



**The International Preschools  
NYS AIS Self Study Report  
2015-2016**

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## **Section 1: Mission and Culture**

### **Committee Members:**

Chair: Amy Lorowitz, Office Manager

Donna Cohen, Director

Lisa Goodman, Teacher

Bernadette Weiss, Assistant to the Location Director

The International Preschools is a not-for-profit preschool with three locations in New York City that educates more than 400 children per year from around the globe. Its educational mission centers on a thematic curriculum designed to build on each individual's strengths. Through the experience of play, the school seeks to promote the cognitive, emotional, social, and physical growth of each child within a nurturing atmosphere. Welcoming families from around the world, The International Preschools is truly one of New York City's largest extended families. The school is currently a provisional member of the New York State Association of Independent Schools (NYSAIS) and a full member of the Independent Schools Admissions Association of Greater New York (ISAAGNY).

### **A History of The International Preschools**

The International Preschools was originally founded as The International Playgroup (IPG) in 1963, as an outreach to international families as they arrived in New York City. Prominent New Yorkers such as Mrs. Frances Lehman Loeb, New York City's first commissioner to the United Nations, and Mrs. Gordon E. Cox, wife of the Canadian ambassador, established the organization to serve a dual purpose. IPG was meant to be an educational venue for the children of international families, as well as a social experience to help parents navigate the customs and day-to-day life of their newly adopted city, helping to bridge the gap between anonymity and acceptance in an otherwise unfamiliar world. On its first day, the school opened its doors to ten children and families from France, Japan, Brazil, and Cambodia. From these humble beginnings, The International Playgroup grew into a multiple-location school for children ages 18 months to 5 years and officially changed its name to The International Preschools in 1974 to better represent its educational mission. The International Preschools was originally accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) in 1995.

The original Board of Trustees ("the Board") leased space for The International Preschools from churches and synagogues across the city, which had vacant classroom space during the week. This allowed The International Preschools to expand its mission to a variety of neighborhoods for much of its history, at one point having ten locations

throughout Manhattan and Queens. As part of a strategic decision by the Board to secure long-term leases, the school today is consolidated at three locations in the borough of Manhattan: 330 East 45th Street (“45th Street”); 345 East 86th Street (“86th Street”); and 120 West 76th Street (“76th Street”).

Since the beginning, The International Preschools has placed an emphasis on fundraising in order to provide financial aid to international families, particularly to children of United Nations employees and of staff to the missions of the United Nations. During the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s, the school held biennial fundraising art exhibits that included donated works by artists such as Alexander Calder, Joan Miró, Marc Chagall, and Will Barnet.

Donna Cohen became the fifth director of the school in 2010. Under her leadership, the school maintains its longstanding traditions of celebrating international events, such as United Nations Day, and individual family culture shares. It has also added innovative programs for preschool-age children such as the iPad program, which has been attracting attention from other schools around the country. During the 2013-2014 school year, The International Preschools celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a variety of events for current and alumni families as well as the remaining founders. The year-long celebration was a reminder of how far the school has come and a recognition of the fulfillment of the school’s mission.

## **Mission Statement**

### **The International Preschools Mission Statement**

A window to the world for young children and their families...

The preschool years are a crucial window in a child’s academic, social and cultural development. In the few years spent at The International Preschools, a child will develop not only academic skills but also social skills and cultural attitudes. At The International Preschools, where English Language Learners are welcomed and supported, children and families from New York City and all over the world share their cultures and gain a sense of international awareness through mutual understanding and respect. Through play, we promote the cognitive, emotional, social and physical growth of each child in a nurturing atmosphere. With schools in multiple Manhattan neighborhoods children may attend school close to home while their families are part of a large and vibrant parent and faculty network. The size of The International Preschools allows us to be a laboratory for curriculum development, including a rich variety of specialty activities based on early childhood educational research and good practices.

The International Preschools' current mission statement was officially adopted by the Board of Trustees on September 17, 2013. This was the culmination of a two-year process that began with the formation of a Mission Statement Committee at the beginning of 2012. The Committee comprised faculty, parents, trustees, and administrators. The Chief Administrative Officer organized small group meetings where constituents discussed what The International Preschools meant to them. He gathered the notes from each of these meetings and summarized them for the Mission Statement Committee, which, in turn, drafted a statement that was then revised and approved by the Board of Trustees.

The school had not revised its mission statement since 1974, when it transformed from The International Playgroup to The International Preschools. At the end of the 2013 process, the Mission Statement Committee recommended that the school's mission statement be reviewed by the Board every five years.

The mission statement can be found on the school's website, in its parent and employee handbooks, and in admissions packets for potential new families. It is framed and posted in a prominent place at each location.

The mission statement is embodied in a variety of ways:

- The International Preschools has a continual commitment to a Learning Through Play educational philosophy.
- The International Preschools draws and supports international families by providing financial aid to those who would not otherwise be able to afford tuition. In the 2013-2014 school year, The International Preschools awarded 43 families a total of \$306,486 in financial aid. Of the 43 families, 28 were international and were awarded a total of \$247,604 in financial aid. Of the 28 international families, 12 of them were employed by the United Nations or were staff of missions to the United Nations and were awarded \$99,105 in financial aid.
- The school promotes the social and cultural development of all children through a year-long global awareness curriculum highlighted by the annual United Nations Day celebration. Leading up to the day, the curriculum includes a variety of activities that recognize cultural differences and similarities. Parents are invited into the classrooms to celebrate special days from their countries of origin.
- As a laboratory for curriculum development, the school has recently expanded its offerings to include an iPad program, Handwriting Without Tears, and a clay program, all of which resulted from conversations between parents and administrators and have been adapted by the faculty. The school committed

financial resources to support these offerings by hiring specialty teachers to implement and teach these programs.

- To appropriately support children with developmental concerns that were known at the time of admission or that emerged subsequently, The International Preschools has a dedicated developmental specialist on staff.

## **Philosophy and Culture**

The International Preschools is fundamentally defined by its core values, which include respect, learning through play, mutual understanding, and cultural and international awareness. These core values make up the culture of the school and are lived out daily in the classroom, providing a safe environment and nurturing education for young children. The developmentally appropriate curriculum promotes the cognitive, emotional, social, and physical growth of each child.

The faculty supports and brings to life a curriculum that addresses the diversity of the classroom. Children are encouraged to share what they are familiar with from their home and personal experiences. The hallways and entranceways exemplify the school's diverse cultures through displays of student artwork and photos of student activities in the classroom.

By developing mutual understanding, the school promotes its social values of respect and acceptance, which are modeled in the classroom. Teachers reinforce the ethical values of sharing, fairness, and responsibility within the community by encouraging student independence and cooperation. The daily routines of the classroom allow students to learn these values first-hand. Teachers consistently encourage and model respectful communication and peaceful conflict resolution, and they provide children with a variety of choices at play.

No matter what part of the world children come from they all have one thing in common: the universal language of play. When children are engaged in play, they are using their imaginations, developing social skills, expanding their curiosity, taking risks, and becoming more independent. Collectively, the Board, teachers, staff, and parents cultivate the academic, social, and cultural attitudes that children need for their future growth.

The International Preschools provides opportunities throughout the year to share and celebrate its social values. These include celebrating United Nations Day and the Winter Solstice, coming together for the Spring Benefit, and participating in activities like Family Culture Share and the Read-Aloud Program. The school prides itself on keeping its doors open for parents to share their cultural experiences through stories, food, art,

and music. These are ways the community learns about each other's cultures and learns to respect differences, making for a happy and successful school environment.

The culture of The International Preschools is supported in a variety of ways throughout the school:

- The admissions staff informs prospective families about the school's inclusivity of children from all backgrounds, and parents make a conscious choice to enroll their children in this unique, diverse, and international environment.
- The school welcomes bilingual, multilingual, and non-English-speaking families.
- The administration hires faculty members who share the school's values, particularly the importance of learning through play for young children and respect for other cultures.
- A majority of the school's non-teaching staff are either former faculty members or former parents of The International Preschools, which reflects a long-term commitment to the school and its values.
- The Board of Trustees represents a variety of nationalities and is committed to maintaining an international community. The Board supports reserving spaces in the school for international families; hires top-level administrators who share the same core values as The International Preschools community; and approves a portion of the budget for financial aid, promoting economic diversity. The Board members also support the school by attending benefit events, making financial donations, and fulfilling their fiduciary responsibilities.

## **International Identity**

The International Preschools prides itself on cultivating an international community, broadly defined. The school welcomes children whose parents were born abroad and for whom English is a second language; children of United Nations employees or foreign nationals in the United States on assignment through their employers; and children who are first-generation Americans and whose extended family remains in another country. International faculty and staff have roots around the world, and they, too, vary in how they define themselves as international. International identity is a major element of The International Preschools' culture and can be found throughout the school, from the Board of Trustees to the leadership in the Parents' Association.

## **Equity and Justice**

The International Preschools' mission statement notes that the school is a window to the world, and the name of the school indicates that it is a diverse and inclusive world

community. For more than 50 years, The International Preschools has been opening doors to families and visitors from all over the world. The school's current community represents almost 150 countries.

The International Preschools fosters equity at all levels of the organization. In the classroom, teachers may work with the students to create classroom rules. English language learners are helped to master English through visual aids; teachers also learn a few words in the child's home language. There is a development specialist on staff to promote full participation by students of all abilities, and teachers use scaffolding strategies so that all children are successful in all class activities. All families are also encouraged to share their home traditions with the school community. Economic assistance allows families from various income levels to enroll their children in the school, and the cost of school-wide events is kept affordable so that all families are able to attend. The school provides translators for parent meetings as needed, and meetings are arranged at various times to accommodate parent schedules. Exmissions assistance includes discussions of both public and private school options. Professional development is regularly offered for all faculty and staff, and tuition assistance is available for faculty and staff pursuing degrees in their fields. Teachers who are currently enrolled in a master's program combine theory and practice when they use classroom observations in their coursework. Telecommuting is an available option for faculty and staff if needed and when appropriate. The scheduling of events and school closings (snow days, etc.) takes into account the distance faculty and staff need to travel to work.

Recent surveys asked both parents and faculty and staff to define diversity at The International Preschools, with responses acknowledging the school's multicultural, socioeconomic, religious, and ethnic diversities.

Economic diversity is mainly addressed through financial aid, for which all families may apply. The Board is committed to increasing economic diversity in the school and has requested that the administration continue to compare its financial aid data to that of other preschools in Manhattan. This was done for the first time in the 2014-2015 ISAAGNY survey, and The International Preschools' Finance Committee will review these results to determine how best to promote its scholarship program for lower-income families.

The school also has a long history of hiring faculty and staff from the world community and sees many applicants who are drawn to the job in part because of the school's international focus. In the 2014-2015 school year, the school's staff was 43-percent international, with many of those jobs in assistant teaching, administrative, or maintenance staff positions. (Head teachers require a state certification, and due to tightening New York City Board of Health regulations over the past fifteen years,

transferring degrees from other countries for the required certification has become increasingly difficult.)

Preschoolers are developing a sense of self and of their place in the community around them. The school encourages social responsibility—even at such a young age—by incorporating it into the early childhood curriculum, allowing young students to participate in a meaningful way. A longstanding tradition of curricular community service projects has included the following:

- An annual, school-supported UNICEF collection
- A food, clothing, and toy drive conducted by the Parents' Association at each location around the winter holidays to provide for those less fortunate
- Staff, faculty, and parent participation in the “Making Strides” walk to raise money for breast cancer research

The school works to communicate policies regarding diversity, equity, justice, and social outreach in a variety of ways, including in family and employee handbooks; faculty/staff meetings; new parent meetings; Town Hall meetings; enrollment contracts and hiring agreements; admissions materials; and an ISAAGNY non-discrimination ad.

Family and employee handbooks are reviewed annually by the Director and other administrative staff to make sure they are current and clear. Every three years, these handbooks are reviewed by legal counsel to assure the school's compliance with changing laws. Other materials are reviewed annually.

## **Section 2: Governance**

### **Committee Members:**

Chair: Elizabeth Patrick, Chair of the Board of Trustees

David Bernstein, Board Secretary

Paul Britton, Board Treasurer

Nancy Brown, Board Member, Former Director

Donna Cohen, Director

Connie Cranch, Board Member, Former Board Chair

## **Governing Body**

### **Overview**

The International Preschools is governed by a Board of Trustees (“the Board”) as defined in its bylaws. The size of the Board varies, but it usually has between 17 and 20 members, including a chair, treasurer, secretary, and the director of the school. The Board meets six times per year.

The Board plays its most active role in the school’s strategic planning and financial matters. It reviews the annual budget and evaluates tuition and salary levels to balance affordability and the ability to attract and retain high-quality personnel. The Board closely monitors the financial condition of the school, the way in which its funds are invested, capital projects, and security. The Board zealously promotes the international focus of The International Preschools and its international diversity among students and teachers.

The Board defers to the school’s Director when it comes to operations and education, subject to adherence to the annual budget, the school’s mission, and the legal and ethical requirements. In matters regarding education, the Board functions to evaluate the Director, and considers her recommendations on broad issues.

There are currently six Board committees: Audit, Finance, Trustees, Development, Retirement Review, and Facilities and Space Planning. Each committee has a chair, and the number of each committee’s annual meetings varies, depending on its function.

The leadership of the Board generally reflects the experience, strengths, and time commitments of individual members, whose skills often make them particularly well-suited to their positions. The Board counts among its officers a corporate attorney, banker, and hedge fund manager; the Board also includes a real estate lawyer, retired pediatrician, director of another preschool, former director of The International Preschools, and parents of children who either attend or have attended the school.

The Board Chair is in constant contact with the school's Director, and the Board committees work closely with the Chief Administrative Officer. The Chair usually remains on the Board for at least one year after the end of his or her term.

### **Membership and Evaluation**

Board members serve for three-year terms, which can be renewed as stated in the bylaws. When a vacancy becomes available, the school's Director or other Board members make recommendations to the Trustees Committee, which comprises four current Board members. Nominees may be current parents, recent parents, or representatives from the larger school community. The Board often adds recent parents to its ranks in order to ensure an understanding of current parents' needs and interests. Between them, the current Board members have served a total of 280 years—with an average tenure of 15 years. The longest serving Board member, Dr. Ed Davies, was appointed in 1964.

The International Preschools provides guidelines for Board member activity, including a conflict-of-interest policy and a requirement that all Board members annually certify their compliance with this policy. The school has never encountered an instance in which a Board member has had a significant conflict of interest.

There is no formal training program for new Board members. Currently, the Board Chair keeps abreast of current best practices for nonprofit organizations and institutes them as needed. Upon the school's admittance to NYSAIS, the Board will review its practices against the recommendations in the Principles of Good Practice, and will make any necessary modifications.

Consistent with the diversity of the student body, the Board members also come from various backgrounds. Of the 20 current members, six identify with an international background. Membership tends to be approximately evenly divided between men and women, and the desire to maintain this balance is a factor in the Trustees Committee's selection of member candidates. The Board also strives to select members with diverse skills and occupations. The ability to financially support the school is also considered when selecting Board members, but the Board does not set an annual giving amount.

In 2012 and 2015, the Board conducted self-surveys to take the pulse of Board member engagement and commitment. These results were shared with the members.

### **Communication**

At each Board meeting, members hear a report from the president of the Parents' Association and a formal report from the school's Director that covers the state of the school, including admissions, exmissions, potential risks, and matters of concern to parents. Related written materials are emailed to members approximately a week before each Board meeting.

The school's bylaws permit telephonic Board meetings, but all meetings to date have been held in person, with arrangements made for absent members to participate by conference call. There is also frequent phone communication among individual Board members and between Board members and members of the school's administration.

Although Board members frequently express different opinions, they retain cordial relationships. There has never been an instance in which a group of Board members has been unwilling to abide by the views of a majority of the members.

In addition to regular Board meetings, members also attend fundraisers and other school-related events.

### **Significant Initiatives since 2009**

In recent years, the Board has undertaken many significant initiatives, including:

- The search for and hiring of a new school director
- The decision to lease and build out a new school location and close two smaller locations, making operations more efficient and improving the overall quality of the school
- The planning and funding of a major series of events celebrating The International Preschools' 50th anniversary
- The development of the chief administrative officer position and the search and hiring to fill the role
- The strategic planning required to launch an extended day program to meet the changing needs of families with two working parents in New York City

The Board views strategic planning as an important part of its responsibilities, guiding the future course of the school. Strategic planning is done jointly by the Board Chair, the school's Director, the Chief Administrative Officer, and the Board members. Discussions about the The International Preschools' direction and focus occur at two or three Board meetings every year. Such discussions led to the decision to open a new location and consolidate the activities of two other facilities. The new facility opened at the start of the 2013-2014 school year.

## **Financial Oversight**

### **Overview**

The Finance Committee, led by the Board's Treasurer, meets six times a year with the school's Chief Administrative Officer and Director to plan, budget, and monitor all

financial aspects of the school for each fiscal year, which runs from September 1 to August 31. The committee also sets the annual tuition schedule for each age group, reflecting the costs of staffing the classrooms and enhancing the school's developmentally appropriate curriculum with specialty classes.

The Finance Committee closely monitors the multi-year trends of teachers' salaries, health insurance premiums, financial aid, facility lease negotiations and rental costs, and leasehold capital improvements.

### **Investments**

The Finance Committee also oversees the school's investments. A Board-designated endowment of \$1 million was established in 2007. Since 2014, the investment accounts have been managed by Vanguard in accordance with strategic asset allocation guidelines recommended by the Finance Committee and approved by the Board. While individual security selection must avoid concentration risk, the investment guidelines do not impose any limitations at the industry- or company-specific level.

### **Audit Committee**

The independent audit firm Loeb & Troper, LLC annually audits the school's finances and 403(b) retirement account and advises the school on its compliance with local, state, and federal reporting. The Audit Committee meets with representatives of the firm to review the audited financial statements and its letter to management. Subsequently, the full Board reviews the completed statements, letter to management, and the management's response.

## **Support of School Leadership**

The Board works closely with the school's Director and Chief Administrative Officer throughout the year, not only in Board and committee meetings but also as supporters in their roles. The Board was instrumental in restructuring the school's administration to add the chief administrative officer position when it laid the groundwork to search for a new director in 2009.

### **Director Search and Transition**

During the summer of 2009, Valerie Kennedy, who had been the school's director for eight years, informed the Board Chair of her desire to retire at the end of the upcoming school year. The Chair formed a search committee consisting of six members of the Board, including the Secretary and Treasurer, a former school director, a founding Board member, and two Board members with children enrolled at the school. After consulting other schools and incorporating input from the corporate world, the Board concluded that The International Preschools was unlikely to attract a qualified candidate for director without the support of a chief administrative officer to manage the finances,

facilities, and information technology (IT). The position was created, and after a search through an agency, this role was filled in the summer of 2009.

Once the chief administrative officer position was in place, the search committee hired an executive search firm specializing in the placement of high-level administrators at independent schools and other not-for-profit entities. The firm conducted various informational interviews at the school and had several meetings with the search committee to review the required qualifications for a new director. The firm presented the committee with résumés of eight prospective candidates, five of whom were interviewed. Two finalists were invited to tour the school and meet with several key administrators, and the Board then voted unanimously to hire Donna Cohen as director.

Providing for leadership succession is an important issue that the Board takes into consideration. Until this last succession, new leaders were chosen from within the administration. Valerie Kennedy had been the director of education before becoming head of the school (although a search was also conducted with the help of an executive search firm). The director before her had previously served as the supervisor of the school's Crèche program, interim director, and co-director upon the director's return and was elevated to director when her predecessor retired.

The Board is very supportive of Ms. Cohen in the role of director. The Board has confidence in her abilities, pays close attention to her reports at Board meetings, and comments appropriately. The Director attends all committee meetings and is well informed about the workings of the Board. The Chair and the Director have a close working relationship, which is respectful, collegial, and productive. The trusting and respectful relationship between the Director and the Board provides for the smooth and effective operation of the school.

The Director is compensated according to an employment contract that was signed at the beginning of her employment. The compensation provision of that contract is clear and formulaic.

The Director's employment contract provides for automatic two-year renewals. Nine months before the end of the second year of each renewal term, either the Director or the Board may elect not to renew the contract. To date, the Board has not encountered a situation where it did not elect to renew a director's contract.

### **Leadership in Crisis**

In the summer of 2014, an intern at The International Preschools was accused of inappropriately touching students. The school conducted an internal investigation that did not reveal any evidence to confirm the accusation. The intern was nevertheless arrested, but the charges against him were subsequently dismissed. Under the direction of the Board, the school hired legal counsel and other advisors to guide it through the

internal investigation and investigations by governmental agencies. Between July 3 and September 18, 2014, the Board Chair scheduled 20 twice-weekly Board conference calls to monitor and respond to the ongoing investigation. The Chair and Board members also met with concerned parents in small groups. This leadership guided and supported the school during its most difficult experience in its 50 years.

## **Development and Institutional Advancement**

The Development Committee meets six times a year, and the school's Director and Chief Administrative Officer report to the committee on annual giving, Parents' Association events, and other community-building events. The Board formed a special 50th Anniversary Planning Committee and was asked to underwrite many of the 50th Anniversary events during the 2013-2014 school year, which permitted families to enjoy a "family fun day" at Chelsea Piers, a John Farrell holiday concert at Symphony Space, and the world premiere of *A Window to the World: The Story of The International Preschools* documentary with a family dim sum celebration. These community events provided opportunities for families and employees to gather in fun and fellowship and to learn more about the history of the institution. The year culminated in the annual Spring Benefit and auction, which United Nations dignitaries, alumni parents, and former faculty and staff were invited to attend. The year ended netting more than \$550,000, setting a school record.

During the course of a regular year, the Development Committee advises the administration on a variety of topics, including boosting parent participation, increasing the size of donations to the school, and establishing further community-building activities.

The Development Committee also continually reviews the school's branding and assures that internal and external communications continue to match the school's mission.

## **Board Policies and Records**

Board bylaws and policies are reviewed by legal counsel provided by Nixon Peabody LLP, and changes are implemented as needed to assure the school is in compliance with federal, state, and local laws. Board meeting minutes and other corporate records are archived according to NYS AIS' Document Retention Guidelines.

## **Assessment of Strengths and Challenges**

### **Strengths**

- The Board is a cohesive, collaborative group.
- The diversity among Board members allows them to contribute to all aspects of the school's needs and provide professional advice in areas like real estate, law, and others.

### **Challenges**

- There is a need for formal criteria and structure for the annual evaluation of the Director.

## **Section 3: School Operations, Finance, and Advancement**

### **Committee Members:**

Chair: Paul Q. Kane, Chief Administrative Officer

Claire Chau, Senior Accountant

Donna Cohen, Director

Kristen Johnson, Human Resources Coordinator

Habib Rahman, IT Coordinator

Charlene Sison, Business Manager

## **Administrative Operations**

### **Administrative Organization**

Director Donna Cohen manages the day-to-day administration of The International Preschools. To assure that proper management is provided to the multi-location school, she divides her responsibilities with Chief Administrative Officer Paul Q. Kane. The Director currently manages:

- The budget, in cooperation with the Chief Administrative Officer
- All curriculum and education programs
- The Location Directors
- All Parents' Association relations
- All exmission placements
- Implementation of all Board decisions (unless they are delegated to the Chief Administrative Officer)
- All teaching faculty matters, including hiring and annual appointment letters
- Admissions
- School communication, in cooperation with the Chief Administrative Officer
- Summer camp
- Handbooks and policy implementation

The Chief Administrative Officer currently manages:

- The budget, in cooperation with the Director
- Facilities and maintenance, including leasehold improvements

- Lease negotiation, in cooperation with the Board, to be reviewed and signed by the Director
- The finance and human resources office
- Development (institutional advancement), in cooperation with the Director
- Auxiliary (i.e., after-school) programs outside of summer camp
- IT (information technology including the school's database, website, electronic communication, and infrastructure)
- School communication, in conjunction with the Director
- Emergency plans and security

The Director and Chief Administrative Officer work in consultation together on all planning and policy changes for the school.

Each location is managed by a Location Director who works closely with the Director and Chief Administrative Officer. The Location Directors oversee their location's day-to-day operations, manage and evaluate their location's faculty, and implement curriculum. A full organizational chart may be found in the supplemental materials.

The school's structure requires the Director and Chief Administrative Officer to work very closely together and communicate regularly, and it enables the school to run smoothly if either of the two managers is away. It also assures a system of checks and balances. The Director and Chief Administrative Officer have a strong working relationship, and both look out for the best interests of the school. They are willing to make difficult decisions but also are open to feedback and implementing changes when needed.

A system of checks and balances also ensures that the school's resources are being used in a prudent manner. The Board reviews and approves the annual budget, which includes all tuition increases as well as faculty and staff salary increases. The Chief Administrative Officer reports to the Finance Committee and the full Board with quarterly variance reports and end-of-year projects. The Chief Administrative Officer and the finance office then manage the macro-budget numbers directly.

### **Policies, Procedures, and Compliance**

The Employee Handbook is the central guide for all human resources policy and practice at The International Preschools. Every three years, the handbook is fully reviewed by outside legal counsel Jackson Lewis to ensure that the school is in compliance with federal and state laws regarding employment policy. This was last done in 2015. Other policy or practice changes are implemented annually. The Chief

Administrative Officer, Location Directors, and teachers can suggest a policy or practice change for the Director's consideration. The Director discusses it with the administrative staff and recommends it to the Board of Trustees if it is worthwhile and in keeping with the mission statement. If the Board approves the policy, it is implemented in the subsequent school year.

All new employees receive a handbook from the Human Resources Coordinator. At the beginning of each year, the Director reviews any changes to the handbook with the entire community. As of 2014, the Director also reviews the handbook with new employees as part of their orientation. In 2014, the school also made the employee handbook available online for the first time.

Because preschools are closely governed by the New York City Department of Health, and Article 47 in particular (which provides the legal guidelines for all New York City daycares and preschools), the administration stays aware of any policy changes in that government agency. All three of the school's locations are inspected twice a year, and the inspector meets directly with the Human Resources Coordinator to provide information about upcoming policy and procedure changes and how to prepare for them to remain compliant. The Human Resources Coordinator shares this information with the Director and Chief Administrative Officer to ensure that required changes are implemented in advance of future inspections.

The International Preschools relies on its health insurance broker and human resources consultant, Austin & Co., Inc., its auditor, Loeb & Troper, and its legal counsel, Jackson Lewis, to proactively inform the school's community of upcoming changes in health care law, employment law, accounting law, and other school-related issues. The school also has an annual audit and receives direct notices from TIAA-CREF, the provider of the employee 403(b) retirement plan. All notifications the school receives are screened by the Human Resources Coordinator, who sends appropriate information to the Director and/or Chief Administrative Officer. If the material needs to be communicated to faculty and staff, the Human Resources Coordinator does so through email, postal mail, and/or other forms of communication.

### **Information Technology (IT)**

With three locations throughout Manhattan, the school must be able to communicate with and among administrators, faculty and staff, and parents on a regular and often instantaneous basis. Technology is the cornerstone of communication, coordination, and financial oversight for the administrative staff. In 2010, the school committed to increasing network bandwidth and Wi-Fi coverage at all locations to provide better Internet connectivity. The school also committed to upgrading its server to handle more information and decrease downtime, and to enhancing web communication to both internal and external users. Overall, the infrastructure has improved greatly in these

three areas, but there is still room for end-user training, as the rollout has not always been as smooth as planned. (For example, with the increased bandwidth came a new phone system, which was not nearly as user-friendly as the one that had been replaced.)

Every administrator has access to a computer and many also have access to an iPad. All computers are properly equipped with the programs each administrator needs; for example, all Location Directors have access to the school's student database. The IT Coordinator keeps an inventory of all school hardware and software, including the date of purchase and potential date of obsolescence.

In the spring of each school year, The International Preschools' two-member technology team assesses the upcoming year's IT needs and lays out a plan for infrastructure, hardware, and software improvements. The team proposes an IT budget to the Chief Administrative Officer, who reviews it with the IT Coordinator. The team is also available during school hours to provide help-desk support and to travel to any of the school locations if needed.

The International Preschools maintains strict security of its technological assets. Firewall access rules are in place to protect the network and server from online intruders. Data on both local and offsite servers is backed up daily, and the server rooms are locked to ensure physical security of the server and network equipment. The IT Coordinator and Chief Administrative Officer have developed a comprehensive disaster recovery plan, which is reviewed biannually.

## **Finance**

### **Budget Process**

The following timeline outlines The International Preschools' annual budget process:

From September to November, the Chief Administrative Officer gathers benchmark information regarding tuition and faculty and administrative salaries from other Manhattan preschools. This information is found in an official, early-education ISAAGNY survey as well as on schools' websites. It can also be acquired by calling schools, if necessary. The admissions team and the Director also finalize the class offerings during this time, based on projections of returning students. The information for the current academic year is then analyzed and compared to prior years' to track trends.

The information is then presented to the Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees in December of each year. Finance Committee members ask the Director and Chief Administrative Officer about trends and make comments and recommendations that are incorporated into a preliminary operating budget for the following academic year.

At the January Finance Committee meeting, committee members make a budget recommendation, which the full Board then votes on, also in January. The preliminary operating budget is then approved, adopting the recommended tuition increase and the recommended percentage salary increase for faculty and staff. Re-enrollment contracts are released the day after this meeting. New-student enrollment contracts are released in accordance with the ISAAGNY guidelines for early childhood education.

Between January and the end of the admissions season (approximately mid-March), the operating budget is revised as necessary in preparation for the release of faculty agreement letters and staff appointment letters. At the April Board meeting, the Chief Administrative Officer presents a revised operating budget, which has been reviewed by the Finance Committee. This budget is then considered fully approved for the following school year barring unforeseen, material changes (exceeding 3 percent) in the budgeted numbers that need to be approved by the Board. It is the responsibility of the Chief Administrative Officer and Director to inform the Board should such material changes arise.

The Finance Committee and the full Board review a fiscal-year budget variance report and projection report approximately every quarter, beginning in November. (The remaining reports occur in January, April, and June, with an end-of-year report in September.) These variance and projection reports are prepared by the Chief Administrative Officer and reviewed by the Director and the chair of the Finance Committee prior to full review. Because many of the school's expenses are fairly fixed, the variance on budgeted line items tends to be less than two to three percent.

### **Long-term Budgets**

Beginning in May 2014, the Director and Chief Administrative Officer began to work on a projected two-year budget with input from the admissions office. This process considered different potential enrollment scenarios based on a shift in demographics, suggesting that the school may need to downsize. The Board Chair and the chair of the Finance Committee, who is the Board Treasurer, actively participated in these discussions. The long-term budget process is still ongoing, but it should allow the school to properly prepare for enrollment shifts.

### **Internal Budgets**

Since 2013, the Director, Chief Administrative Officer, and Senior Accountant have also worked to create internal budgets to hold administrators and head teachers accountable for the finances under their control. The administration provides each Location Director and classroom teacher an individual annual budget to maintain. The finance office prepares variance reports, which the Director reviews and distributes to each person responsible for a budget. The process is still in its initial stages, and further

systematization and budget education is needed to ensure that expenses are properly allocated.

### **Leasehold Improvements**

The International Preschools does not have any debt service, and it does not have any short- or long-term plans to borrow money for leasehold improvements. In 2012, the school secured a long-term lease at 345 East 86th Street in Manhattan and invested almost \$2 million in its renovation without any debt service. This capital investment was possible through financial management and Annual Fund donations saved over several years for this purpose. The school annually budgets for leasehold improvements and technology capital purchases, which are mainly done over the summer. The budget for summer capital projects is reviewed and approved by the Finance Committee at its April meeting. The goal of the school as supported by the Board has been to operate with a near-balanced budget and then fundraise for any capital improvements, which generally range from \$100,000 to \$200,000. Any net reserves remaining after capital improvements are paid for are added to the investment portfolio or directed into liquid assets at the bank. The Board determines each fall what happens to these net reserves, based on a recommendation from the Finance Committee.

### **Fundraising**

Fundraising includes the Annual Fund and Parents' Association activities, which are the only revenue-generating activities outside of normal school operations. In total, these activities generate between 7 and 9 percent of additional revenue beyond tuition, summer camp, and after-school activities.

### **Audit and Compliance**

For the past five years, The International Preschools has contracted with Loeb & Troper to perform the annual audit and annual pension fund audit. The Chief Administrative Officer plans both audits and delegates to the Senior Accountant, the Business Manager, and the Human Resources Coordinator the task of collecting information and delivering it to the outside auditors. Reconciliation of accounts receivable and donations is done on a monthly basis, led by the Senior Accountant. Bank and investment reconciliations are done on a monthly basis by the Senior Accountant and reviewed by the Chief Administrative Officer. School credit card purchases are reviewed quarterly by the chair of the Finance Committee. This ongoing cycle of reconciliations and checks and balances allows the administration to be fully prepared for the annual audit.

The annual operating budget is based on a modified cash basis, which generally ties directly to the audited financial statements once non-cash items—such as depreciation and accruals—are incorporated into the operating budget. After the annual financial statements and letter to management are drafted, the Chief Administrative Officer reviews them. Then, the documents are sent to the Board's Audit Committee to review,

which then meets directly with the auditors. The Audit Committee signs off on the audit, and the auditors complete the federal 990 and state filing forms. The Director and Chief Administrative Officer review and sign these forms, and the auditors file them. The filing forms are available for Board review upon request. The audit team comes annually to the April Board meeting to discuss the audit and review the financial statements and letter to management with the entire Board.

Any problems raised in the letter to management are expected to be corrected and documented prior to the next audit season. It is the responsibility of the Chief Administrative Officer to ensure that any changes be implemented during the year.

Although the majority of the finance office is centrally located at the 45th Street location, the Chief Administrative Officer is often located at another site. Software and hardware upgrades have been made since 2010 to provide secure remote access to ensure efficient management of accounting, fundraising, and human resources information. The school does not currently bond its employees.

### **Purchase Orders**

All supply purchases require a completed order form, which is filled out by the party requesting the items, reviewed and signed by his or her supervisor, and ordered at each location. Any items costing more than \$1,000 must be approved by the Chief Administrative Officer. Capital projects are included in an annual budget to the Board, and the Chief Administrative Officer reviews and signs the proposal and contracts. For projects exceeding \$50,000, the school requires at least two bids. Any contracts related to the school are reviewed and signed by the Chief Administrative Officer. All leases are reviewed by the Board and signed by the Director.

### **School Insurance Coverage**

The school currently works with two insurance brokers to provide benchmark comparative information regarding the school's umbrella, general liability, workers' compensation, and directors and officers insurance. Representatives from Marsh & McLennan review the coverage annually with the Chief Administrative Officer, providing comparative information for similarly-sized organizations as well as trends. The Chief Administrative Officer also contacts Austin & Co., Inc. to request information about independent school trends and limited benchmarking information. The Board did a full review of its insurance coverage in 2010 and has requested that the Chief Administrative Officer notify the Audit Committee of any deficiencies and inform them if committee members need to meet with the broker. Since then, there has been only one adjustment to the insurance coverage, which affected fiduciary liability based on changing pension laws and reviews of 403(b) plans. The next full insurance review by the Board is scheduled for 2016.

### **Tuition Receivables and Bad Debt**

Thanks to the coordination of the Business Manager, who is in charge of tuition receivables, and the Chief Administrative Officer, the school's delinquent tuition accounts and bad debt have dropped from between \$50,000 and \$100,000 per year to less than \$3,000 per year. This significant drop came after the Board recommended adding a monthly payment plan through Tuition Management Systems and tuition insurance provided by Dewar. With a sometimes transient international community for whom jobs may require parents to move out of New York unexpectedly, the tuition insurance has protected the school from substantial losses that might occur when this happens. Once a month, the Business Manager reports to the Chief Administrative Officer any outstanding balances, and together they contact families and work out any necessary payment agreements. The school provides prorated, partial-year enrollment contracts to United Nations families who know they will be relocated during the school year. This is in standing with the school's mission and its long historical ties to the United Nations and its families.

### **Long-Term Planning**

The International Preschools is in the nascent stages of long-range planning and forecasting. As part of the school's consolidation from four locations to three in 2014, the Board worked with the Director and Chief Administrative Officer to develop a three-part plan, with consolidation as the first step. The second step was to secure long-term leases at each of the locations. Both of these steps have been completed for the 86th Street and 76th Street locations. The third step is to address the short-term lease at the 45th Street location while budgeting strategically, should the school need to downsize without this location in the future.

### **Development and Institutional Advancement**

The International Preschools has been fundraising since it opened, and for many years the school focused its fundraising efforts on two annual events: Faculty Appreciation Night, held each fall to raise money for the professional development of faculty and staff; and the Spring Benefit, to raise money for general operations and capital projects. In the 2014-2015 school year, the school decided to merge these two events to direct more attention to the Annual Fund. The Annual Fund is the main fundraising activity of the school in dollar terms, and its purpose is to cover the school's leasehold improvements, which are not covered by income from operations (tuition); to fund the development of new curricular initiatives; and to provide long-term financial stability for the school.

The Annual Fund was launched in 2000 by a former parent who worked part-time for ten years managing it. To replace her, the school sought a full-time development

director and associate to coordinate all fundraising efforts. The school hired two different development directors between 2009 and 2013 with limited success in increasing Annual Fund giving, and during the 2012-2013 school year, the administration decided to move away from employing a dedicated development director. Instead, the Director and the Chief Administrative Officer spent the 2013-2014 school year coordinating fundraising activities while analyzing The International Preschools' needs and reporting their findings quarterly to the Board as well as its Development Committee.

They found that with a student population close to 410 and a parent base of more than 380, The International Preschools has the population of an ongoing school. However, being a preschool and having an international community presents a set of unique fundraising challenges:

- Students age out after only 2 to 3 years.
- Some parents (both domestic and international) have never encountered school fundraising before.
- The international population is largely transient.
- More than half of the outgoing families seek public school options, which requires the school to educate these families on giving requirements at New York public schools.
- A variety of cultural backgrounds means some people view giving with indifference or prefer to give collectively.
- Families with an older child placed in an independent ongoing school often dedicate their donations to those schools.

The school's administration concluded that a number of outreach steps were needed to address the issues, including:

- Early introduction and education about Annual Fund giving
- Parent participation in hosting small events to introduce the Annual Fund
- More direct parent contact with the Director and/or Chief Administrative Officer
- Hiring an associate who could coordinate small gatherings of potential donors based on database analysis
- Scheduling Annual Fund activities to correspond with other administrative activities

By the end of the 2013-2014 school year, which was the 50th anniversary year, the school had raised the most donated money in its history, using many of the techniques listed above. The school hired a full-time development associate in the fall of 2014 and is continuing to implement these changes with the full support of the Board's Development Committee. The Chief Administrative Officer oversees the development activities while coordinating with the Director. The Board, in turn, has also actively recruited two new members for the Development Committee, which supports this transition.

## **Physical Plant**

The International Preschools currently has three separate locations in Manhattan, at 120 West 76th Street, 330 East 45th Street, and 345 East 86th Street. They operate as a single school with three individual campuses, with much of the administration working out of the flagship 45th Street location.

In 2012, after a two-year search by the Board's Facilities and Space Planning Committee, The International Preschools signed a 20-year lease at 345 East 86th Street. This allowed the school to consolidate and move its two smallest locations, on East 35th Street and East 74th Street, which held short-term leases, into the new, larger location. With a team of architects, project managers, and contractors, the school was able to completely design and build its newest location to the specifications of its licensing agent, The New York City Department of Health, as well as to code for the Department of Buildings and the Fire Department of New York. This was the largest construction project to date for the school, and the admissions team was able to fill more than 85 percent of the school's seats the first year, when families could only see a construction site during admissions season. This location is on a single floor covering 7,518 square feet and houses seven classrooms, a gym, outdoor space, three offices, a multipurpose room, and a faculty lunch/work room. The project was completed on time and opened for the second half of summer camp in 2013; it was fully open for school in the fall of 2013. The location was designed with a security desk, cameras, and a security system that requires employees and parents to use a swipe-card system to release the entry door.

In 2013, The International Preschools secured a 15-year extension on its lease at 76th Street. The lease negotiation also granted this location an additional room for its library and a much-needed meeting space. The 76th Street location spans five floors and just over 7,800 square feet. It houses six classrooms, one office, a library/multipurpose room, a gym, and a small outdoor play area. The school shares the building with the West Side Institutional Synagogue. Throughout the day, the third floor (a space not used by the school) is leased by the Jewish Association Serving the Aging to provide

meals and entertainment for the elderly. The children sometimes interact with the elderly in shared common areas or at school concerts, which are opportunities to establish healthy relationships between the groups.

Security at the 76th Street location was upgraded in the summer of 2014, after the landlord granted permission for the school to upgrade the lobby, add an additional interior door, install a swipe-card system to secure the front and interior doors, and install cameras at all access points and common areas. The small outdoor play area works well for the youngest of the preschool children, but is confining for the oldest. The school has worked with the nearby Public School 87 to share its outdoor play area but continues to search for a long-term solution in the neighborhood.

The 45th Street location has been leased since the early 1980s from the United Nations Development Corporation (UNDC). However, UNDC is in negotiations to build a new structure just south of the United Nations and does not want any tenant to be an anchor if it sells the current building that houses the school. As of 2009, UNDC has been offering the school a two-year lease, which has been extended four times since then. The current lease expires in July 2017 as of this writing. The International Preschools continues trying to negotiate a longer-term lease at this location and will begin again in the spring of 2016. This location provides invaluable access to the United Nations, whose headquarters are only half a block away.

The 45th Street location spans 10,000 square feet across two floors, housing eight classrooms, a rooftop playground, a smaller outdoor playground at street level, a gym, a library, a mini-gym/meeting room, and a storage room. Most of the administrative offices can be found here including the finance, human resources, development, and IT departments. The building is secured with swipe-card access and cameras covering all access points and common areas.

The school has made great strides in recent years in creating consistency across its three facilities. For example, each location now has a library/multipurpose room. Not only is this advantageous for the students, but it also provides parents with a space to hold meetings at each location. A security guard is also now assigned to each location. The school will continue to identify and implement areas that need upgrading so that the three locations are equally functional.

## **Records**

The school leases off-site storage units nearby to archive student files and financial items as directed by the Document Retention Guidelines established by NYS AIS. At the end of each fiscal year, files are boxed, labeled, and moved to the off-site storage units.

A certified shredding vendor is contracted to destroy files once they pass their retention requirements.

### **Medical Files**

The International Preschools is required by the New York State Department of Health to keep all employees' and students' medical records in a locked file cabinet. The original medical files are kept at the 45th Street location in the main administrative offices. Copies are placed in student files and kept in respective Location Directors' offices.

### **Employment Records**

All current employees' completed I-9 forms are stored in a three-ring binder in a locked cabinet in the human resources office. A locked cabinet in the human resources office also holds an employee file with items required by the Department of Health, appointment letters, and payroll forms. A locked cabinet in the Director's office holds personnel files, which contain evaluatory information.

### **Payroll Files**

All current payroll files are kept in three-ring binders in the finance office in a locked cabinet.

### **Student Records**

Information pertaining to currently enrolled students, including enrollment contracts and parent-teacher conference notes, is filed in a locked file cabinet in the main administrative offices. Copies of each file are kept in respective Location Directors' offices. The school does not allow parents access to the student files.

### **Financial and Banking Files**

The school uses QuickBooks as its accounting program, and all general ledger information is stored on a dedicated server that is backed up daily to an off-site location. Files pertaining to current accounts payable and accounts receivable are stored in the school's finance office, which is locked at the end of each work day. Current banking files are also stored in the finance office. The same process of storage, retention, and shredding is followed as with student records.

All audited financial documents and permanent corporate files are kept in locked file cabinets in the Director's and Chief Administrative Officer's offices.

### **Development**

The finance and development offices work closely together to reconcile and account for all fundraising. Receipts are kept in the finance office with other accounting records, and communications are kept in the Development Associate's office.

### **Electronic Files and IT Information**

In 2012, the IT Coordinator and Chief Administrative Officer issued the school's first Disaster Recovery Plan to map out all of the school's electronic storage, security safeguards, and recovery options. A copy of this plan can be found in the supplemental materials for this section. The recovery plan was updated in 2015 and is reviewed on an annual basis. The school has committed the resources to back up all of its electronic files daily on local servers and at regularly scheduled intervals on external servers. In 2015, the school also began the process of converting hard copies of student files to an electronic format and storing them securely on Google Drive.

### **Safety**

The safety and security of the children at The International Preschools is the utmost priority of the faculty and staff. The Chief Administrative Officer is responsible for the general oversight of the school's safety policies and procedures. Location Directors are responsible for the implementation of emergency, accident, and other safety procedures.

### **Facility Access and Security**

All three locations have dedicated security officers who are contracted through Integrated Security Services, Inc. The security officer is the first person visitors and community members encounter when entering the school. At arrival, parents and caregivers deliver each child directly to their teachers in their classroom; at dismissal teachers release each child directly to their parent or authorized caregivers. The security officers are always present to ensure that no child leaves the school unattended. Security officers also keep each location's lobby clear at all times to maintain an accessible point of entry and exit.

Adult members of the school community are required to have a photo identification with them to enter the buildings. The school issues photo ID cards at the beginning of the year to parents, caregivers, and all faculty and staff. These IDs must be swiped at the front door for access, and parents and caregivers have access to classrooms at drop-off and pick-up times. If a student's caregiver changes, the parents must notify the school in writing to assure that records and IDs are properly updated; a new photo ID is issued, and the former caregiver's ID is deactivated. IDs expire at the end of each school year and new cards are issued to employees and families annually.

All visitors to the school are required to sign in and wear a nametag. Loiterers are asked to move away from the front of the buildings, and the security officer is asked to immediately report any suspicious behavior or activity to the Location Director, Chief Administrative Officer, and appropriate authorities.

When a security officer is on break, his or her desk is covered by an administrative or maintenance staff member, and the front doors remain locked.

### **Fire Drills, Shelter in Place, and Evacuation Procedures**

The International Preschools regularly conducts drills and trains staff on emergency procedures. Each location requires its own variations on emergency procedures, and Location Directors train each location's staff. Fire drills are conducted monthly at each location for both morning and afternoon sessions.

The school developed an extensive shelter-in-place manual for each location after the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in 2012. The Location Directors and Chief Administrative Officer attended a seminar on what could be learned from the tragedy, and the entire faculty and staff participated in two mandatory school workshops. The community provided input and helped write sections of the manual, which included best ways to shelter children in the classrooms, what supplies are needed to keep children quiet, the height of deadbolts on doors, and the locations of wireless intercoms that were installed throughout the school. Location Directors schedule shelter-in-place drills twice a year, and the procedures are updated as needed.

The school also has written evacuation procedures and designated safe havens in the event of a necessary evacuation. Evacuation drills are not practiced with the children, but faculty and staff review the procedures at least twice a year. A bomb threat required an evacuation at the 45th Street location in 2013, and, as a result of the procedural reviews, the staff succeeded in calmly evacuating the school and then contacting parents.

### **Emergencies and First Aid**

Faculty are trained in CPR as required by the Department of Health. All faculty and staff receive infection control training and bloodborne pathogen training to ensure that they can respond to a bleeding incident and properly clean and dispose of blood. Each classroom contains a backpack with a first aid kit, a bloodborne pathogen bag, and all emergency contact sheets for each child in the classroom. These backpacks travel with the students if they leave the classroom for activities such as gym, outdoor play, or field trips.

Parents are informed immediately by phone of illness, an accident, or a dispute between students. After an accident occurs, the child's teacher completes an accident report, which the Director reviews. They then create a plan to prevent such accidents in the future.

## **Chemical Storage**

Any toxic materials in the classroom, such as cleaning supplies, are kept in cabinets with child-safety locks. Flammable chemicals are stored in locked cabinets in closets or storage rooms.

## **Professional Development**

On average, The International Preschools allocates approximately 1 percent of tuition revenue for professional development annually. This includes tuition reimbursements for faculty members working on advanced degrees; funds for five or six faculty or staff members to attend the 92nd Street Y Wonderplay Conference for preschool educators; and funds for faculty and staff to attend NYSAIS conferences on a variety of school-related topics. Tuition reimbursements can be applied to any institution's degree plan, equivalent to the cost of three three-credit courses per school year at a City University of New York (CUNY) school. Faculty members may also ask to attend other conferences or workshops that hone their classroom skills; these requests are reviewed—and frequently approved—by the Director. The school calendar also allows for professional development days. The Director designs these days based on feedback from faculty or provides training in new educational programs the school is implementing.

Before The International Preschools became a provisional member of NYSAIS, several administrators began attending the NYSAIS annual conferences appropriate to their roles. The school has supported the Director, Location Directors, members of the admissions team, the IT Coordinator, the Development Associate, and the Chief Administrative Officer to attend these conferences. The experience allowed them to network with peers and keep apprised of changing regulations and exciting new practices. Inspired by the admissions conferences, the school launched an online application form in 2014, and the Development Associate began to implement better ways to track donors year to year.

## **Assessment of Strengths and Challenges**

### **Strengths**

- The school encourages its faculty and staff to participate in a wide variety of professional development activities.
- The school is able to offer tuition insurance and monthly payment plans (through Tuition Management Systems). These safeguards minimize the potential loss of revenue among a transient international community.

- The size of the school allows for economies of scale when purchasing supplies and services.
- The school benefits from the collective knowledge of a large and experienced staff.
- The establishment and growth of the Annual Fund has helped to offset operating deficits and provided investment reserves.

**Challenges**

- It is difficult to maintain facility consistency among locations because of different lease agreements and landlords.

## **Section 4: Admissions and Financial Assistance**

### **Committee Members:**

Chair: Kevin Abernathy, Director of Admissions

Susan Ehrlich, Director of Admissions, 76th Street

Amanda Quinn, Admissions Associate

Charlene Sison, Business Manager

Martha Smeaton, Director of Admissions, 86th Street

### **Admissions and Financial Assistance Policy**

The International Preschools admits children of any race, color, nationality, and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, or disability in the administration of its educational policies, financial aid, and other school-administered programs.

The admissions process at The International Preschools is guided by the school's mission: to provide an atmosphere where children from New York City and all over the world are welcomed and supported. The admissions process takes into account the age of the applicant, and the admissions team assesses the child's readiness to take part in the school's program through formal tours and classroom observations. Informal discussions help the admissions team determine the parents' understanding of and openness to the school's mission and educational philosophy.

The International Preschools gives admission priority to United Nations employees, employees of consulates, and international families. Siblings and legacies also receive admissions priority and receive acceptance letters before the general applicant pool. Once all returning students, international and UN students, siblings, and legacies have been placed, the admissions team turns to new applicants. An effort is made to place families into the school's location closest to their homes.

The admissions team is sensitive to non-English-speaking applicants and their families. When possible, the admission team seeks out interpreters to assist in the admissions process. The families are treated with respect and feel comfortable while visiting the school.

Having a developmental specialist on staff allows the school to admit students with Individualized Education Programs.

The International Preschools seeks to admit a racially and culturally diverse group of students. To ensure this, tuition assistance is based on individual family need.

## **Admissions Process**

Parents can learn about The International Preschools through its website, reference sources like private school directories, organizations such as the Parents League of New York, and recommendations from current and past parents. Once a parent decides to apply, the following steps are followed.

### **Contacting the School**

Parents visit the school's website, where they can apply online. Once the school receives the completed application, the parents are invited to attend one of the monthly admissions open houses and information meetings. At these sessions, the Director, Location Directors, and a faculty member describe various aspects of The International Preschools, including the educational philosophy, parent involvement, exmissions, and the admissions process. Parents of currently enrolled students also participate by describing their experiences at the school.

### **The Parent and Child Visit**

After attending the admissions meeting, each applicant is contacted by a member of the admissions staff to schedule an individual, private tour of the location of their choice with their child. The visit occurs during the school day, and the child is invited to join in classroom activities. Parents have an opportunity to ask questions and see how the school's philosophy is implemented. After the visit is complete, the Admissions Associate writes an evaluation of the child and his or her family, which is kept on file and factored into the decision.

### **The Decision Process**

The admissions team considers class size, gender balance, student needs, and diversity when deciding whether to offer admission to a family. Requests from Board members, current families, and friends are also considered.

The following chart shows the number of applications the school received from 2012 to 2015, along with the number of students accepted, the number enrolled, and rate of return for each year.

## Admissions Statistics 2012-2015

Year	Applications	Accepted	% Accepted	Enrolled	Rate of Return
2012	981	619	63%	261	42%
2013	1037	637	61%	264	41%
2014	924	581	63%	199	34%
2015	711	559	79%	178	32%

### **Reception for Accepted Families**

After students have been offered admission, their parents are invited to a reception where they meet current parents, teachers, and administrators. Subsequently, they accept or decline the admission offer.

### **Orientation**

In the spring, a new parent reception is held. The Director welcomes new parents, and the new parents have a chance to meet other new and current parents and to become more familiar with the school. Before school starts in the fall, an orientation meeting is scheduled for parents to learn about school and classroom policies.

### **Assessment and Analysis**

In 2010 and 2014, The International Preschools conducted a post-admission survey, which studied families who either declined or accepted their offers to attend. More than 50 percent of applicants responded to the 2010 survey, and 25 percent of applicants responded to the 2014 survey. The surveys asked questions about schedule conflicts, location, facilities, programs, philosophy, relocation, financial issues, ongoing school opportunities, tour and information session experiences, desired religious education, and other issues. Based on the responses, the school made certain changes, including opening a half-day program for two-year-olds and a full-day program for three-year-olds five days a week. These steps were well-received by parents, who fully enrolled in these classes the following year. The school continues to monitor its offerings to assure that enrollment stays strong and that the school is meeting the needs of its parent body.

## **Financial Assistance**

The Board approves an annual budget for financial aid that allows The International Preschools to maintain its commitment to international families. No matter what time of year an international family arrives in New York City, there are funds available should they need financial assistance to attend the school, and classroom space is kept available year-round to accommodate the children of these families. 3 to 3.5 percent of the school's annual tuition revenue is allocated for financial aid.

The annual financial aid process begins in January, before returning families receive their re-enrollment contracts. The finance office informs families who are currently receiving financial aid that they must submit a new aid application along with their latest tax return and current W-2 form. This information is reviewed by the school's Financial Aid Committee, which comprises the Chief Administrative Officer and the Business Manager. The financial aid budget is first allocated to returning families seeking financial aid, and the balance is allocated to new families.

The criteria used by the Financial Aid Committee to determine aid eligibility are:

- Need based on income
- Compatibility with the school's mission, including international background
- Class availability
- The school's allocated financial aid budget

If these criteria are met and the admissions office has accepted the family, financial aid is awarded, and the Business Manager prepares an enrollment contract reflecting the financial aid.

When a new family requests financial aid, a member of the admissions office sends them a financial aid application along with a letter explaining the financial aid process. The family returns the completed application to the admissions office along with their most current tax returns or a W-2 form. Once the family has been accepted and assigned to an appropriate class, the Admissions Director forwards the completed application to the Financial Aid Committee for review. Based on the same criteria as for returning families, financial aid packages are awarded, and the Business Manager prepares a customized enrollment contract. All documents related to financial aid are kept locked in a file cabinet in the finance office.

The school also has the Valerie Kennedy Scholarship Fund, which is specifically dedicated to supporting international students. This fund was established in 2010 to honor the school's former director and her dedication and commitment to the school's community. It provides grants between \$2,500 and \$5,000 and has assisted children from all over the world, including Serbia, France, Mongolia, Haiti, Algeria, and Ireland,

thereby bolstering a diverse learning environment that benefits the entire school community.

## **Assessment of Strengths and Challenges**

### **Strengths**

- The unparalleled diversity of The International Preschools community is a unique asset that is self-perpetuating.
- Current and alumni families provide strong, favorable word of mouth, and the popularity of the school remains consistently high.
- The school maintains low student-teacher ratios and small classes.
- The size of the school supports a larger number of specialty teachers on staff than smaller schools can afford.
- The size of the school supports a well-resourced admissions team.
- Having multiple locations within New York City affords families the flexibility to change locations if they move.

### **Challenges**

- Changing economic conditions have made it difficult to offer program schedules that meet the needs of families with two working parents.
- There is increasing competition from a growing number of daycare centers and preschools.
- There is new competition from free programs in New York City's universal pre-kindergarten initiative.
- As a result of the increased competition, The International Preschools' afternoon enrollment is declining because parents prefer a morning class time. The administration is working to determine whether under-enrolled afternoon classrooms could be used to offer Mommy and Me, language immersion, or special needs classes. Changing the times and days that classes are offered is also an option. The amount of financial assistance available is directly related to the amount of tuition collected; therefore, increasing classroom use would help maintain the amount of funding available for financial aid.

## **Section 5: Education**

### **Committee Members:**

Rosie Finizio, 76th Street Location Director and Education Director

Mona Green, 45th Street Location Director and Education Director

Monique Tabbs, 86th Street Location Director and Education Director

Consultant: Donna Cohen, Director

### **Identity and Objectives**

The International Preschools seeks to inspire its young students and build a foundation for children to become lifelong learners. In this environment, hands-on play experiences foster an interest in discovery. As children play, they learn how to think, solve problems, and develop language. Teachers and administrators strive to be aware of trends in early childhood education and introduce new curricula when appropriate.

### **Learning Through Play Educational Philosophy**

Valuing a child's natural impulse to learn, The International Preschools has been committed to a Learning Through Play educational philosophy since its inception. Play is the central activity in the life of a child, and through structured, teacher-led, and play-based activities, children learn naturally how to think, solve problems, and achieve goals.

A visitor to an International Preschools classroom will discover:

- Teachers who carefully and thoughtfully choose developmentally appropriate activities, projects, and themes based on the children's interests and the world around them. These projects and themes permeate all areas of classroom learning.
- Young children whose curiosity and interests are being encouraged and fostered through the hands-on experiences of touching, experimenting, choosing, talking, and negotiating.
- Learning centers that provide opportunities for children to select activities themselves in order to develop a sense of independence as learners and thinkers.

Cohesive schedules are the framework to each classroom, which provide children with a sense of security and the ability to develop self-discipline and manage expectations. Daily schedules may vary based on age level but all classrooms include the following components:

- **Circle Time:** This facilitated meeting time allows children to gain social skills such as listening and turn-taking; develop early literacy skills by learning vocabulary and understanding the structure of stories and language; and make meaningful connections by sharing thoughts, stories, questions, and ideas.
- **Choice Time:** Choice Time is the heart of play-based learning. Hands-on experiences allow children to learn fundamental social skills such as negotiating and planning; science and math skills such as measurement, equivalence, and volume; and fine and gross motor skills such as how to hold a paintbrush or understand visual-spatial awareness.
- Snack time, specialty classes, and active play, which are all opportunities to expand and enhance skills and knowledge.

## The Educational Program and Curriculum

Children reach developmental milestones at different ages, and to that end, The International Preschools has established three separate programs to accommodate the range in preschool children's ages and abilities.

1) **Crèche and the Red Room** are the programs for The International Preschools' youngest children, focusing on separation, socialization, development of language and skills, and encouragement of independence, or basic self-help skills. Each class has ten to twelve students with three teachers. Toddlers from 1.6 to 2 years old attend the Crèche program, which is only offered at the 45th Street location. Children from 2.1 to 2.11 years old attend the Red Room program.

2) **The Green Room** is a program for three-year-olds designed to further the students' growing abilities to make new connections in all learning domains. Here, teachers emphasize independence as learners, development of peer relationships, and decision-making. These classes each have twelve to eighteen children, with two or three teachers. In 2015 there were four Green Room offerings at 76th Street, four at 86th Street, and five at 45th Street.

3) The **Pre-K** and **Junior Kindergarten (Jr. K)** programs are classes for four- and five-year-olds, which support strategies for the transition to symbolic learning. Open-ended, theme-based projects incorporate creative and logical thinking, problem solving, and verbal reasoning while they expand the students' factual knowledge. The classes have twelve to twenty children, with two to four teachers. In 2015, the school offered three sections of Pre-K at 76th Street, three at 86th Street, and three at 45th Street. Only 45th Street offered Jr. K during the 2014-2015 school year.

Arrival time for morning classes begins at 9:00 AM, and students are dismissed at 12:00 PM. Arrival time for afternoon classes is 1:00 PM, with dismissal at 4:00 PM. Students

in all-day classes arrive at 9:00 AM and are dismissed at 3:00 PM. The school allows for early drop-off beginning at 8:00 AM and provides after-school programs until 5:00 PM.

All of the above programs emphasize both self-directed and teacher-directed, engaged learning through hands-on, play-based activities. The teachers at The International Preschools determine which pre-established units and themes their classes will explore, which allows the teachers to tailor their curricula to the interests, skill levels, and developmental needs of individual children. Each of the programs is outlined in further detail in sections below.

Each classroom at The International Preschools is divided into various learning centers, which are the centerpiece of the early childhood learning experience. The learning centers focus on dramatic play, art, literacy, scientific discovery, math manipulatives, puzzles, writing, blocks, and sensory play. Many learning centers reflect the various themes and units being taught in the classroom at any given time. Students are given the opportunity to work at these centers during their 45–60-minute Choice Time. Teachers determine which centers are open, and often one center has a teacher-directed activity. During this period, the students decide independently where they will work and what they will explore. In doing so, they develop a sense of independence and discernment, sharpen their thinking skills, and enhance their capacity for independent learning. As children explore the centers and engage in the tasks presented at each, they are playing, and they are learning as they play.

Skills and concepts are further reinforced during the teacher-led Circle Time. Circle Time (and in the Pre-K and Junior-K classrooms, Meeting Time) provides a regular and consistent opportunity for teachers and students to gather together for the recitation of the daily schedule and lesson, demonstrations, songs, stories, and conversation.

The classroom curriculum is enhanced through the Specialty Program, which offers classes in clay, music, iPad learning, library, science, writing workshop, and movement, discussed in more detail in Section 5D.

The school focuses on several areas of early childhood development, including language and literacy, mathematics, scientific inquiry, socialization, sensory activities, and multicultural identity. Art is also incorporated into the students' daily curriculum with collaborative group activities, self-portraiture, journals, and projects with an international focus. Field trips are also incorporated into Green Room, Pre-K, and Jr. K classes to expand and enrich the children's learning experiences.

### **Language and Literacy**

Language and literacy permeate the school's curriculum. In all classrooms, the walls and shelves display environmental prints designed to trigger and foster the development of reading. This skill is introduced to younger children via pictorial reading: Words are

combined with pictures to help students transition into the reading process. Older students review color-coded daily messages as they begin to decipher written words. Independent, quiet book time is also strongly encouraged. Although storytime sharpens listening skills, perusing books independently enhances children's sense of self as they begin to see themselves as readers, develop self-confidence and pride, and further their ability to connect written text to meaning.

The iPad specialty class and the listening centers offer additional resources for literacy development in Pre-K and Jr. K. In the listening centers, children can use an iPad during Choice Time to listen to and engage with a story. In the Green Rooms, students collaboratively "read" and listen to award-winning books with their teachers.

Additionally, letter formation and handwriting skills are introduced and reinforced in weekly handwriting specialty classes, beginning in the fall for the Pre-K and Jr. K classes and in the spring for the Green Rooms. Early writing skills are enhanced through the development of fine motor skills.

The school also supports language development for both English speakers and students for whom English is not a first language.

### **Mathematics**

Young children internalize many abstract mathematical concepts while at play. The classrooms offer many opportunities to develop the critical thinking skills and reasoning abilities needed to gain math competence. Pre-math skills are woven into activities such as art, cooking, or Circle Time throughout the day. As students sort and group objects, they develop problem-solving strategies. Exploring and manipulating materials allows students to build the strong mathematical foundation necessary for understanding mathematical theories. Play and hands-on exploration introduce concepts like fractions, one-to-one correspondence, data analysis, measurement, geometry, and number sense.

### **Socialization**

The International Preschools emphasizes a positive, nurturing, and respectful environment in its classrooms. Throughout the day, students are encouraged to express their feelings, listen to each other, and learn to share. As students grow and mature, teachers work with the children to develop the ability to self-monitor their behavior and to consider the feelings of others.

### **Sensory Activities**

Teachers incorporate sensory activities into the curriculum for all age groups to help develop sensory integration. Sensory activities at the school involve working with glue, mud, paper, Play-Doh, "flubber," and sand and water tables.

## **Multicultural Identity**

The International Preschools is committed to providing children with a positive view of other cultures. Children and families broaden each other's knowledge, understanding, and acceptance of the world. A further discussion of multicultural identity in the classroom can be found in Section 5E.

## **Art**

Teachers incorporate art projects into the classroom curriculum on a daily basis. Art projects strengthen children's fine motor skills through cutting, drawing, gluing, and tracing activities, which ultimately prepare them for writing. Representational drawing skills are tracked via journal entries in the Green Room, Pre-K, and Jr. K classrooms. The children's progress in drawing figures (e.g. parts of the face and body) is also tracked through the creation of self-portraits. Other activities include multi-step projects, process art, and independent work in the writing center, where children have the opportunity to use a variety of materials on open-ended projects of their choice.

## **Technology in the Classroom**

The International Preschools is at the forefront of providing children with developmentally appropriate technological experiences. In addition to the iPad specialty class and listening centers, each teaching team is equipped with an iPad for parent-teacher conferences, where teachers can share photos and videos of a child's development. Teachers also help students use the classroom iPad for research and documentation.

## **Student and Program Assessment**

At the early-childhood level, reflective assessment using written observation and anecdotal records is standard. Such data provides insight about each child's learning behavior and performance in all areas of development. Student assessment is done in an informal fashion in order to ascertain the various developmental levels and learning styles of each child. Based on specific children's needs, educators differentiate their plans and materials and confer with a developmental specialist if necessary. Additionally, biannual parent-teacher conferences allow teachers and parents to share information about their children. Parents are also kept up to date on their child's activity via a regular newsletter and classroom photos they can access through a parent portal, referred to as the Dashboard. Pre-K and Jr. K teachers have yet another avenue for assessment when they write ISAAGNY school reports for children applying to ongoing schools.

Teachers, Location Directors, and administrators share the responsibility of ensuring that the school's curriculum and academic goals are mission-appropriate. Throughout the year, the curriculum is evaluated through formal classroom observations by the

Director and Location Directors and through regular teaching team and age-level meetings with Location Directors.

To ensure best practices, The International Preschools stays abreast of current educational thought through research and conferences. In addition, the Director maintains relationships with peer schools, private and public ongoing schools, and peers in the education field to stay informed on kindergarten and first-grade expectations in New York City.

## **Separation and Phase-In**

A gradual and individualized phase-in program helps all children adapt to school at their own pace. The phase-in program works in tandem with the separation process to ease a child into the school setting and routine. For the children in the Crèche and Red Room programs, this process lasts for several weeks, with the child staying gradually longer at school each day. The separation process requires the parent or caregiver to remain inside or outside the classroom until the child is fully comfortable without their presence. Children in the Green Room, Pre-K, and Jr. K programs participate in a weeklong phase-in period during the first week of school.

## **Assessment of Strengths and Challenges**

### **Strengths**

A developmentally appropriate curriculum:

- Enables teachers to meet the expectations, milestones, and benchmarks at each age level
- Is engaging, which allows for positive classroom management
- Enables children who do not speak English or for whom English is not a first language to participate and learn through hands-on experiences

### **Challenges**

- It can be difficult to maintain consistency among the school's three locations and faculty of varied experience.
- The school recently introduced an assessment for all age groups, and regularly administering the assessment and analyzing and acting on the results will be a new challenge for the faculty.

## **Section 5A: The Crèche and Red Room Programs**

### **Committee Members:**

Original Chair: Jessica Anderson, Former Teacher

Maura Baritot-Finnerty, Teacher

Jenna Forsthuber, Teacher

Colleen Krowl, Teacher

Dora Oakley, Teacher

Grazyna Zukowska, Teacher

### **The Crèche and Red Room Programs**

The youngest members of The International Preschools community are the children in the Crèche and Red Rooms, ranging in age from 1.6 to 2.11 years. Children in the Crèche program are under two years old and attend school two days a week for two hours at a time. Children must be two years old to begin the Red Room program; they attend school for two, three, or five days per week, depending on their age and individual development, and stay at school for three hours each day. The primary goal in these programs is for every child to develop the solid social and emotional skills that will allow him or her to function independently within a structured, play-based environment. The Crèche and Red Room programs are often the students' first school experiences.

The International Preschools' classrooms are designed to not only be warm and nurturing, but also to pique curiosity and stimulate the imagination. In this environment, children develop a sense of comfort and trust on multiple levels and have opportunities to try new things.

During the process of phase-in and separation, children learn not only to trust their teachers, but also to trust that their caregivers will come back for them. Most importantly, they learn to trust themselves and feel safe and secure in a new environment without their familiar adults.

From play-based activities at Circle Time to sharing in play centers, the youngest children learn to incorporate various skills into their repertoires. Students at this level learn to foster friendships through whole-group activities, share, take turns, negotiate, and exercise self-restraint. Through play, practice, and teacher modeling, the children develop effective communication skills, learn how to handle transitions and changes in routine, and increase their ability to stay on task. The children also acquire fundamental self-help and self-regulatory skills. From the beginning of each year, these young students begin to gain an understanding of routines, which is reflected in their ability at the year's end to come together as a group.

### **Intellectual Development**

Literacy, math, and science are integrated throughout the curriculum. This gives students the opportunity to learn through vital and stimulating play. For example, children are exposed to letters and numbers by reading books; sorting by shape, color, and size; measuring and mixing ingredients during cooking sessions; and spending time in a print-rich and stimulating environment.

### **Social/Emotional Development**

Children learn to share, take turns, negotiate, resolve conflict, self-monitor, work together, and use appropriate language when interacting with peers and teachers. Circle and Snack Times also foster the fundamental social skills needed to becoming productive community members.

### **Physical Development**

Through unregimented 30-minute gym and outdoor play times, children learn to move their bodies, strengthen their muscles, and develop gross motor skills. They develop their fine motor skills through a variety of different artistic mediums. Children work their finger and hand muscles to mold Play-Doh, thread beads, tear paper, cut with scissors, and peel stickers for art projects.

### **Multicultural Identity**

Children begin recognizing cultural differences and similarities and incorporating them into their lives by celebrating holidays in the classroom throughout the year and by discussing themselves and their families at Circle Time. Flags representing the children's backgrounds are displayed in the classroom. Please refer to Section 5E for an explanation of the use of flags in the curriculum.

Because the school welcomes international families, the Red Room is often the first encounter a child may have with the English language. Teachers work with parents to learn a few familiar phrases in the child's home language to create a safe learning environment. Through the course of the year, the children gain a solid receptive and expressive knowledge of English to help them confidently communicate.

## **Assessment of Strengths and Challenges**

### **Strengths**

- The International Preschools is one of the few schools that offers enrollment for children under two years old in a continuing program.
- There is a high success rate of smooth separation and phase-in, as exemplified through positive feedback from families.

- English as a Second Language (ESL) students often learn English quickly through constant exposure and use of visual clues by the teaching team.

### **Challenges**

- Working with very young children is always challenging, as is interacting with inexperienced parents who may require much reassurance.
- The 76th Street location is housed in a synagogue, which can create difficulty with scheduling the separation and phase-in schedule, because of the many Jewish holidays in the fall.
- This is often the first time that a child has been in school; therefore, identification of exceptionalities begins at this stage.

## **Section 5B: The Green Room Program**

### **Committee Members:**

Original Chair: Kayla Piskuliyski, Teacher

### **Reviewed and Revised By:**

Sarah Baraie, Teacher

Maura Baritot-Finnerty, Teacher

Christina Branton, Teacher

Elizabeth Denton, Teacher

Hande Erkin, Teacher

Jill Fuersich, Teacher

Janine Louis, Teacher

Jaya Misra, Teacher

Astrid Moises, Teacher

## **The Green Room Program**

The Green Room Program is for The International Preschools' three-year-old students. This program builds on the social, emotional, and cognitive skills that were established in the Crèche and Red Room classes. Independent decision-making and the strengthening of self-help skills are reinforced, and interdisciplinary learning is explored via thematic units. All Green Room students are assigned a "job" they are responsible for, which changes on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. The program develops independent learners who feel secure and confident when taking risks and trying new things. Teachers strive to ensure that every child feels comfortable in the classroom, participates in all activities, and feels happy, loved, nurtured, and encouraged.

### **Social/Emotional Development**

A variety of social skills are cultivated in the Green Room. Children learn to transition between activities, identify emotions, acquire spatial awareness, and practice sharing with their peers. While building on their strong sense of self, children begin to develop cultural awareness and consciousness of the world around them. They start to acknowledge and accept the perspectives of others in their classroom community.

### **Intellectual Development**

Circle Time develops cognitive skills such as print awareness, reflective listening, turn-taking, sequencing, letter and number recognition, verbal retelling, and understanding story components.

Literacy is at the core of the Green Room Program, and teachers aim to support each child at his or her own level. Children increase their interest in literacy through story time and independent exploration of books.

Each Green Room has a Dramatic Play Area, consisting of an open space with materials to support and enhance children’s play scenarios. The teachers adapt and expand the Dramatic Play Area to meet the interests of the class and support curricular areas where cooperative play, sharing, and negotiation skills are reinforced.

A number of activities introduce the fundamentals of mathematics and science. Certain classroom jobs, such as the calendar and attendance helpers, develop counting and discrimination skills, as well as the rudiments of addition and subtraction. The weather reporter fosters an awareness of the external world and provides an opportunity for acquiring new vocabulary. During their weekly cooking class, children are introduced to measurements, fractions, and patterns. Cooking also offers an opportunity for children to explore physical science and understand basic chemical reactions. Students develop their discrimination, problem solving, and observational skills through hands-on math and science experiences.

Science is also incorporated into the curriculum via the discovery center, thematic activities, and a weekly science specialty class taught by the Green Room teachers. Science classes often focus on topics such as seasons, in addition to teaching basic investigative skills such as making observations, posing questions, and participating in experiments.

### **Physical Development**

Students in the Green Room spend time every day in the gym or outdoor playspace, developing gross motor skills like running, agility, coordination, and balance. The movement specialty class also enhances these skills, while encouraging an appreciation of music, story, rhythm, and dance.

Children also engage in drawing, painting, and other fine motor activities which strengthen their hand muscles for future writing activities. They experience art through a variety of forms and mediums that enhance their fine motor skills and increase self-expression.

### **Multicultural Identity**

Children in the Green Room are well-equipped to begin identifying differences and similarities among their peers. Flags displayed in the classrooms serve as a starting point for conversations about similarities and differences, based on the simple differences in the flags’ aesthetics like shapes and colors. Please refer to Section 5E for an explanation of the use of flags in the curriculum.

## **Assessment of Strengths and Challenges**

### **Strengths**

- Beginning in the Green Room program, children begin attending specialty classes five days a week, exposing them to new skills in science, technology, movement, clay, and writing, and enhancing the music and library skills that were introduced in the Red Rooms.
- A structured schedule allows teachers to individualize instruction to strengthen the fine motor, literacy, and math skills of each child.

### **Challenges**

- There is a range of curriculum development as some Green Room students move on to Pre-K at The International Preschools and others to kindergarten at public schools.
- While necessary, the integration of Special Education Itinerant Teachers (SEITs) in some of the Green Rooms can be challenging for classroom teachers.

## **Section 5C: The Pre-K and Jr. K Program**

### **Committee Members:**

Chair: Robyn Clery, Teacher  
Lisa Goodman, Teacher  
Astrid Moises, Teacher  
Kayla Piskuliyski, Former Teacher  
Jamie Raboy, Teacher  
Klara Reisinger, Teacher  
Tamisha Sanders, Teacher  
Melissa Sann, Teacher  
Emi Tosabayashi, Teacher  
Gillian Weitz, Teacher

### **The Pre-K and Jr. K Programs**

Children in the Pre-K program attend school for either a half or full day, while children in the Jr. K attend school for a full day. The Pre-K program builds on the cognitive skills in all subject areas that were acquired in the Green Room program. Jr. K builds on these cognitive skills as well, adding skills taught in a classic kindergarten classroom. This is necessary because some children in the Jr. K class must be prepared to enter a first-grade classroom the following year. In both Pre-K and Jr. K, students are prepared for a successful and fluid transition to kindergarten and/or first grade. The International Preschools is dedicated to sending them off happy, secure, and with a great love of learning.

### **Intellectual Development**

Teachers in the Pre-K and Jr. K programs offer a comprehensive academic curriculum for all students. The teachers develop lessons and activities for their classes based on their students' previous learning experiences, language abilities, interests, and needs.

The Pre-K and Jr. K programs integrate a writer's workshop program that focuses on strengthening fine motor skills, uppercase letter formation and recognition, and phonemic awareness. In addition, students create journals, dictating their stories to their teachers, then illustrating them with corresponding drawings. Students in the Jr. K program are encouraged to use inventive spelling to write words or sentences from their stories.

Students also take math workshops, which employ whole-group instruction, hands-on learning centers, and a variety of tools and materials. Teachers introduce in-depth units on number sense, classification, spatial relations, problem-solving, and data collection and reinforce these concepts throughout the day during math workshops and centers.

Mathematical education is also incorporated in other classroom experiences, including the daily Circle Time, where children learn and practice one-to-one correspondence, graphing, and counting using classroom charts and the calendar. Additionally, mathematical skills are used during weekly cooking classes, where they learn about quantity and forms of measurement.

Throughout the day, students play games, participate in hands-on activities to strengthen their letter and word recognition and phonemic awareness, and develop an understanding of text directionality. A readers workshop is also part of the Jr. K curriculum, where children participate in independent and guided reading activities and exercises focused on phonics.

### **Social/Emotional Development**

Pre-K and Jr. K students' social skills are developed organically through modeling, cooperative activities, and exposure to differences and similarities. Recognizing feelings and empathizing with others are at the core of the programs, and lessons fostering tolerance, respect, and caring for others occur daily. Teachers play the role of facilitators during small and large group activities and encourage verbal communication, listening to others, and turn-taking. Sharing in a group gives children the opportunity to become comfortable with speaking in front of others. Participating in the school's multicultural celebrations also provides a context for children to learn about and accept differences. Flags displayed in the classroom for the entire school year provide a consistent visual representation of the differences and similarities within The International Preschools community.

### **Multicultural Identity**

Please refer to Section 5E for an explanation of the use of flags in the curriculum.

## **Assessment of Strengths and Challenges**

### **Strengths**

- The oldest students truly embody the school's mission as they gain a deeper understanding of international awareness and the benefits of embracing diversity.
- The International Preschools can accommodate and prepare a wide age range of 4- and 5-year-olds to enter both public and private kindergartens and public school first grade.

### **Challenges**

- The final year at the school can be stressful for parents who are applying to the next school. Sometimes they don't appreciate the ongoing development of their children or participate fully in school activities.

- Classroom routine in the fall and winter is often disrupted when students visit ongoing schools and ongoing schools visit to observe applicants.

## **Section 5D: The Specialty Program**

### **Committee Members:**

Chair: Karen Rosenthal, Former Teacher (Science)

Douglas DaSilva, Teacher (Music)

Marie-Claire Foss, Teacher (Clay)

Peggy Gallagher, Teacher (Movement)

Elizabeth Hornick, Teacher (Writer's Workshop)

Nikki Rosso, Teacher (iPad)

MackKerrow Talcott, Teacher (Library)

Eira Toral-Sukhra, Consultant (iPad)

### **The Specialty Program**

The International Preschools offers a comprehensive specialty program that enriches the school's curriculum while complementing the play-based classroom experience. The specialty classes enhance students' cognitive, social-emotional, physical, and creative development.

The size of the student body allows the school to employ designated teachers who travel among the three locations and present library, movement, clay, music, science, iPad, and writer's workshop classes. Specialty teachers visit each location on a regular schedule and spend approximately 30 minutes with each class.

The specialty classes are integrated into the program according to age level as follows:

- Crèche: weekly music class
- Red Room: weekly music, library, and movement classes; bi-monthly clay class
- Green Room: weekly music, library, and movement classes; bi-monthly clay class; weekly iPad and writing workshop classes in the second semester
- Pre-K and Jr. K: weekly music, library, movement, iPad and writing workshop classes; bi-monthly clay class; monthly science class

### **Library**

The library curriculum is taught through picture books, songs, and poems accompanied by fingerplays, interactive storytelling, puppetry, and short films. Children develop listening skills and an extended capacity to focus while following a storyline. The library classes increase vocabulary, sharpen phonemic awareness, and broaden general knowledge. The children learn the difference between an informational book and a storybook; information about authors and illustrators; literary elements such as plot and character; ways to care for books; and the organization of the school's library. At the end of each class, the library teacher offers a selection of books, and each student

chooses one to take home each week. Choosing their books allows the children to exercise discrimination and heightens their self-esteem: They are proud of the choices they have made independently.

The collections of books held in the school's libraries reflect and expand on the students' experiences while supporting the curriculum. They also reflect the school's own cultural diversity by containing works by authors and illustrators from around the world. The library teacher will often read international stories not only to expand a class' worldview, but also to connect with international students. The library curriculum is designed to work hand in hand with the story-reading families are encouraged to do at home.

## **Movement**

Anchored in kinesthetic teaching, the movement curriculum presents a blend of music, storytelling, improvisation, interpretive dance, folk dance, yoga, exercise, and sports skills. Children develop social and listening skills, increase body strength, build self-confidence, and access their creativity. They learn to pay attention and respond to instructions, contribute thoughts of their own, explore the ideas of others, and move together in a shared space.

Students are offered movement tasks and problems to be solved individually or as a group. Such activities might include following along to songs like "We Are the Dinosaurs" or "We're Going on a Bear Hunt." Children dance with scarves and egg shakers and participate in beanbag games: tossing them to one another or balancing them on different parts of their bodies. In "leader and follower," "fast-slow," and "partnering" exercises, students learn to perform specific actions and to navigate within a space with their fellow classmates. Stretching, yoga, and breathing are also used during transition times to regulate energy levels, increase the attention span, and promote positive behavior. The movement teacher uses a rich vocabulary to describe motion, position, and velocity.

As the class explores each lesson's theme, guided improvisation offers an alternative avenue for understanding, which is particularly beneficial to those children who learn well in a bodily-kinesthetic mode. The movement program allows English Language Learners to express themselves freely and communicate directly with others in their class, thereby reinforcing both the sense of self and of community.

## **Clay**

The clay program is the most recent addition to the specialty curriculum, and it offers students the opportunity to express themselves creatively through an assortment of

child-friendly materials, with an emphasis on clay. Early in the school year, children explore this material with their hands, squishing and kneading it (and strengthening fine motor skills in the process). Later, they are introduced to simple tools and basic techniques of molding and imprinting clay, using shells and buttons to create patterns and impressions.

The clay program is a wonderful outlet for all children, but is a particularly effective method of self-expression for English Language Learners. As in the classroom, there is no judgment on work produced. Through the course of the year, and in conjunction with the classroom curriculum, students learn to think expansively, organize their ideas thoughtfully, and share their creative selves openly.

## **Music**

The music curriculum offers experiential learning through song, dance, rhythm, instruments, and active listening. Students are introduced to a broad spectrum of musical instruments and learn about the different families of instruments, like woodwinds or strings. Engaging, play-based exercises in fast and slow singing teach students about fundamental musical concepts like tempo and meter.

The music class emphasizes the use of songs in several languages to engage students and teach them about rhythm and expression. Children prepare for school-wide celebrations such as United Nations Day or the Winter Solstice celebration by performing a variety of international songs—like “Rum Sum Sum,” “Mi Cuerpo,” and “Les Petits Poissons”—for their families. Exposing children to songs in a multitude of languages and music from global instruments provides a gateway to other cultures and reinforces the school’s own multicultural identity.

The music teacher schedules performances by professional musicians for the students once or twice a year and invites faculty or parent musicians to take part in music classes where appropriate.

## **Science**

The specialty science program for Pre-K and Jr.K students is designed to give children an opportunity to identify, observe, and explore the scientific world around them. The program covers topics in physical, earth, and life sciences; is always age-appropriate; and increases in depth and complexity with the progression of age levels.

Students learn through hands-on exploration, play, and investigation of ordinary objects in their environment. Topics include insects, magnets, electricity, water, and plants. Children learn to share ideas, make predictions, listen to peers, work independently and

in groups, sharpen their observation skills, and present their findings—all while having fun.

## **iPads**

In 2011, The International Preschools established an iPad initiative to develop its own technology curriculum. Several generous donors underwrote the start-up costs to provide the school with 15 iPads. The administration determined that the iPad is a natural tool for preschool learning, as it is both developmentally appropriate and tactile. The school selected a classroom teacher to strategically plan four phases of the introduction and implementation of the program:

- I. Pilot the program with select teachers and administrators to plan a curriculum that would introduce the program into the classroom
- II. Expand to include an iPad specialty teacher for Pre-K and Jr. K classes
- III. Expand to all head teachers for use in parent-teacher conferences
- IV. Expand into the second-semester specialty curriculum for Green Rooms and purchase and incorporate more apps regularly in the Pre-K and Jr. K classrooms

The program introduces students to the basics of iPad operation, and iPad apps are chosen weekly to enhance the classroom curriculum. For example, if the week's focus is Earth Day, the specialty teacher will choose an environmentally themed app, like a child-friendly app about recycling. iPad classes are provided during Choice Time, with no more than six students at a time working with the iPad teacher. Children in the Pre-K and Jr. K classes also have independent access to iPads in their classrooms' listening centers.

iPads provide an engaging and fun method of independent learning that encourages curiosity and stimulates creativity. They also enhance a child's physical development by reinforcing hand-eye coordination and visual motor skills.

The school's administrators have been invited to share their iPad program curriculum at educational conferences.

## **Handwriting Without Tears/Writer's Workshop**

Writer's Workshop is a developmentally based handwriting program that focuses on capital letter formation and emergent literacy skills. The Jr. K and Pre-K materials include the Handwriting Without Tears workbook and ABC journals. In the spring, the Green Room children are introduced to the fundamentals of the program with developmentally appropriate coloring sheets.

Children begin each lesson by shaking hands during Circle Time, which reinforces right/left discrimination. Next, a letter is introduced along with its formation and corresponding sound. Children sing songs to reinforce new skills and concepts. At the completion of Circle Time, children move to tables to begin coloring activities.

Introductory lessons focus on crayon/pencil grip, fine motor dexterity, and strength. Children are encouraged to move the crayon deliberately, practice “controlled scribbling,” and follow the Handwriting Without Tears technique of “aim and scribble.” Capital letter formation is taught following the Handwriting Without Tears developmentally appropriate sequential order, first learning to form letters with horizontal and vertical lines, then moving on to letters with curved and diagonal lines.

Additionally, children learn to draw detailed pictures of people. The Handwriting Without Tears Mat Man lesson offers a fun and developmentally appropriate blueprint for drawing pictures of themselves or others.

## **Assessment of Strengths and Challenges**

### **Strengths**

- The International Preschools is able to offer a wide variety of specialty classes each week, which enriches and enhances the students’ educational experience.
- The acquisition of a kiln at the 86th Street location allows students to create and take home finished, long-lasting keepsakes.
- There is very little turnover in the specialty teaching staff. The size of the school provides these teachers with many hours of work each week, and they truly understand the school’s mission and incorporate it into their lessons.

### **Challenges**

- In the past, the school has not done a good job promoting the strength of its specialty programs, and specialty teachers are often not as visible to the parents as classroom teachers.
- A designated space and storage is not always available or provided for the specialty classes. When specialty classes are held in the classrooms, they can be a distraction to the children.
- Because the specialty faculty travel to work at all three locations, developing a mentor relationship with the Location Directors they report to is a challenge.

- Specialty teachers' schedules are often disrupted in the fall at the 76th Street location when the synagogue is closed for holidays, creating inconsistency in projects.

## **Section 5E: The Unique Curriculum at The International Preschools**

### **Committee Members:**

Chair: Monique Tabbs, Location Director

Karen Chaitram, Teacher

Johnelle Childs, Teacher

Eunice Folla, Teacher

Deborah Matlovsky, Teacher

Riyo Minari, Teacher

The International Preschools has a unique curriculum that helps define the school's identity and sets it apart from other private preschools in the city. From celebrating the multicultural nature of the school to experiencing the world in nontraditional ways, The International Preschools has implemented programs that help the children and the greater school community develop a broader, more expansive sense of self and a more tolerant, healthy, and respectful view of the world.

### **Multicultural Identity and United Nations Day**

As much as possible, the school tries to assemble teaching teams that reflect the ethnic and cultural diversity of the faculty. The multicultural population of students and families is celebrated in the classrooms through world music, food, and stories.

United Nations Day is an important day for The International Preschools. It first began as a multicultural celebration designed to coincide with the anniversary of the opening of the United Nations in New York City and is now a school-wide celebration of the school's own unique and culturally diverse community. Children and their families come to school dressed in clothing native to their countries. Food from around the world is shared, and the children learn songs in a variety of languages such as Japanese, French, and Turkish.

Administrators and teachers develop teaching plans for United Nations Day along with a year-long curriculum geared toward multiculturalism. Teachers incorporate flags from the children's native countries into a wide variety of activities throughout the school year. Flags representing the nationality of each student are discussed and displayed before the event, and they remain in the classroom for the rest of the year, serving as visual reminders of the class' rich cultural diversity. Flags are used in many classroom activities and projects such as drawing, matching games, and construction paper representation. In the past, younger children have also used flag stickers on placemats to distinguish their countries of origin. Books from different cultures and written in different languages are read to the children throughout the year.

To ensure that all students feel welcome and at home in the classroom, The International Preschools created a program called Culture Share, where parents and family members are invited into the Green Room, Pre-K, and Jr. K classrooms to share a book, music, or activity that is of special significance to the family. Celebrating the rich cultural diversity of the school not only expands the children's experience of the world, it serves to create a more dedicated parent body and a more closely-knit school community.

Each year, the school chooses a community service project to help a child-based organization in another part of the world. In the past, the school has worked with UNICEF and developed a relationship with the Mukwashi Trust School in Zambia. The school's efforts have helped the Mukwashi Trust School purchase materials for its preschool.

The International Preschools also has a global community initiative for Green Room, Pre-K, and Jr. K classrooms. Every year, these students participate in a coin drive that benefits the UNICEF organization. This experience nurtures cultural sensitivity in the students as it gives them direct insight into another way of life.

## **Winter Solstice**

The International Preschools celebrates the Winter Solstice as a way to share different holiday traditions. The children participate in activities such as singing international holiday songs and sharing native food and dress to demonstrate the school's rich cultural heritage.

Many cultures use light to celebrate their holidays, and The International Preschools' students use flashlights to accompany their songs. Central to the teaching plan for the Winter Solstice is a curriculum called "Lights" that offers a program designed especially for 2-to-5-year-olds. Younger preschoolers perform open-ended activities exploring contrast, brightness, and shininess, while older students work in more scientific ways, using shadows, bright lights, and constellations to dissect the world of dark and light.

## **Fathers—And Other Male Friends—Read Aloud**

Fathers Read Aloud is a unique part of the school's literacy curriculum. By inviting fathers, grandfathers, and male family friends into the classroom to read to children, the school affirms that reading is for everyone. In the female-dominated world of early childhood education, the Read Aloud program offers a refreshingly new experience and perspective, presenting men as role models for young boys, breaking with traditional mores, and building community by involving fathers and male figures in the class activities.

## **Walk to School Week**

For one week during the school year, children and school community members are encouraged to walk to school as part of the “Two Heels instead of Four Wheels” program. The program arose from a need to recognize the country’s skyrocketing rate of juvenile obesity and to promote the benefits of physical activity; now, it has become a school-wide event, a cross-curricular activity, and an opportunity to celebrate the many benefits of walking. Developmentally appropriate self-help skills are encouraged as children move away from dependence on a stroller toward walking on their own.

Teachers explain what a pedometer is, discuss what parts of the body are used when walking, and address why walking is important. Each child is given a pedometer and learns scientific concepts about health, body parts, and muscles. In addition, children strengthen gross motor skills, learn math skills such as number recognition, and enjoy quality parent-child time.

## **Earth Day**

Every spring, The International Preschools hosts a week-long celebration of Earth Day through an age-appropriate, diverse curriculum to raise awareness about environmental preservation and global sustainability.

Teachers celebrate the Earth throughout the month of April with their students by facilitating activities in all curriculum domains. In the past, children have celebrated Earth Day through science activities like observing a caterpillar-to-butterfly transformation, planting seeds, and monitoring the growth of flowers. They have created art by making prints from leaves, sculptures from recycled materials, and Earth representations from coffee filters and paint. They have dug for rubber insects at the sensory tables and prepared a snack of “dirt ‘n’ worms” (chocolate pudding, crushed Oreos, and gummy worms). Students have also made recreational tools out of repurposed goods, and some classes have set up their own recycling centers.

## **Assessment of Strengths and Challenges**

### **Strengths**

- The school’s unique curriculum allows teachers to address important trends in education.
- The celebration of United Nations Day and the Winter Solstice creates global citizens.
- The Read Aloud program encourages literacy.

- The Walk to School Week program encourages physical fitness.
- Earth Day celebrations and curricula encourage environmental awareness.

### **Challenges**

- It is challenging to give each of these unique curriculum topics enough time and difficult to find time to introduce any new unique curriculum topics.

## **Section 5F: Physical Activity Program**

### **Committee Members:**

Chair: Christina Branton, Teacher

Peggy Gallagher, Teacher (Movement)

Eileen Leigh, Former Assistant Teacher, Current Substitute

### **Physical Activity Program**

Physical activity plays a critical role in the healthy growth of young children. The International Preschools offers two forms of physical education: structured and free-form. Physical exercise helps develop gross motor skills and allows children to release energy, express themselves without inhibition, develop social skills, and enhance self-esteem.

In the structured physical activity classes, students express themselves freely through directed activities. These classes are led by the specialty movement teacher or by classroom teachers. An in-depth explanation of the specialty movement class can be found in the “Movement” portion of Section 5D.

Free-form physical education is open play in the gym or outdoor playground. The 45th Street location also has a rooftop climbing gym. All play spaces are stocked with age-appropriate gym equipment and toys. Half-day classes have one 30-minute play session each day, and full-day classes have two. Activities include running, jumping, climbing, and playing with equipment like balls, scooters, tricycles, balance beams, slides, and basketball hoops. Unstructured play lets children express their creativity and builds body strength, coordination, balance, and hand-eye coordination. Physical activity also lets children recognize their own abilities and develop interpersonal skills. Non-verbal or non-English-speaking children are also able to participate and connect with their classmates.

The International Preschools sponsors school-wide events to promote physical activity and healthy lifestyles. For example, Walk to School Week encourages families to avoid using strollers, cars, and public transportation to get to school, and teachers lead class discussions about the physical and environmental benefits of walking.

### **Assessment Methods**

The International Preschools encourages children to meet physical milestones for each age group. Teachers take anecdotal notes and design individualized plans of action to assist in their physical development.

## **Assessment of Strengths and Challenges**

### **Strengths**

- The physical activity program offers a variety of structured and unstructured activities promoting physical wellness, strength, social bonding, fun, and creative play.

### **Challenges**

- It is a challenge to maintain the recently implemented school-wide assessment for evaluating a child's gross motor abilities.
- Outdoor play spaces at the 76th and 86th Street locations are small.
- It is challenging to develop and schedule a daily 30-minute program of structured and guided physical activity for full-day children in compliance with a new New York City Department of Health requirement.

## **Section 6A: Student Services—Guidance and Support**

### **Committee Members:**

Original Chair: Marcia Finkelstein, Former Developmental Specialist

Dalia Favela, Teacher

Sue Scalettar, Developmental Specialist

Cathleen Vasserman, Ongoing Schools Advisor

### **Guidance and Support for Parents**

The International Preschools has a comprehensive guidance program in place to help parents become acclimated to the school's routines and cultures; provide feedback to parents on basic areas of their child's development; alert parents to any concerns; and help parents transition their children to elementary school.

In the past decade, the number of non-traditional families—including same-sex parents, single parents, and parents in their late 40s and early 50s—enrolling at the school has increased, as has father involvement. Approximately half of the students have an international background, and approximately ten percent are non-native-English speakers. About ten percent of the students have mild-to-moderate developmental delays, often identified at the school. More families have also become interested in continuing on to public schools, in part due to the increased cost of private school and large family sizes. Respecting students' home cultures and perspectives is a priority whenever the school makes any contact with parents.

Each child has two parent-teacher conferences during the school year, one in the fall and one in the spring. Classroom teachers meet with each family individually to discuss goals, concerns, and the child's progress. The International Preschools also has a developmental specialist on staff. If teachers have concerns about a specific child, they ask the specialist to observe the child in the classroom and make recommendations. These recommendations are discussed at individual meetings between parents, the Developmental Specialist, and the Location Director, and sometimes include the Director.

The school also offers parents a series of workshops throughout the year on topics like setting limits, self-esteem, and toilet training.

### **Special Educational Needs**

Teachers note any of a child's consistent behaviors or issues that raise concerns and share them with their Location Director. After a discussion with the parents, the Developmental Specialist observes the child and suggests classroom modifications to

accommodate the child's needs. Such modifications may include therapeutic cushions or chairs, supplemental visual cues, or therapeutic activities.

The Developmental Specialist can also guide parents through a comprehensive evaluation by the New York State Early Intervention Program or the New York City Department of Education; make referrals to private agencies and clinicians; and ensure that appropriate services are being provided either outside of school or in the classroom. Outside services may include speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, or behavioral therapy. For students who need additional support and intervention, an early childhood Special Education Itinerant Teacher (SEIT) may be applied for by parents or guardians through the New York City Department of Education to provide classroom support. Any clinicians treating a child are encouraged to work collaboratively with classroom teachers to establish age-appropriate goals and a consistent approach to learning. Outside clinicians are welcome to make arrangements to observe a child in the classroom as well.

### **Enforced Withdrawal**

Withdrawal for academic or behavior problems is rare at The International Preschools, but the school may require a student's withdrawal if parents do not obtain a requested evaluation or follow its recommendations to address developmental or behavioral problems. Enforced withdrawal is a last resort after several other steps to address behavioral problems, including classroom modifications and referrals to outside specialists.

### **Guidance and Support for Students**

No formalized counseling or guidance program exists on the preschool level. When needed, however, The International Preschools has a comprehensive list of professionals available for referral. Age-appropriate guidance is part of the day-to-day communication teachers have with their students, and they stay alert to signs of changes in their students' lives like divorce, relocation, changes in caregivers, or absent parents and family members. Teachers foster age-appropriate social skills, and the students move from individual play through parallel play to collaborative play as they develop. Open discussions about how to be a friend, help others, and share provide continuous lessons in developing empathy and encourage building strong relationships.

The International Preschools is required by law to report to the Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment any case of a child in danger, and all staff are trained to recognize possible indications of abuse and neglect.

## **English Language Learners**

A large number of students at The International Preschools are English Language Learners (ELL). The school emphasizes multicultural identity, so it is not unusual that the classroom environment might be the first place a child is surrounded by the English language. Most children pick up the basics of English simply by spending consistent classroom time with English-speaking peers and teachers.

The faculty and staff at The International Preschools employ a variety of strategies to make ELL students feel at ease and included. Teachers can ask parents for a phonetic list of essential words to communicate with their child until he or she becomes more comfortable with English. Teachers also use consistent, simple words, rather than long sentences, to describe classroom activities. Teachers simultaneously provide visual cues with pictures and gestures to both the ELL students and the English-speaking students. Areas of the classroom display both words and pictures of particular activities, and an ELL student might also be assigned a “buddy” who can help him or her throughout the day.

The International Preschools also provides ways for parents of ELL students to feel comfortable and included. Through the Parents’ Association and/or staff members, ELL parents can meet other International Preschools families who speak the same language, providing a source of information and friendship.

## **Exmissions: Moving on to the Next School**

The International Preschools advises parents to keep their children enrolled at the school through Pre-K and Jr. K and guides parents through the process of applying to the next school. The formal advising process begins six months before the application period begins, which is eighteen months before the child will start at the new school. The International Preschools holds one meeting each year about the application process for New York City private schools, and two workshops per year about public school options. The school stays involved throughout the process, with the Director working closely with the school’s Ongoing Schools Advisor.

Each family whose child is transitioning to kindergarten meets with the Director and Ongoing Schools Advisor to create a list of potential ongoing schools based on the parents’ interests and the child’s learning style and strengths. Public school options are always included in this discussion, and if applicable, the school refers families to Early Steps, an organization that supports families of color in the New York City private school application process.

The Director and Ongoing Schools Advisor take an active part in helping parents decide among accepted schools, advocating for students on waitlists, and, if necessary,

helping to continue their search. The school also assists any family interested in transferring out of The International Preschools earlier and families looking for schools abroad. The exmissions process also involves the faculty—who are required to write student reports for the schools to which the child is applying—and the Location Directors, who first read and edit the teachers' reports before they are read once more by the Director and Ongoing Schools Advisor.

To stay abreast of options for students matriculating from The International Preschools, the Director and Ongoing Schools Advisor regularly attend tours and other events offered by New York City independent and public schools. The International Preschools contracts with School Search NYC, a public school advising service, to present workshops for parents and receive updates on public school news and policy changes.

## **Tutors**

The International Preschools discourages parents from enrolling their children in individual tutoring services, abiding instead by the belief that the best preparation for continuing schools comes from preschool participation and family activities. Parents are not required to inform The International Preschools of their child's activities outside of school, but teachers encourage ongoing communication about all aspects of a child's life.

## **Assessment of Strengths and Challenges**

### **Strengths**

- The administration and faculty work closely with each other and with the parents to offer guidance and create a plan for children with special educational needs, English Language Learners, and children transitioning to the next school. This advising process is in-depth and individualized.
- The Director, the Ongoing Schools Advisor, and, if needed, the Development Specialist stay familiar with the ever increasing range of services and schools in the New York area.
- Parents are presented with as many appropriate options as possible and parental expectations are realistically managed throughout the process. The majority of families are grateful for the guidance offered by the School's staff and satisfied with their outcomes.

### **Challenges**

- In the past, The International Preschools has primarily worked with children who received support services through the private sector. As the expenses of such

services rise and more International Preschools graduates attend public schools, the desire to acquire support services through the Department of Education has increased. However, teachers who have not had experience with attending Early Intervention and Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) meetings through the public sector are not always aware of the importance (and larger accessibility) of acquiring these services early, particularly with children under the age of 5.

- The International Preschools is the first school experience for many parents, and the school may be the first to alert parents of developmental concerns. Sensitively raising such issues with families is always challenging. While good practice dictates that the sooner intervention is suggested and implemented, the better the outcomes, some teachers may be hesitant to relay such information to parents due to its sensitive nature.
- The ongoing schools advising team must constantly counter media hype about school competition and commercial test prep services that exploit parents' fears.

## **Section 6B: Student Services—Health Services and Nutrition**

### **Committee Members:**

Original Chair: Kathy Seidner, Former Administrator

Jill Fuerisch, Teacher

Kristen Johnson, Human Resources Coordinator

Tamisha Saunders, Teacher

Jennifer Surun, Administrative Assistant

Jacqueline Vaida, Teacher

### **Nutrition**

The International Preschools does not have a dedicated kitchen or cafeteria. Meals are not served, but snacks are provided. Children enrolled in all-day classes bring their own lunch from home and eat in their classrooms, assisted by their classroom teachers. Children are encouraged but not forced to eat. Food is not withheld from children as a punishment or given as a reward.

The International Preschools follows the nutrition guidelines and regulations set forth by the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Fresh fruit; a low-fat protein; a low-sugar, low-salt, whole grain carbohydrate; and filtered water are offered to the students daily. The International Preschools is a nut-and-seed-aware school, and other food allergies or dietary restrictions (such as dairy-free, gluten-free, or vegan) are also taken into account. Parents are required to inform the school if their child has an allergy, and a list with the names of all children with allergies and their allergens is posted in each classroom.

### **Health Services**

The International Preschools does not have a nurse or doctor on staff, but each location has a person on site qualified in Medical Assistance Training (MAT). First aid and CPR training is required every two years for all faculty and staff. Health and emergency workshops are given periodically, and the school has emergency procedures in place.

All students must undergo annual physical exams and receive required immunizations and flu shots; exceptions can be made with a doctor's note or for religious beliefs. The school submits the New York State Department of Health's Immunization Survey each February, and a health coordinator ensures that all student records are updated regularly at all three locations.

The International Preschools only administers medication in the event of an anaphylactic emergency. The families of children who are prescribed EpiPens or other related medications are required to fill out a Written Medication Consent Form, which is

signed by the physician, parents, and the Director. EpiPens are kept in an emergency bag, which remains with the class at all times. Ill children are not allowed to attend school and are required to be fever-free without medication for at least 24 hours before returning to class. For children who have had a communicable disease or infection, a doctor's note is necessary in order to return to school.

## **Assessment of Strengths and Challenges**

### **Strengths**

- The school is a nut-and-seed-aware environment that provides a variety of information and resources to educate parents on what can and cannot come into the school.
- School-provided snacks and family-participation cooking projects encourage healthful attitudes to food.
- New York City Department of Health regulations are stringently followed.

### **Challenges**

- The school must provide ongoing education for adults whose children do not have a life-threatening allergy to be mindful of the foods they bring into the classroom.
- Implementing frequent New York City Department of Health changes in regulations is a challenge.

## **Section 6C: Student Services—Summer Camp**

### **Committee Members:**

Chair: Alyssa Wisoff, Teacher  
Judith McIntyre, Teacher's Aide  
Dara Vogel, Teacher

### **Summer Camp**

The International Preschools' summer camp is held from mid-June to the end of July at each of the school's three locations. It is divided into two sessions consisting of three weeks each and provides a safe, friendly, and welcoming atmosphere for young children. For students newly enrolled for the following school year, the summer program provides an ideal setting for them to begin the separation process from home to school. It also provides continuity for currently enrolled students. Summer camp offers several age-based programs for children between 1.5 and 5 years old.

The Tadpole program is for children between 1.5 and 2.2 years old and meets twice a week for 90 minutes. A parent or caregiver accompanies these children the entire time, and together they take part in group and art activities, sing-alongs, and water and sand play.

Programs for other age groups consist of half-day or full-day activities and include a wide variety of seasonally appropriate activities. Children aged four and older also take swimming classes, and at least one other sport activity is incorporated into the weekly activities. Summer camp supports The International Preschools' mission by placing an emphasis on a curriculum that promotes appropriate social-emotional development as well as play.

Depending on their availability, specialty teachers come to each classroom once a week to teach a summer curriculum. In the past, the librarian led a unique fairy house project that involved creating a small house out of sticks, leaves, clay, and other organic material; the music teacher introduced new instruments; and the movement teacher taught a special unit about yoga and dances from around the world. The school also hosts creative events like ice cream parties, T-shirt day, or silly hat day. Occasionally, magicians, puppet shows, and other vendors such as the local Art Farm present educational, informative, and fun programs in the classroom. Performers also visit the camp throughout the six weeks.

## **Assessment of Strengths and Challenges**

### **Strengths**

- The program accommodates families who are in the city during the summer months.
- Parents like the consistency of having their children attend a program supervised by International Preschools teachers and with their school friends.
- The program helps retain teachers, giving them the chance to earn extra money during the summer.

### **Challenges**

- It is difficult to accommodate individual family schedules.

## **Section 6D: Student Services—After-School and Early Drop-Off Programs**

### **Committee Members:**

Chair: Ben Kelly, Admissions/Auxiliary Program Associate

Babette Ayassamy, Teacher

Sarah Baraie, Teacher

Carol Straker, Teacher

The International Preschools has responded to the needs and interests of its families by extending the school day with an early drop-off session and a range of after-school classes. The school also provides childcare during the twice-yearly parent-teacher conferences.

### **Early Drop-Off**

Parents who need before-school childcare can enroll in the school's early drop-off program which runs from 8:00 to 9:00 AM each day, for an additional fee. Children attending early drop-off are supervised by designated teachers in classrooms and indoor playgrounds. Early drop-off is open to three-, four-, and five-year-olds, and in contrast to the regular school day, the age groups are combined. Activities available at early drop-off include active play and art activities, puzzles, and other manipulatives. Children can also spend some quiet time with books. At the end of the early drop-off session, children are escorted to their classrooms by their classroom teachers to start the school day.

In addition to accommodating working parents, early drop-off gives students additional opportunities to work with school materials, a chance to develop confidence by engaging with older and younger children, and an unhurried start to their school day. Early drop-off also offers additional employment for the school's teachers.

### **After-School Program**

The school offers a range of after-school classes for children three years and older for an additional fee. The after-school program runs Monday through Thursday in one-hour blocks from 3:00 to 5:00 PM. One or two activities are available each day and include sports, performing arts, cooking, and chess. The school contracts with several children's enrichment programs that send instructors and equipment to the school's locations. Each program has been carefully selected to ensure that the instruction is developmentally appropriate and provided in accordance with the school's Learning Through Play philosophy. The school's own teachers are also present during each class

so children will have a trusted adult for reassurance, encouragement, or trips to the bathroom.

## **Conference Day Childcare**

On the twice-yearly parent-teacher conference days, The International Preschools offers childcare at no charge to parents during their conference. At each location, “floater” teachers and specialty teachers provide care in the location’s multipurpose room. The conferences last twenty to thirty minutes, and while parents attend them, the children draw, work on puzzles, and hear stories under the supervision of familiar teachers.

## **Assessment of Strengths and Challenges**

### **Strengths**

- The programs offer opportunities for children to interact with older and younger children and develop friendships outside of their classroom community.
- The programs offer opportunities for children to try new activities, such as chess, theater, and others.
- The programs accommodate working parents.

### **Challenges**

- It is hard to predict the demand for these services and staff them accordingly.

## **Section 7: Faculty, Administrators, and Non-Teaching Personnel**

### **Committee Members:**

Chair: Kristen Johnson, Human Resources Coordinator

Donna Cohen, Director

Paul Q. Kane, Chief Administrative Officer

### **Faculty Structure**

Teaching positions at The International Preschools fall into three main categories: head teacher, associate teacher, and assistant teacher. Each classroom has a head teacher, and either an associate or assistant teacher; some classes have all three. Head teachers are required to have a master's degree from an early childhood education program or its equivalent as defined by the New York City Department of Health. They are responsible for managing the classroom's teaching team, leading the curriculum planning, communicating with parents, and ensuring that all school reports and assessments are made for each child in the classroom.

Associate teachers traditionally work for a minimum of two years with the school before they are promoted to a head teacher position. On occasion, qualified and exemplary associate teachers may be promoted to a head teacher position prior to their two-year anniversary with the school. Associate teachers may already possess a master's degree or be working toward graduate credentials.

Assistant teachers must possess a high school diploma and must meet the New York City Department of Health requirements to work in a classroom with preschool-aged children. They assist the head teachers in daily classroom responsibilities but are not responsible for curriculum development, assessment, or ongoing school reports.

The school also employs permanent substitute teachers known as "floaters." Floaters must meet the requirements of an assistant teacher, and Location Directors assign them daily to the classroom where they are most needed. The school also has three paraeducators on staff, who are under the supervision of the Location Directors. They have completed a paraeducator non-credit certificate program through New York University. All three paraeducators assist in the classrooms and offices with a variety of jobs ranging from sorting and preparing snacks to making copies.

### **Hiring Practices**

The Director, with input from the Location Directors, is responsible for all faculty hiring. The Director is also responsible for hiring Location Directors and the Developmental Specialist. The Chief Administrative Officer, with input from the Director, is responsible

for the hiring of all other administrative and maintenance staff. The school is committed to equal employment opportunities for all individuals and follows its anti-discrimination policy.

All applicants are required to fill out an application and provide a résumé with three references. All candidates for a position are interviewed, and faculty candidates are required to be observed in a classroom. Reference checks must be completed and on file before a job offer can be made; once an offer is made, the candidate must furnish transcripts from his or her highest-degree granting institution if higher than high school. Candidates must also agree to have a background check through Sterling Infosystems, make an appointment to be fingerprinted, and complete a filing with the Statewide Central Register.

Over the past five years, job descriptions for all roles have been revised and clarified to assure that they clearly match the roles and responsibilities of the job.

### **Staff Diversity**

In the 2015-2016 school year, approximately 45 percent of The International Preschools' employees identified themselves as international. In keeping with the school's diverse student population, an effort is made to hire international faculty members. The school occasionally recruits international faculty from local colleges, universities, and early childhood education programs, but does not yet have a systematic way of conducting this outreach. Most of the school's employees are female.

### **Employee Compensation and Benefits**

In the past five years, the school has begun to address a few immediate concerns regarding equity in compensation. The Board annually reviews salary data benchmarks for other ISAAGNY schools and the public universal preschool pay scales. In 2010, the Board made a three-year commitment to make head teacher salaries comparable to other ISAAGNY schools' in order to support the administration in recruiting and retaining qualified head teachers. The administration also defined the distinctions between an assistant and associate teacher.

The International Preschools works to ensure that its benefit package is in line with other schools' in Manhattan. Providing affordable health insurance to the school's employees remains a priority for the Board.

As the result of a 2014 faculty and staff survey, The International Preschools made several changes to its employee benefits. In 2015, the school raised the number of sick/personal days from five to seven for faculty and staff, after finding that it provided fewer sick/personal days than peer ISAAGNY schools. The school also expanded its

tuition reimbursement plan to open up tuition reimbursement opportunities for faculty and staff who are advancing their education related to their work at the school, and not just to those who are enrolled in a “study plan” as defined by the Department of Health.

## **Orientation and Mentoring**

Prior to 2015, new faculty received an orientation from the Human Resources Coordinator, but had to rely on their colleagues for orientation and mentoring. This worked well for teachers with outgoing personalities, but less well for new teachers who were introverted or shy. Concerns were brought to the administration’s attention in the 2014 faculty/staff survey, and the orientation and mentoring procedures were changed.

Beginning in September 2014, the new-faculty orientation now involves both the Human Resources Coordinator and the Director. The orientation includes an introduction to the mission statement and a review of the handbook, benefits, and classroom expectations. New faculty members then have a location-specific orientation with their Location Director. Faculty hired after the school year begins receive their orientation from the Human Resources Coordinator and their Location Director (rather than the Director).

## **Staffing Decisions**

With three locations and more than 60 faculty members, staffing decisions require the attention of the Director, Location Directors, and the Chief Administrative Officer.

Annual staffing decisions include:

- The number of teachers assigned to each classroom, depending on the number of students and their ages, as mandated by the New York City Department of Health
- The number of full- and part-time teachers required to staff the classroom schedules
- Faculty contract renewal based on performance and/or staffing needs

When enrollment for the following year is completed in the spring, the Director and Location Directors review each classroom’s staffing needs, and take teachers’ qualifications, seniority, and need for mentoring into consideration. To round out a teaching team, the administration also takes into account personalities and skill sets, such as strengths in art or math. Using the salary percentage approved by the Board in January of each year, the Chief Administrative Officer then works with the Director to calculate salary rate increases based on any reconfigurations or changes in status of the teaching staff.

In 2009, the school established the role of the chief administrative officer and transitioned to a new director. Many of the other administrative roles have retained employees who have been with the school for many years; they have often inherited tasks or jobs that were not a part of their original role. Job descriptions have been revised to assure that tasks are more clearly assigned. This reorganization has been slow and is a work in progress.

## **Technological Needs for Faculty and Staff**

The International Preschools is committed to incorporating technology in support of its mission and providing a laboratory for curriculum development. Cameras and iPads allow parents glimpses of the classroom, while computers, copiers, and phones are integral to school communication. The school has two staff members dedicated to IT support for teachers and staff.

The IT department keeps an inventory of all computer equipment and software, iPads, cameras, and copiers. This inventory is reviewed by the IT Coordinator and the Chief Administrative Officer in the spring of each year to determine what equipment should be upgraded and what equipment is nearing its life expectancy. They create an equipment budget for the following school year, which then must be approved as part of the budget. Servers and software are upgraded biennially, unless required earlier. Copiers are generally leased for 36 to 48 months, and their leases are reviewed in the last year of their term. Since 2010, upgrades have been made to bandwidth, telephone systems, and Wi-Fi connectivity at all three locations.

## **Recognizing Staff**

The International Preschools publicly celebrates faculty and staff with milestone anniversaries commemorating their years of service. These markers occur every five years, and employees are treated to a milestone lunch and presented with a gift certificate. In the past, they have also been honored at the annual Spring Benefit with a video presentation.

At the end of each school year, the Director presents a State of the School Address to faculty and staff and publicly recognizes their personal and professional accomplishments throughout the year. The Board Chair acknowledges teachers' dedication at the beginning of each school year.

The school also hosts a fall celebration for faculty and staff, as well as a December holiday party. These activities provide an opportunity for faculty and staff from all three locations to socialize in ways they are not able to on a daily basis.

In 2014, the Board established the Elizabeth Patrick Faculty Leadership Fund to recognize faculty from each location who bring initiative, leadership, and creativity to the classroom. The funds are used for professional development, educational advancement, and an annual award of \$2,500 to a single faculty member who best reflects the school's mission.

## **Faculty and Staff Evaluations**

Faculty members are evaluated annually prior to the release of the following year's appointment letters. Head teachers evaluate their classroom's assistant and associate teachers, and Location Directors evaluate head teachers. The evaluation process includes a written evaluation and a one-on-one meeting to review it and discuss commendations and goals. Once the evaluations are completed, they are sent to the Director for review.

The International Preschools developed a biennial administrative staff evaluation four years ago, which has since evolved. Currently, administrative staff members are asked to set short- and long-term goals for their jobs for the coming school year. Managers also set short- and long-term goals for their employees and expectations for meeting them. Employees meet with their managers to review the goals in January, April, and July.

## **Termination of Employees**

In the event that an employee of The International Preschools unsuccessfully performs the duties of his or her assigned job, the school reserves the right, at its own discretion, to employ one or both of the following disciplinary actions: a discussion between the employee and his or her supervisor(s) and/or a formal written warning with an action plan that includes expectations and goals for improvement. Should an employee continue not to meet expectations, termination will follow. All final decisions to terminate are made by the Director. If the employee receives any severance pay, he or she is given a separation agreement, which has been reviewed by the school's attorney. All employees who leave The International Preschools, either by termination or resignation, are asked to complete an exit interview.

In 2015, the Board passed a reduction in force policy (RFP) to support the administration if administrative positions ever need to be reorganized and long-term employees terminated.

## **Assessment of Strengths and Challenges**

### **Strengths**

- Many of the current head teachers began as associate teachers. This trajectory allows The International Preschools to “grow” its own head teachers and allows for teachers’ professional advancement.

### **Challenges**

- In recent years, due to a decrease in enrollment, specifically in afternoon classes, the school has had to reduce teaching schedules. This has resulted in some teachers leaving for full-time positions elsewhere.
- The school is working toward implementing a mentorship program that would provide new teachers a faculty mentor, and the Location Directors would conduct monthly meetings for age-level and classroom teaching teams to provide additional support and mentoring for all teachers.
- Overseeing such a large staff with many different points of view due to different cultures, ages, and backgrounds can lead to unintentional miscues and miscommunication.

## **Section 8: Parent Community**

### **Committee Members:**

Chair: Sunny Nagel, 86th Street Location Parent

Paul Q. Kane, Staff Consultant and Chief Administrative Officer

Livia Nguyen, 76th Street Location Parent

Ashley Smyth, 76th Street Location Parent

The relationship The International Preschools has with parents is an important factor in the success of each student and in the school's ability to fulfill its mission. The school believes that, at its best, the relationship is mutually supportive and marked by clear, respectful, and honest communication. The school surveyed its parent community during the spring of 2014 to evaluate The International Preschools' communication strategies and the various mechanisms by which parents are welcomed, informed, and encouraged to participate in school life. 290 parents participated in the survey. The responses to that survey serve as the foundation for this section.

### **Communication**

The International Preschools employs a broad array of tools for communicating general information about the school, its policies, classroom goals, and activities conducted in the classroom with parents or guardians. These tools include regular newsletters from teachers, administrative announcements, and communications from class parents (volunteers who act as classroom liaisons to the Parents' Association and school administrators). The school posts whiteboards outside classroom doors that list the week's unit of study. The whiteboards also offer discussion points for parents so they can effectively engage in conversation with their children about their classroom activities.

Parents are welcomed to school at the beginning of each academic year with an email that includes the school handbook and a range of class-specific information regarding teachers and the year's curriculum. Curriculum meetings are held in the early fall so parents can learn more about their child's class structure and academic and social-emotional learning goals. A series of informational sessions is offered over the course of the year to educate parents on topics that are appropriate to the academic and social development of preschool-aged children (e.g. toilet training and raising confident children).

The vast majority of parents think that the school's communications strategies are effective or very effective. More than 90 percent of parents indicated that they have a good sense of what is happening in their child's classroom, that teachers are available if

a parent has questions or concerns, and that school leadership is available and approachable if a parent has questions or concerns.

Parents are also extremely satisfied with the school's classroom teachers and the various specialty teachers that oversee classroom learning. 98 percent of parents indicated on the survey that teachers have a solid understanding of early childhood education and development; 99 percent indicated that teachers have a good attitude toward children, parents, and caregivers; and 99 percent believed that teachers act in the best interest of children and their families. Comments about teachers typically included the adjectives "great," "helpful," "responsive," and "caring."

A key element of The International Preschools' strategy for communicating with parents is the parent-teacher conferences that are held twice over the course of the school year. The school closes to children for conference days, and teachers report on the child's activity in the classroom, note areas of strength and weakness, and identify child-specific goals for the remainder of the school year. 92 percent of parents indicated that these conferences are well organized and useful to their understanding of their child's development at school.

Still, while 90 percent of parents indicated that they understand the classroom curriculum, only 75 percent indicated that they understand their child's academic goals (as opposed to 86 percent who indicated that they understand their child's social-emotional goals). This discrepancy highlighted an area for improved communication during the course of the parent-teacher conferences. iPads were incorporated into parent-teacher conferences as a tool to show videos and photos of a child's developmental progress. Preliminary findings show that the visual aid greatly enhances the teachers' reports.

Parent-teacher communication is a vital element of The International Preschools, and teachers are also available at times other than the designated conferences. A high percentage (98 percent) of parents indicated that they experienced teacher availability during non-class hours to discuss issues of concern.

## **The Parents' Association**

All parents at The International Preschools are members of the Parents' Association, which plans and assists with fundraising, educational, and social events throughout the school year. It also assists in communication between the school and its families. The Parents' Association board is led by a president and composed of volunteers from all three locations who meet monthly.

Because of the large number of families at The International Preschools who are not originally from New York City, Parents' Association activities become a key vehicle for

parents to support each other through the exciting milestones that the preschool years bring. The Parents' Association organizes a wide range of events throughout the school year to promote the development of the community and raise funds to support the school. These events include the annual Spring Benefit, various community service activities, bake sales, book sales, a school-wide picnic, and other events. Nearly 100 percent of parents indicated that they felt welcome when they joined the school community. 95 percent indicated that it is easy to learn about opportunities to support the school and the Parents' Association, and 93 percent indicated that they feel comfortable volunteering.

### **Additional Parent Feedback**

A key element of The International Preschools' mission is promoting learning about the diverse cultures and ethnicities that are represented among the school's families. Each year, United Nations Day offers the foundation for a school-wide celebration marked by concerts in which children sing international songs, dress in clothes representing their family's cultural history, and sample parent-prepared international dishes. The school's Japanese community has an active Japanese Parents' Committee that is well represented at school events and provides a great deal of support for learning about the culture. Parents also frequently lead classroom discussions about specific traditions. The international community is often cited as a primary reason that parents choose The International Preschools for their child, and 93 percent of parents indicated that the school offers appropriate opportunities to share and learn about different cultures.

As a private school located in an expensive urban area, The International Preschools is committed to helping parents understand and plan for their tuition obligations. In order to promote the economic diversity of the school's community, the school also offers financial aid to qualified families. Almost 98 percent of parents indicated that tuition obligations are well communicated to them. 90 percent believe that non-tuition-related financial expectations (e.g. funds for Parents' Association-sponsored events) are appropriate. 86 percent of parents are aware that the school offers financial aid, and 85 percent of parents indicated that the school is welcoming to families of different economic needs. The Parents' Association prioritized fundraising to support the school's financial aid program at the 2014 Spring Benefit, which raised \$22,000 to help support scholarships for qualified students. It is the Parents' Association's mission to maintain this fundraising priority at all future benefits.

Providing a safe and pleasant learning environment is a top priority at The International Preschools. The safety and security of the students and faculty are a main focus of the administration, and numerous security upgrades have been implemented at all three locations in the past 24 months. As a result, 100 percent of parents reported that the

school provides a safe, secure, and clean environment for their child. The school takes great pride in this level of satisfaction among the parent community.

The school's facilities also benefit from continuous upgrades to the indoor and outdoor classrooms and play spaces. The indoor spaces clearly meet the expectations of the school community. 100 percent of parents reported that the classrooms are adequately maintained and meet the needs of the children; 99 percent reported that the libraries are adequately maintained and meet the needs of the children; and 94 percent of parents reported that the indoor gyms are adequately maintained and meet the needs of the children. The outdoor play spaces at all three locations, however, are an area that needs improvement, with 78 percent of parents reporting that the outdoor spaces adequately meet the needs of the children. Although the school has made great strides to provide facilities of equal quality, the outdoor space at the 76th Street location may eventually require a more long-term approach beyond the school's current shared use of a nearby public school's play area.

## **Assessment of Strengths and Challenges**

### **Strengths**

- The International Preschools has a long history of parent involvement and participation in the school.
- Parents are the school's best ambassadors for recruiting new families.
- Parents, who are often far from their own families, make long-time friends at The International Preschools.
- The international parent body provides exposure to many different cultures and traditions.

### **Challenges**

- It is difficult to adequately communicate a play-based curriculum to a wide parent body to assure parents of their child's developmental and academic success.
- Engaging working parents in school activities is a challenge, as is engaging parents who come from cultures that don't invite much parent involvement in schools.
- Miscues and miscommunication can happen when working in an international community, and faculty and staff need to be reminded to approach parents with cultural sensitivity.

## **Section 9: The School and its Community**

### **Committee Members:**

Chair: MacKerrow Talcott, Teacher (Library)

Elena Clarke-Balasa, Teacher

Ana Maria DeSouza, Former Teacher

Quintilia Greene, Teacher

Nikki Rosso, Teacher

The International Preschools' three locations are each found in a different neighborhood in New York City. These surrounding communities include apartment buildings, office buildings, large and small businesses, arts organizations, community service organizations, public transportation, construction sites, farmers markets, and parks. These communities have greatly contributed to upholding the school's mission and culture and shaping its offerings; most of the students live in the neighborhood where their school is located.

At the 86th Street location, the curriculum is influenced by easy walking access to local markets, Fairway and Gristedes grocery stores, a pet store, and Carl Schurz Park, all where children take field trips. The Yorkville Common Pantry staff comes in to collect food donations once a year, and they meet with the children to thank them for collecting food for people in need.

The shared space at the 76th Street location with JASA (Jewish Association for Services for the Aged) has provided opportunities for the children to sing for the senior citizens as well as experience outside musical exhibitions together. The location's proximity to Central Park, the American Museum of Natural History, a green market, library, bookstore, and firehouse provide walking field trip opportunities to build on classroom learning.

With the United Nations building down the block from the 45th Street location, children are able to visit the flags on display every day and experience the excitement of the annual opening of the General Assembly. Walking tours to the local post office, bank, green market, library, and restaurants are opportunities to engage with the local community.

The school's administration is always eager to have a dialogue with neighbors at any of the locations. The school is cooperative with and respectful of its neighbors, and asks that its adult community—teachers, administrative and custodial staff, parents, and caregivers—be as well. Should a problem arise that requires outside help, the school can reach out to its local community leaders. For example, the school met with local politicians and community board members to address complaints regarding safety and

security at an abandoned brownstone next to the 76th Street location. The annual opening of the United Nations General Assembly requires the full cooperation of the school's security, administration, faculty, and parent body to assure proper coordination with the dignitaries arriving and leaving the area.

Many of The International Preschools' parents come from other countries and are an excellent resource for connecting the school and classroom with the global community. The school would like to foster more parent cultural groups like the Japanese Parents' Committee, which works with the school on fundraising and cultural exchange events.

Building on its strong relationship with the United Nations, The International Preschools established the administrative position of International Liaison, who hosts international visitors to the school. The International Liaison also hosts a free monthly playgroup for young children in the diplomatic community who have recently arrived in the country.

To build on all these strengths, the school can make an even greater effort to take advantage of its New York City setting in coming years.

## **Assessment of Strengths and Challenges**

### **Strengths**

- The school's locations in New York City have community groups, local businesses, and city workers such as fire fighters and police officers within walking distance for student visits.

### **Challenges**

- It's occasionally challenging to identify opportunities for students to be involved in ways that are age-appropriate and don't cause distress.

## **Section 10: Internal and External Communications**

### **Committee Members:**

Original Chair: Jack Byers, Web Consultant, Former Webmaster

Christina Cleary, Webmaster

Jenna Forsthuber, Teacher

Paul Q. Kane, Chief Administrative Officer

The International Preschools communicates with a variety of constituencies, including new and prospective parents, current parents, alumni families, teachers, administrators and staff, former teachers and staff, the Board of Trustees, local communities around the school, ongoing schools, peer preschools, donors, and potential donors.

### **Internal Communications**

The school's internal communication needs fall into three broad categories:

- Keep faculty and staff abreast of school happenings, including events, curricula, and fundraising.
- Inform employees of school policies and human resources procedures that are relevant to them.
- Inform employees of any emergencies that arise and emergency procedures.

School events are almost always announced by email. Announcements relevant to teachers are also discussed at monthly staff meetings at each location. Teachers and staff are copied on email communications to parents as appropriate. Announcements that are especially important, relevant to specific staff members, or that require a response are often reinforced more informally: in person or through the internal phone system. For larger or more formal events, such as benefits or the Annual Fund drive, the school often distributes information in print.

Email is also the primary means of communication for human resources announcements, such as changes in school policy or reminders about events. These are also reiterated informally and at staff meetings. The Employee Handbook contains a more complete listing of school policies.

Emergency communications are sent through AlertNow, owned by Blackboard Connect, which sends an email, text message, and recorded voice message. This system is tested at the beginning of each year, and appears to be successful in reaching everyone with important messages.

## **External Communications**

The school's external communication needs fall into the following categories:

- Keep parents informed about classroom curricula, activities, and needs.
- Inform all relevant constituencies of happenings and events, such as benefits.
- Inform parents of any emergencies that arise and emergency procedures.
- Target potential donors.
- Attract prospective families to apply and enroll at the school.
- Maintain and improve the school's reputation among schools, parents, the local community, and others.

### **Parents**

Since the fall of 2013, most communication with parents is sent through the school website, IPSnyc.org. At the beginning of the school year, every parent receives log-in information, and logging in to the site takes them to a personalized "Dashboard" with photos, newsletters, announcements, and calendars pertaining to their child's classes. Every evening, parents receive a digest email with an excerpt from each of the day's announcements and a link to read more on the Dashboard. This feed mixes classroom announcements from their child's teachers with school- and campus-wide announcements from the administration. This information was intentionally combined after the school received feedback that many parents were reading emails only from their teachers and deleting administrative emails without reading them. The school continues its efforts to drive more parents to the website.

As with staff, important announcements to parents are made through a variety of means, including USPS, direct email blasts (as opposed to emails through the website), social media (Facebook and Twitter), emails from class parents, flyers sent home with children, and postings on school walls and parent boards, as well as less formal one-on-one communication. These methods are used much more sparingly than the website, which has become the central repository for communication with parents.

Like staff, parents receive emergency updates through AlertNow.

### **Donors**

The International Preschools reaches potential donors through email, phone, mail, and web presence. The most important pools of potential donors are current parents and staff, who receive solicitations through largely the same means as for other communications. Recently, the school has attempted to widen its pool of donors to

include former staff and alumni families. These efforts have included mass emails, a network of Facebook groups, and dedicated sections of the website. The school also publishes *The Scribbler*, a news magazine that includes a list of donors. It targets donors and potential donors and is sent by mail.

### **Admissions**

As with most independent schools, word of mouth is The International Preschools' best means of reaching prospective parents. Other important avenues include the website, a listing in the Parents League of New York's directory of independent schools, and public signage. The school's name draws the interest of many international families, particularly in online search results and on public signs. Many international families are also drawn to the school by its relationship with the United Nations. Though there is no formal relationship, the school's International Liaison gives the school a presence in the United Nations community.

Window signage at the 86th Street location and branding on children's backpacks have drawn a surprising amount of interest, suggesting that public visibility is effective.

Once prospective parents have applied to the school, they are invited for an open house and a private tour of the school. It is to the school's advantage that it sends acceptance notices by email, as they reach parents before other schools' postal acceptances. Accepted parents view the school's website in large numbers, and the website has been updated in the last year to target them more effectively.

One of the most important goals of external communication is to maintain and improve the school's reputation for excellence. This is an important element of all of the communications with prospective parents.

## **Assessment of Strengths and Challenges**

### **Strengths**

- The website and parent portal provide a great way to communicate with parents, who use the portal and calendar regularly to stay up-to-date on their child's classroom activities.
- A new e-blast system powered by MailChimp has been beneficial in designing more creative and visually pleasing e-blasts and for timing e-blast distribution.
- The IT department has improved communications with the admissions team and is now notified each time a new student enrolls or a student's information has changed, keeping information standardized between departments.

## **Challenges**

- Determining an optimal frequency and timing of communications is challenging, because if recipients feel overwhelmed by communications they may ignore them.
- The school does not currently have any formal public relations media outreach.
- MailChimp's list setup can be challenging to keep updated.
- Making the school's website and Dashboard more user-friendly for teachers remains a challenge.

## **Section 11: Conclusion Process and Reflection**

### **Steering Committee Members:**

Chair: Paul Q. Kane, Chief Administrative Officer

Christina Branton, Head Teacher

Rosie Finizio, 76th Street Location Director and Education Director

Kristen Johnson, Human Resources Coordinator

Karen Rosenthal, Development Associate

Charlene Sison, Business Manager

Cathleen Vasserman, Ongoing Schools Advisor

### **Contributors:**

Donna Cohen, Director

Elizabeth Patrick, Board Chair

Brian Wu, Board Member

The International Preschools chose to join NYSAIS for a variety of reasons:

- Access to resources and best practices used by peer preschools and many of the private ongoing schools in New York City
- Expanded professional development options for faculty and administrative staff
- Strategic planning advice and tools for Board governance, as well as development opportunities for Board members
- Contribution to a larger organization through sharing the school's best practices and institutional knowledge

With these goals guiding the process, The International Preschools undertook this multi-year self-study. What was proposed was very simple: to think about what the school is doing. This process involved a wide spectrum of the school's community, began with an update to the school's mission statement, and continued with the formation of subcommittees who corroborated, pondered, and shaped the preceding sections.

Out of this work came several major findings.

### **Major Strengths**

The International Preschools remains a unique preschool in New York City as it lives out its mission to welcome children and their families from around the globe. Over the course of this self-study, the school renewed its commitment to learning through play, as faculty members, Location Directors, and the Director refined each of the education

sections. In renewing the school's commitment, the Director and Location Directors have ensured that the admissions staff, administrative staff, and faculty share a common language about how The International Preschools expresses, discusses, and implements this educational philosophy.

The Board is a cohesive and collaborative organization whose governance has provided support for a smooth transition of leadership, strategic planning to open a new location, and commitment and mobilization during crisis. Given the changing economics of preschool education in New York City, the Board continues to look forward and has been supportive in developing an extended day program to draw two-income households who may need longer hours and in analyzing the cost of leasing different facilities that would better suit such a program. In the self-study survey, Board members acknowledged these strengths in a variety of ways but also acknowledged the need for longer-term strategic planning and evaluation of the Director.

The parent body survey provided important feedback on how much parents value the mission and educational philosophy that is at the core of The International Preschools. Communication with parents is crucial, and the school administration takes parent feedback on how the school communicates into careful consideration. The Dashboard discussed in Section 10 was developed as a direct result of parents' desire for a "window into the classroom," and combines classroom newsletters, photos, and direct communication with teachers in one secure place. Parents also value the size of the school, which makes possible the specialty programs and unique curriculum programs that are such a large part of the school's mission.

This self-study process allowed faculty and staff members the opportunity to come together and define themselves as a community. The faculty and staff survey set much-needed changes in motion. For example, personal/vacation days were expanded from five to seven per year, and the school reinstated its commitment to contributing to educational expenses for faculty and staff members to complete degrees related to their employment. The faculty and staff's commitment to the school has been tested over the past few years both internally by the intern accusations and externally by economic factors that have led to a drop in enrollment. However, faculty and staff remain at the school because of their belief in its mission and their desire to see that mission carried forward into the future.

## **Major Challenges**

The single most important challenge The International Preschools faces in the next five years is keeping up enrollment to support the investments the school has made in its faculty, staff, and infrastructure, while financing initiatives like iPads, which keep the school on the leading edge of preschool educational offerings.

Maintaining and increasing enrollment will require tactical planning and flexibility to meet the needs of shifting demographics. Offering traditional 9:00-3:00 classes may no longer be enough to attract dual-income families living in New York City. As a result, the school is initiating extended-learning offerings that would provide educational instruction and physical activity from 8:00–5:30, five days a week, while still retaining its commitment to its mission and Learning Through Play philosophy.

The 76th Street facility, which is housed in a synagogue, may not be able to provide this kind of flexibility. This will require further analysis and planning to determine whether another facility on the Upper West Side of Manhattan will be required. The short-term lease status at the 45th Street location will also require further analysis and planning.

The Board and the leadership of the school are committed to strategizing and solving these challenges to assure that The International Preschools continues to be a window to the world for young children and their families.

**NYS AIS Criteria for Accreditation • International Preschools • April 2016**

A school is evaluated in terms of its own mission and the NYS AIS Criteria for Accreditation. First the school, and later the visiting committee, will assign ratings to each of the Criteria. Any rating of 3 or lower by the school should be accompanied by an explanation, or referenced to the school's self-study report.

6 = criterion fully and completely met

5 = criterion substantially met

4 = criterion generally met

3 = criterion generally not met

2 = criterion not met in significant respects

1 = criterion not met in any respect

n/a = criterion not applicable

#	Criterion	School's Rating	Committee's Rating	Brief Comments
<b>Section I: Mission and Culture</b>				
1.1	The mission statement is clearly articulated and understood by all constituencies of the school community.	5		
1.2	The mission statement is reviewed at minimum every five years.	3		Done as part of NYS AIS Accreditation, plan to review on a regular schedule going forward
1.3	The mission statement informs all decisions and programs.	5		
1.4	The school's culture is a reflection of its intended values and fosters mutual respect among all constituencies.	5		
1.5	In keeping with its mission and culture, the school promotes an equitable, just, and inclusive community.	5		

<b>Section 2: Governance</b>				
2.1	The governance of the school is clearly defined, transparent, and understood by all constituents.	4		
2.2	The governing body provides for the continuity of mission.	5		
2.3	The governing body provides stability in transitions of leadership for itself and its head of school.	5		
2.4	The governing body provides strategic planning for the school.	4		
2.5	The governing body ensures that adequate financial resources are provided for the school.	5		
2.6	The governing body has appropriate policies to support the creation, review and approval of an annual operating and capital budget as well as a multi-year financial plan.	5		
2.7	The governing body ensures appropriate administrative follow up as a result of an outside, annual professional audit and the corresponding management letter.	6		
2.8	The governing body ensures that the school has in place adequate provision for risk assessment and management including the transfer of risk through appropriate insurance coverage.	6		
2.9	The governing body understands its central role in institutional advancement and actively supports these efforts.	5		
2.10	The governing body delegates responsibility for the operations of the school to the head of school and ensures that the head of school	4		The Board is developing an annual review for the Director but it has not been

	receives appropriate support, evaluation, and compensation.			implemented yet
2.11	The governing body reviews and maintains appropriate by-laws that conform to legal requirements while assuring that the school and governing body operate in compliance with applicable laws and regulations.	6		
2.12	The governing body creates a conflict of interest policy that is reviewed annually with, and signed by, individual trustees.	6		
2.13	The governing body keeps full and accurate records of its meetings, committees, and policies and widely communicates its decisions.	5		
2.14	The governing body is responsible for establishing school policies and the administration is responsible for establishing administrative practices.	5		
2.15	Members of the governing body put aside any special interest when fulfilling their responsibilities.	5		
2.16	The governing body avoids sharing negative perceptions with non-trustees and ensures the confidentiality of all conversations that are conducted by the governing body and its committees.	5		
2.17	The governing body participates in an effective program of board development that includes annual new trustee orientation, ongoing trustee education, evaluation and self-evaluation, and board leadership succession planning.	3		Need for improvement-participated in NYSAIS training in January 2016
2.18	When appropriate within its mission, the governing body ensures that	5		

	issues of gender, diversity, and multiculturalism are appropriately considered in policymaking and governing body membership.			
2.19	The governing body operates effectively and has developed policies and procedures to guide the governing body and the school leadership in the implementation of the NYSAIS Criteria for Accreditation.	5		
	<b>Section 3: School Operations, Finance, and Advancement</b>			
3.1	The administration understands and promotes the mission, standards, and policies of the school, and provides leadership as these evolve and when they are evaluated.	5		
3.2	The business officer works strategically with the head of school and the governing body to ensure the development and implementation of appropriate policies for the long-term management of the school.	6		
3.3	The business officer provides important assistance to the head of school in administering the school and to the governing body in meeting its fiduciary responsibilities.	5		
3.4	The administration manages the school's resources in a prudent manner, consistent with the mission, safeguarding the value of those assets for the use of future generations of students by establishing appropriate financial controls and procedures.	6		
3.5	The administration ensures that the human resource policies and practices are clearly articulated,	5		

	consistently applied, and conform to legal requirements			
3.6	The administration participates in ongoing professional development that might include participation in local, regional, and national associations that offer personal support and professional assistance and development.	6		
3.7	To protect the school's financial resources, the administration and board employ sound financial planning and management practices and procedures, including the development of an annual operating and capital budget, multi-year budget projections, appropriate governing body oversight, and an annual audit.	6		
3.8	There is appropriate administrative follow up as a result of the annual audit of all financial records and its corresponding management letter.	6		
3.9	The school has appropriate procedures and personnel in place for accounting for all assets and liabilities in accordance with GAAP, including management of accounts receivable.	6		
3.10	The school adheres to non-discriminatory practices in the administration of its financial assistance policies.	6		
3.11	The school provides guidance to students and families on its financial assistance process and options.	6		
3.12	The school enacts documented procedures that ensure a fair, consistent, and equitable assessment of each family's ability to contribute	6		

	toward educational expenses while safeguarding the confidentiality of financial assistance applications, records, and decisions.			
3.13	The school has a clear picture of its long and short-term development needs and the organization, resources, and staffing to carry out its efforts.	5		
3.14	The physical facilities and equipment are adequately maintained, and a plan is in place for their long-term protection and renewal.	5		
3.15	If the school has an early childhood program, all instructional and play spaces, as well as supporting resources (e.g. lavatories, eating areas) are adequate and maintained to meet the needs of the children in this program.	5		Outdoor and shared space at 76th Street need constant maintenance
3.16	The school maintains complete and accurate records for every aspect of the school including financial, students, personnel, legal, corporate, health and safety, etc.	5		
3.17	The school has policies and procedures that govern the retention, maintenance, and use of past personnel, financial, corporate, and student records, including print and digital records, and such records are protected against catastrophic loss.	5		
3.18	All records are current and maintained in a secure fashion.	4		Working on locking all file cabinets in common areas
3.19	Materials, routines, and procedures (on and off campus) and the physical plant are so organized as to provide a safe environment for all members	5		

	of the school community.			
	<b>Section 4: Admissions and Financial Assistance</b>			
4.1	Consistent with the stated mission of the school, the admission process operates under a clear set of practices for gathering, disseminating, and maintaining prospective student information, and respects the confidentiality of students, families, and documents in the admission process. Schools will ensure that the admission process and/or transcripts have provided sufficient documentation of an appropriate match before offering admission to a student.	5		
4.2	The school has in place policies and procedures to insure nondiscrimination in recruitment and enrollment.	6		
4.3	The school maintains an admission process that respects the needs of students and families to learn about school programs and activities, by communicating before an enrollment commitment is required, in user-friendly formats: clear information, dates, and timeframes for all aspects of the admission process, including total cost of attending the school and other financial expectations as well as expectations around financial aid applications and acceptance of an enrollment offer.	6		
4.4	The school determines eligibility for admission based on the merits of the application and then determines how to allocate financial aid resources to meet student needs and fulfill the	6		

	mission of the school.			
4.5	Throughout the admission process, school representatives apply the same high standards of integrity whether talking about their own school or other institutions.	6		
4.6	School representatives ensure that all recruitment arrangements support the best interests of the student and do not result in a conflict of interest on the part of the school, individual, or firms representing the school.	6		
4.7	The numbers of the total school population, of grade and administrative groupings, and of instructional classes are appropriate to the stated mission of the school.	6		DoH requirements govern
4.8	The admissions staff participates in ongoing professional development that might include participation in local, regional, and national associations that offer personal support and professional assistance and development.	5		Offered to all, but not everyone takes advantage
	<b>Section 5: Educational Program</b>			
5.1	The formal educational program is consistent with the mission and culture of the school.	5		
5.2	The school demonstrates that its educational programs and practices are informed by relevant, well-documented research regarding how students learn and the knowledge and capacities they will need to lead purposeful and constructive lives and these programs and practices are regularly reviewed and articulated.	5		
5.3	The educational program is periodically evaluated by the	4		

	members of the faculty, and, where appropriate, by other members of the school community, and the results of the evaluation contribute to the analysis and modification of the school's educational program.			
5.4	The performance of individual students is regularly assessed by developmentally appropriate measures consistent with the school's mission and meaningful to those who have a legitimate interest in that performance (viz., students, faculty, parents, admissions officers, evaluators) and effectively communicated to those constituencies.	4		implemented assessment and now working to maintain it
5.5	The school provides evidence of a thoughtful process, respectful of its mission, for using the collective results of student assessment to analyze and modify its educational program.	3		in progress
5.6	The school has in place a procedure for follow-up on the success of its graduates, and uses that information to assess and modify its educational program.	N/A		
5.7	All school programs demonstrate consideration for the appropriate intellectual, social, physical, aesthetic, and emotional development of students in all aspects of school and student life.	5		
5.8	The issues of equity and justice and anti-bias are addressed in the educational program, the library holdings and other resources to support the program.	5		
5.9	If the school has an early childhood	5		

	program, all instructional and play spaces, as well as supporting resources (e.g. lavatories, eating areas) are adequate and maintained to meet the needs of the children in this program. (This criteria also appears in Section Three, Business Operations and needs to be addressed in this section from a program viewpoint)			
5.10	Instructional materials, equipment, and student work/learning spaces are of sufficient quality, quantity, and variety to provide effective support to the goals and methods of the program.	5		
5.11	The various resource, learning, and support centers are organized, supplied, and staffed to provide for the program of the school and the needs of the students and the faculty.	4		
5.12	Resources, including digital technology, are used appropriately to support the educational program of the school and are assessed regularly for effectiveness.	5		
	<b>Section 6: Students and Student Services</b>			
6.1	The composition of the student body is consistent with the mission of the school.	5		Daily schedule does not always work for United Nations families seeking more day care
6.2	Where appropriate, the school has established a program for orienting and mentoring students new to the school.	N/A		Orientation available for parents
6.3	The guidance, counseling, and learning services/support programs of	6		

	the school meet the needs of the students and are consistent with the educational program and the stated mission of the school.			
6.4	The school recognizes the right of currently enrolled students and families to consider other educational options, and if a transfer is initiated by the family, the school provides appropriate follow up and documentation in a timely manner.	6		
6.5	The school makes provisions for the nutritional needs of its students.	6		Work hard at nut/seed award environment
6.6	The program for health care is adequate to meet the needs of the student body and includes the prevention and care of illness and injury.	N/A		
6.7	If applicable, the school has a program of auxiliary or off-campus activities that is appropriate to the mission of the school and carefully planned and supervised.	6		
6.8	The purpose of the extracurricular activities and the breadth, supervision, and resources allocated to student extracurricular activities are in keeping with the mission of the school.	N/A		
	<i>(6.9 through 6.11 pertain to schools with boarding programs.)</i>			
6.9	The school has an intentional boarding program that is a unified part of the total life of the school for both boarding and day students.	N/A		
6.10	Students are supported in developing respectful, cooperative and meaningful relationships with those	N/A		

	with whom they live—their fellow students, and the adults and families who care for them.			
6.11	The evening, weekend and, if appropriate, vacation offerings are intentional and meet the needs of the students.	N/A		
<b>Section 7: Faculty, Administrators, and Non-teaching Personnel</b>				
7.1	Consistent with its mission, the school has appropriate practices to insure nondiscrimination in hiring.	6		
7.2	The school promotes a culture of continued, sustained professional growth, offering in-service and outside professional development opportunities to all administrators, faculty, and non-teaching personnel members, for which there is adequate funding. Staff members are aware of, and understand, the program.	6		
7.3	The school has a program for the systematic evaluation of all staff members and staff members are aware of, and understand, the program.	4		
7.4	Salaries and benefits for administrators, faculty, and non-teaching personnel members reflect independent and local school standards. Retirement provisions and other benefits are understood by the staff members, and meet all legal requirements.	5		Annual peer ISAAGNY benchmarks are done-but difficulty to get information on certain administrative level positions at the preschool level (IPS's size like an ongoing school, but not its budget)
7.5	There are a sufficient number of	5		Difficult to match DoH

	administrators, faculty, and non-teaching personnel members to carry out the program of the school, provide for the needs of the students, and insure the supervision, safety, and health of the students.			requirements for bathroom supervision coverage.
7.6	Staff members successfully carry out the mission via the program of the school.	5		
7.7	Faculty and non-teaching personnel assignments are appropriate in terms of teaching conditions, methods, and total load in both teaching and other assignments.	5		Constant need for technology training
7.8	Staff members are qualified by education, training, and experience for the responsibilities they are assigned.	6		
7.9	The school personnel apply the same high standards of integrity when they are discussing their own school or other institutions.	5		
<b>Section 8: Parents</b>				
8.1	The school provides channels of communication with parents that are sufficient and consistent with the purposes and objectives of the school.	5		
8.2	The enrollment agreement between the school and the parents/guardian and all financial responsibilities are clearly stated in writing.	6		
8.3	The school provides clear expectations regarding parental participation in the school community.	5		
8.4	The involvement of the parent body in the school community is mission-appropriate.	6		

	<b>Section 9: The School in Its Community</b>			
9.1	The school interacts with the larger community in ways consonant with the mission and culture of the school, and these interactions enhance the larger community.	5		
	<b>Section 10: Internal and External Communication</b>			
10.1	The school employs methods of communicating with its community members that are appropriate to the school's size, means, culture and mission.	6		
	<b>Section 11: Conclusion</b>			
11.1	The school has completed a thorough self-evaluation at all levels in accordance with the procedures outlined by NYSAIS.	6		

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