotions.

Building on CARE, the classroom teachers have created a curriculum that uses read aloud to focus on social emotional learning. This includes, but is not limited to, the concepts such as identity, empathy, upstanding, intention vs. impact, biases, the dangers of stereotypes, diversity in families, and critically viewing media. We read several books that bring home these important themes to our students. One by Kathryn Otoshi, encourages children to take a stand against bullying. *I Am Courage - A book of Resilience* by Susan Verde celebrates a student's ability to overcome all obstacles that comes there way. This was a key theme of our school this year because of the global pandemic. *The Name Jar* by Yangsook Choi, as story about a Korean student and her journey to appreciate her name and cultural background. *The Great Big Book of Families* by Mary Hoffman, highlights diverse family units. *The Family Book* by Todd Parr, also celebrates differences of families and emphasizes acceptance.

Bronxville Elementary School is committed to building a community that is equitable for all. To create and sustain this environment, we are committed to cultivating in ourselves the knowledge and skills that make us equity-informed and responsive so that we can cultivate the same knowledge and skills in our students. The books we choose reflect windows, mirrors, and sliding doors, so children see themselves in books as well as learn about the lives of others through literature. Through our courageous conversations, we continue to strive for a school where all students and families will feel seen and validated. We support all students will expand their awareness of and ability to analyze disparities and inequities. We strive so that all students will learn the importance of feeling empowered to be an upstander and interrupting injustice.

Our curriculum work has included our kindergarten classes comparing diverse cultural groups within the community and nation and celebrate distinct holidays. Our first graders work towards our students gaining an appreciation of diversity among men, women, people of color. Our second graders honor diversity as a strength of a community through All About Me projects. Our third grade cultural diversity unit helps them learn about Latin American Storytelling, Folk Dances of Mexico, African dance and music, African art, Japanese music and folklore, classical dance, music, and storytelling of India. Our fourth graders study the

expansion of entrepreneurs and inventors from New York State to include women and people of color. Our fifth graders study the history of enslaved people, the economic Impact of the sugar trade and the middle passage, as well as a nonfiction reading unit on the civil rights era.

The work that was begun with our parents through book clubs and conversations about diversity, equity and inclusion have led to an independent parent group with a similar mindset that works with parents and the community at large. We strive to become better educators and more at ease with conversations about race, class, and gender, and to weed out inequity and injustice within our school community whenever it is uncovered.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

There are many reasons to argue why Bronxville Elementary School can be considered a model for excellence in academic achievement. One such example is when Bronxville Elementary School began its implementation of the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project as the English Language Arts curriculum during the fall of 2015. Prior to its implementation, the ELA curriculum was well thought out and interesting. However, it lacked some research based best practices, alignment to New York State standards, and vertical alignment between the grades. From a pedagogical standpoint, this involved transitioning our instruction towards the workshop model. The students would be given more time to practice reading and writing within the workshop model. Research conducted by the TCRWP demonstrates that the more students practice the skills of reading and writing, the better they become. Students would be asked to demonstrate writing that included narrative, informational, opinion and argument writing, which was aligned to Common Core Standards. Students would be instructed in specific reading skills, the assessment of reading levels and guided reading groups based on those levels would be ongoing. The students would be fully engaged in their work and set goals for themselves. The teachers would provide needed feedback in carefully planned reading and writing conferences to improve student performance.

Additionally, our Kindergarten, first and second grade introduced phonics concepts and strategies that provided full engagement for our youngest readers. After a careful implementation the students excelled. In 2013, thirty one percent of our school scored a level one or two on the state ELA examination. Sixty nine percent of our school scored a level three or four on the state ELA examination. By 2019, the number of students scoring at a level one and two had dropped to eighteen percent while eighty two percent of our school now achieved a level three or four. Seeing the vast improvement in our test scores in ELA over the years has enabled students to excel in all academic areas where reading and writing skills are essential. This transition to this model was a watershed moment for our school in terms of the importance of vertically aligned curriculum, the importance of researched- based practice, and an emphasis on student achievement data that has shifted school culture.