

ABOUT OUR SCHOOL

BNS/BCS VISION STATEMENT

At 610 Henry Street we envision a diverse and inclusive learning community of students and the adults who work with them, all engaged in thought, dialogue, and exploration. Through the use of a project-based inquiry curriculum, we help students become independent thinking human beings, who understand how to learn. At each stage of learning, educators foster the development of young people's voice and sense of personal and social responsibility.

BNS/BCS MISSION STATEMENT

The BNS-BCS learning community lives and breathes its vision for a vibrant, dynamic and organic educational environment. Our success in fulfilling this vision is palpable in our classes, halls, offices, and homes. Our classrooms are communities of adults and students engaged in inquiry-based and expeditionary learning. Members are encouraged and nurtured to develop their own voice: to ask questions, express opinions and ideas, and to challenge themselves to excel. In return, they are respected and valued for their contributions. In this culture of mutual responsibility and common purpose, there is a demand to strive for personal and community excellence. Our students and adults (teachers, guidance staff, school leaders, support staff, and family members) are engaged on any given day in teaching and learning, town meetings, governance, service learning, discussions, performances, school magazines and newsletters, peer mediation, student-led conferences, and self-assessment practices. Our commitment to open discourse is achieved through ongoing conversations that take place in person, online, or on the phone, in and out of school. This practice also serves as a model for the development of good communication skills for our students.

Our learning community functions as a participatory democracy, where everyone has the opportunity to have a voice and be heard. Diversity is cherished and nourished. Intentional choices are made to create an environment rich in racial, ethnic and economic diversity, with the belief that this leads to greater success in learning. The inclusion of different styles of learners in our classrooms is supported by differentiated instruction, and where applicable, two teachers in a class. Additional support comes from academic intervention teachers, teaching coaches, psychologists, social workers, guidance counselors, a school nurse and the onsite full service clinic from LICH. Family involvement strengthens our community. Parents may participate in classroom learning, project time, day and overnight trips, committees, and school events, or volunteer as tutors or mentors for high school students. Our inquiry-based curriculum integrates the content areas by exploring big ideas in depth. Using a project-based approach, teachers and students study and discover the world and through this exploration, discover themselves. Expeditionary learning takes us out of the confines of a classroom's four walls, and into the world at large. In BNS, it may be the study of playgrounds or Ancient China over the course of a semester, while in BCS, it may be exploring the bio-ecology and history of the Gowanus Canal or charting the disease process of cancer. Our learners evidence the integration and interdependence of multiple academic disciplines first hand. Math, writing, reading, language, history, science, and the arts can be clearly seen, and appreciated as interconnected.

We constantly assess our students to ensure that each child is learning. At BNS, daily work, activities, and projects give teachers information about what a child knows and needs to learn. At BCS, students and teachers self-assess and discuss progress along defined learning targets, which state what students are expected to know and be able to do in every course. The expectations that we place on our students and ourselves are high. Long after students have left for the day, our community of adults remains engaged in conversation and planning.

The leadership of our schools guides our learning community toward fulfilling its mission. Our passion for education finds its expression in both inquiry and expeditionary-based learning curriculums and in the collaborative nature of our practice. All who participate in this thriving community embrace our culture of mutual respect and caring and our belief in each and every child's excellence.

Brooklyn New School is a member of Children First Network # 102:

What We Stand For

We stand for a dynamic and complementary interplay of Equity, Excellence, and Democracy. As a result, we are committed to:

1. Access for all
 - Education as a civil right
 - Progressing toward a more just society by closing the "opportunity gap"
 - Preparing students to be active participants in our democracy
2. Continuous learning for children and adults
 - An enriched instructional experience for all
 - An expansive definition of learning with emphasis on the academic, the social-emotional, the arts, and citizenship
 - Intellectual curiosity, reflection, and resulting action
 - Professional learning communities
 - Working within and across networks of schools
3. Community and inclusiveness
 - A school experience that is collaborative and inspiring
 - School-based decision-making
 - Student voice and choice
 - Parent engagement
 - Reciprocal community partnerships: school supports families and community; families and community support school
 - Effecting change beyond our schools
4. Assessment for genuine accountability and improvement
 - Multiple measures of accountability based on meaningful achievement
 - Authentic, performance-based, embedded, formative assessments
 - An assessment system that fosters informed instructional decision-making
 - An assessment system that honors student and teacher best efforts
 - The de-emphasis of excessive and high-stakes testing
5. A "Bottom-Up" structure that provisions schools to accomplish their missions
 - Policy flexibility and encouragement of innovation
 - A fair distribution of resources and support
 - System-wide transparency and responsiveness
 - The primacy of democratic values over market forces

Brooklyn New School has been a member of the Progressive Education Network of New York Schools (PENNY). PENNY is an advocacy organization whose aim is to support and promote New York City public schools that commit to the following principles:

Ten Principles of the Progressive Education Network of New York Schools

AUTONOMY - Our schools make decisions about curriculum, instruction, assessment and Professional development. These decisions cannot be mandated to us. These arise organically from a shared philosophy about teaching and learning and the needs of our

children and their families. Our schools are accountable to our school community and to each other.

SMALL SIZE -The personalization afforded by small school size enables a school to best address the educational and developmental needs of each student. A school's population should not exceed the vision of the school. We believe to teach children well you must know them well as individuals.

CURRICULUM- A broadly in-depth, inter-disciplinary curriculum including the arts, sciences and humanities, inclusive of the diverse heritages that comprise our society, provides the truest model of the world itself. Curriculum must be relevant to the students and provide many entrance points.

STANDARDS - Curriculum emerges from developmentally appropriate inquiry-based projects and has clearly defined expectations for each student, with an appreciation for growth over time.

PARTICIPATORY LEARNING - A supportive and positive school tone is the basis for encouraging children and teachers to take intellectual risks. The role of the student is that of worker-citizen. The role of the teacher is that of facilitator, mentor, and coach. The student should be an active participant in his/her learning. Shared learning, where all participants are celebrated as teachers and learners, is where knowledge is actively and collaboratively built.

ASSESSMENT - Student performance should be evaluated by a variety of assessment tools including authentic performance-based methods. This rejects the notion of high-stakes testing.

COMMUNITY - The school is a partnership of parents, students, and staff committed to family involvement characterized by trust and mutual respect. The school views itself as part of a larger community. Decision-making is primarily in the hands of those directly responsible for the implementation of those decisions. The process and structure of governance and decision-making is collaborative and based on consensus.

CHOICE -A school community is best served by staff, families, and students who are voluntarily committed to its philosophy. Our schools are non-selective and inclusive communities.

DIVERSITY - The school community reflects and values the racial, linguistic, ethnic, socio-economic and academic diversity of the city.

EQUITY- All students must have equitable access to all resources of the school.

BNS PAST AND PRESENT

BNS History and Wider Connections

The Brooklyn New School, an alternative public elementary school, was founded in 1987 by a group of parents and teachers who envisioned a school:

- with a racial, ethnic and economic balance in the student body
- where children engage in active learning
- where children of different skill levels work together and learn from each other
- where parents are active partners in the school and in their child's education.

The school opened its doors with 6 classroom teachers and 150 children, has moved to three different school buildings, now has 25 classes and 616 children, and has settled into its permanent home. BNS is an original member of New York City's Center for Collaborative Education – a network of small public schools of choice created in the 80's and 90's sharing common beliefs about learning and school communities. We are part of the Progressive Education Network of New York and the National Coalition of Essential Schools. These alliances allow like-minded colleagues to learn from a strong collective voice for educational reform. The Brooklyn School for Collaborative Studies (BCS), our sister middle/high school, was opened in 2001 and shares this building with us.

BNS has an experienced and dedicated staff that voluntarily engages in staff development with colleagues in this and other schools. Current staff interests include several national school reform initiatives: (1) the descriptive review process, which uses observation and description of children, their work, curriculum and teaching practice to ground teaching and group inquiry and (2) the Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education which embraces community exploration in an enriching environment based on the interests of the children through a self-guided curriculum and (3) the greening of our school and environment to teach our children to prepare for a sustainable tomorrow. BNS is one of a group of elementary and secondary schools that collaborate on assessment initiatives as part of the Department of Education's Children First Networks. The school maintains relationships with New York University, Long Island University, Bank Street College, Kingsborough Community College, and Brooklyn College, each of which provides us with highly motivated student teachers.

BNS also actively pursues additional funding for special projects. Over the years, grants have been received to equip the school with computers in classrooms and a technology lab, create a multi-use playground and outdoor space, bring artists and other specialists into our classrooms, outfit the library with a multi-media center, and support special science curriculum and service projects.

BNS Today

BNS continues to be committed to its original vision of creating a community that honors and cherishes diversity in all its forms. By drawing students from a wide range of Brooklyn neighborhoods, we create a community that replicates Brooklyn's diversity on a small scale - racially, ethnically, and economically. We group students in heterogeneous classes because we recognize that all children have strengths and challenges, and all children grow when they have the opportunity to work and play with children who are different from them.

We expect children to develop at different rates and in different ways and we help our students to see that each of them has things to teach and each of them has things to learn. We also recognize that children learn in different ways and therefore we must teach in different ways to reach all children. A peek into any classroom during the day - assuming the class is not on a trip - reveals students engaged; some students are reading or writing, others may be drawing or building or exploring materials. By using a variety of approaches in our teaching, we insure that all children, regardless of their learning style, are engaged in learning.

As part of our continuing efforts to create a community that is truly inclusive as well as responsive to children's needs, one class on each grade level is designated as a collaborative team teaching (CTT) class. A CTT class is a general education classroom that has the full-time support of a special education teacher who helps insure that the curriculum is accessible to all. Within the CTT class, 8-12 children (40%) have been identified as having special learning needs (such as a reading or math disability, a speech and language delay, or organizational difficulties) that special education teachers are trained to address. While all teachers at BNS differentiate the curriculum to meet individual students' needs, with two teachers working together as a team, much more differentiation is possible. Whether a student needs extra help or an extra challenge, having two teachers means one will be available to meet that need. CTT classes also insure that students are not socially segregated by differences in learning needs. Since CTT classes benefit all children, we try to make sure that every child is placed in a CTT class at least once during their time at BNS.

While our goal is always inclusion, sometimes children face extraordinary obstacles to learning and they do not experience success in a general education classroom. They may need more individualized attention or a smaller class environment or a specially modified curriculum. To support these children during those times, we have three special classes (K/1, 2/3, 4/5) with only twelve students each, taught by special education teachers with the support of a para-

professional. Wherever and whenever possible, these children join with their peers in other classes so that all students benefit from interactions with all their peers.

Regardless of the topic, the teaching approach, or the composition of the students, BNS is committed to an education that stresses cooperation rather than competition. Working together, students learn about their world, each other, and themselves.

Balanced literacy at the Brooklyn New School grows out of a literature-based reading program that relies on teacher expertise to give students the tools they need to become independent readers and active designers of their own learning. Recognizing that literacy is the foundation for academic learning, we insure that reading, writing and the art of communicating are the essential components of all curricula.

In the 1997 school year, BNS began to use the TERC math curriculum in all of its classrooms. This curriculum is designed to “support all students in acquiring mathematical knowledge, skill, and confidence to become active mathematics learners who can reason about and represent mathematical ideas and relationships”. Family math workshops have helped to explain this approach to parents and will continue to be a part of math education in our school. Some of our teachers have participated in Math in the City Workshops in order to further supplement and understand this curriculum.

Recognizing that children construct knowledge by building upon what they already know, BNS teachers use thematic studies in all of their classes. Themes come from children’s interest or are introduced by teachers. A pre-K class might learn about themselves as babies by talking to their parents, sharing stories, bringing in mementos and creating a baby museum. A fourth grade class might study Native Americans by reading, investigating stereotypes, recreating primitive technology (for example, building a wigwam at Lefferts Homestead in Prospect Park) and writing research reports.

For 18 years Brooklyn New School has maintained an active partnership with Brooklyn Arts Exchange, which allows us to bring creative dramatics to all of our students. The school also offers art, music, physical education and Spanish to all children.

BNS Diversity

The Brooklyn New School was founded on an unwavering belief in every student’s capacity to achieve and on the belief that all students have the right to a quality education regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender or social class. At BNS, diversity among the student body and staff is viewed as an essential key to a quality education and not simply a matter of fairness, justice or equal opportunity — though these issues are important. With this commitment to diversity comes an opportunity for parents to get to know and work with parents different from themselves, and to support their children developing a wide variety of friendships.

The parents, teachers and staff at BNS believe that the proper education of any student includes a solid understanding of racial, ethnic and cultural groups and their significance in the U.S. and throughout the world. BNS students will have the opportunity to develop sophisticated understandings of why their ethnic and cultural groups are the way they are and what ethnicity and culture mean in their daily lives. Such self-understanding will help students to handle more effectively situations in which race, ethnicity and culture play a part. Realizing that students learn as much about society from informal areas of schooling as from the planned curriculum, BNS strives to create a total school environment that is consistent with democratic ideals and cultural diversity. BNS’s commitment to these values should be reflected not only in its curricula and materials, but in hiring practices, governance procedures and climate.

At BNS, teachers understand that every student is an individual; that learning styles vary, and that learning styles may be related to culture in some ways. For these reasons, teachers need to be willing and open to modifying their teaching in ways that promote the academic achievement of students from diverse racial, ethnic, cultural and social-class groups. This means, for instance, taking every opportunity to use examples and content from a variety of cultures and groups to explain important concepts; helping students to understand, investigate and determine how bias influences the ways in which knowledge is constructed; and being sensitive to and concerned about students' racial attitudes and how they can be modified by teaching methods and materials.

No school is truly multi-ethnic or multi-cultural unless members from diverse groups are part of the school's instructional, administrative, policymaking and support staff. Therefore, BNS must establish and aggressively implement policies to recruit and maintain a multi-racial staff and governing body that reflects the composition of the school. To ensure that ethnic and cultural diversity permeates the total school environment, BNS has to examine on an ongoing basis how students achieve academically, how they are grouped, labeled, disciplined and interact with staff and students from different groups. Ultimately, this is everyone's job: parents, teachers and other staff members.

BNS Organizational Chart 2010-2011

Staff	Title	Room	Ext
ADMINSTRATORS			
Anna Allanbrook	Principal	207	221
Regina Godfrey	Assistant Principal	308	
OFFICE			
Frances Tirado	Pupil Accounting Secretary	206	206
Remonia Pennington	Office administrator	206	237
Regina Formisano	Payroll Secretary	206	236
PRE KINDERGARTEN			
Amy Binin	Pre-kindergarten	222	222
Jacqueline Barton	Pre-kindergarten	210	210
KINDERGARTEN			
Marisol Santos	CTT special education kindergarten w/Valerie		202
Valerie Perez	Kindergarten	202	202
Arbo Doughty	Kindergarten	214	214
Helen McMahan	Kindergarten	203	203
Kori Goldberg	Kindergarten	201	201
Sarah Fettman	K -1 (12:1) special education	306	306
FIRST GRADE			
Jennifer Fleming	CTT special education first grade w/Elsbeth		302
Elsbeth Schell	First grade	302	302
Emily Sosland	First grade	224	224
MaryAnn Laborda	First grade	225	225
Paola Borgatta	First grade	226	226
SECOND GRADE			
Andrew Chiappetta	CTT special education second grade w/Rachel		309
Rachel Schwartzman	Second grade	309	309
Maria Cadillac	Second grade	310	310
Penina Hirshman	Second grade	322	322
Amy Brown	Second/Third grade (12:1) special education		302
THIRD GRADE			
Diane Castelucci	CTT special education third grade w/Jenny		307
Jenny Hardy	Third grade	307	307
Ilana Friedman	Third grade	305	336
Steve Wilson	Third grade	301	301
FOURTH GRADE			
Joan Plake	CTT special education fourth grade w/Dana		324
Dana Dillon	Fourth grade	324	324
Elissa Eisenberg	Fourth grade	326	326
Dolores Montero	Fourth grade	325	325
FIFTH GRADE			
Nancy Salomon	CTT special education fifth grade w/Antoinette		314
Antoinette Byam	Fifth grade	314	314
Cora Sangree	Fifth grade	311	311
Laurie Matthews	Fifth grade	313	313
Beth Vertucci	Fourth/Fifth grade (12:1) special education		323

Staff	Title	Room	Ext
Andrea Davidson	Guidance Counselor	216	217
Amy Sumner	Parent Coordinator	207	207
Amy Cohen	Hearing		floaters
Ann Helmer	Speech	204A	204
Ann Rosen	Art	103	103
Abby Vaughn	Academic Intervention	308	320
Barbara Taragan	Science Coordinator	308A	318
Beth Foresta	Academic Intervention	308	320
Christian Hanson	Occupational Therapist	106B	116
Christine Labeste	Occupational Therapist	106B	116
Donna Thelusma	Psychologist	205E	215
Ed Kelly	Technical .4	316	151
Jonathan Hardy	Music	104	
Joseph Simon	Physical Therapist	106B	116
Katherine Sorel	Academic Intervention	308	320
Karen Klein	Academic Intervention	308	320
Katherine Anderson	Occupational Therapist	106B	116
Kelly Wilmeth	Social Worker	205D	246
Lorraine Marvilli	Speech	204A	204
Monique Casey	CTT cluster	floats	
Melissa Hart	IEP/SETTS	203	234
Michele Rayvid	ESL .5	308	320
Rebecca Eaton	Academic Intervention	308	320
Regina Gori	Special Education Coordinator/SETSS/UFT	204	234
Susan Westover	Librarian .5	401	401/403
Soraya Laboy	Librarian .5	401	401/403
Shirley SooHoo	Math Coordinator	312	312
Shelley Bissessar	Community Associate	308A	318
Sandra Gayle	School Nurse	105A	105
Sharon Thompson	SBST Administrative Support	205C	247
Taura Ottey	Spanish	floats	
Tanya Bacchus	Physical Education/Health	gym	120/122
Yolanda Holland	Guidance Counselor	216	217

PARAS

Benjamin Trimmier
 Celso Sanchez
 Johanna Esteras
 Laura Vicidomini
 Maceo Fuentes
 Margaret Ward
 Maria DeJesus
 Mariella Santillan
 Pauline Headlam
 Sally Stewart
 Shalisha Jackson
 Steven Vilela

Tyrice Jackson
Valerie Moses

OTHERS

Gym			122/120
Auditorium			101
Cafeteria			102
Kitchen	Beverly Graham		114/115
Custodian	David Carrigan	112	112
Security First Floor		128	128/129
Security Second Floor		Main Entrance	200
LICH	Eric Luna Psychologist	209	209
	Abby Wolfson Nurse	209	209
	Denise Medical Asst	209	209
Afterschool	Veronica Trevino		
Kavan Greene			
	Jennifer Fleming	Cafeteria	
BAX	Jose Garcia		
Green Projects	Matthew Sheehan		

Professional Understandings for Staff Work at BNS

1. All staff are co-participants in school governance with the expectation that each will abide by staff decisions and take responsibility for the school's work.
2. All curriculum is integrated, collaboratively planned and implemented, and subject to feedback from colleagues.
3. The predominant style of pedagogy is hands-on, interactive, and developmental.
4. The predominant mode of assessment is performance-based.
5. The staff maintains frequent and close communication between school and family. Staff members regularly inform families of student work, progress and concerns. To this end:
 - Staff will communicate in writing with parents regarding class news and curriculum at least once a month.
 - Staff accepts the responsibility of preparing at the specified times and in a timely manner three yearly narrative assessments of children's work.
 - Faculty are expected to participate in 30 minute parent teacher conferences at least twice a year.
 - Grade level teams meet weekly to collaborate on curriculum development.
 - Staff are encouraged to participate in the PTA
6. All staff are expected to:
 - Collaborate with their colleagues
 - Attend a weekly staff meeting on Monday afternoons.
 - Participate in various governance and professional tasks
 - Meet on a regular basis with the Principal, Assistant Principal, Science Coordinator, Math Coach and Intervention Team.
 - Create curriculum maps and provide evidence of planning.
 - Maintain a physically attractive child-centered room with examples of children's current work on display.
 - Maintain age appropriate curriculum that includes a rich variety of activities and trips.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AT BNS

BNS is a learning community for staff as well as students. In order for teachers to grow and learn, they need to be nurtured and supported. At BNS, learning is supported from within the school and teachers are encouraged to take advantage of outside opportunities. PD opportunities include:

- In-House Staff Development - is a tradition at BNS. The expertise of teachers is valued and respected. Each staff member commits to attend weekly Monday staff meetings during which time in house training and curriculum development occurs. Much of this meeting time is devoted to exploring and evaluating new and existing curriculum, and refining teacher practice.
- Weekly Common Planning Periods - Grade level teams have at least two weekly common planning periods for collaborating on grade level curriculum. This planning time allows teachers to benefit from each other's strengths and supports consistency of curriculum between the different classes. Teams work closely together, often sharing the responsibility for creating their weekly homework letter.

- Teachers are selected to participate in staff development that occurs during the school day, weekends, and summer. These selections are based upon interest and need. Teachers are notified about outside offerings and opportunities. These may include training in Schools Attuned strategies, Wilson Reading (including Foundations), Math in the City, and literacy workshops, descriptive assessment strategies, as well as other PD opportunities that are specific to content areas.
- Shirley Soo-Hoo, math coach, and Barbara Taragan, science coordinator, take on a professional development role with all of us, supporting the staff in the development of its math and science curriculum.
- New teachers work with mentor colleagues as they develop their practice. This internal support enables us to work collaboratively with our peers as new teachers become more experienced.
- We participate in two *Design Your Own Assessment* (DYO) projects: one for literacy, and one for math. Both of these DYOS include extensive professional development. Once a month teachers go to a professional development meeting with other schools in the Long Island University literacy DYO to learn about assessing growth in literacy and planning next steps. Teachers also participate in the Math in the City DYO *Implications* meetings, in which teachers have opportunity to look at student DYO math work and determine next steps for instruction.

Calendar as of 9.1.10 For updates, check the school calendar on our new website, www.bns146.org, the weekly letter sent home every Thursday and the school eGroup. **All parent meetings (PTA, Friends of BNS/BCS, parent breakfasts and workshops) start at 8:40 am in room 103.**

2010

September 2 New Families Picnic
September 8 School begins for all students
September 9 & 10 no school – Rosh Hashanah
September 8 -17 Early Dismissal for Pre-K and K students only
September 11 Set Up Day (Work Day part 1)
September 13 Orientation 9 & 11 am Library
September 15 PTA meeting
September 22 5th gr. Parent Breakfast
September 24 Friends of BNS/BCS meeting
September 29 BNS Curriculum Night

October 1 Pre-K non-attendance day
October 2 Apple Fest
October 6 Parents as Learning Partners
October 9 Project Day (Work Day part 2)
October 11 No school - Columbus Day observed
October 13 PTA meeting
October 15 Friends of BNS/BCS meeting
October 20 4th gr. Parent Breakfast
October 27 3rd gr. Parent Breakfast

November 2 No school for students - Election Day /PTA Bake Sale
November 3 Parents as Learning Partners
November 3 - 5 4th Grade Overnight
November 8 - 10 5th Grade Overnight
November 9 half day Parent/Teacher Conferences
November 10 PTA meeting
November 11 No school – Veterans Day observed
November 17 2nd gr. Parent Breakfast
November 19 Friends of BNS/BCS meeting
November 19 Children’s Extravaganza
November 25 - 26 no school - Thanksgiving Break

December 1 Parents as Learning Partners
December 8 PTA meeting
December 14 Picture Retake Day
December 15 1st gr. Parent Breakfast
December 17 Friends of BNS/BCS meeting
December 22 Kindergarten Parent Breakfast
December 24 – December 31 – no school - Winter Recess. Students return on January 3

2011

January 3 First day of school in 2010
January 5 Pre-K Parent Breakfast
January 12 Parents as Learning Partners
January 17 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – no school
January 19 PTA meeting
January 21 Friends of BNS/BCS meeting
January 26 5th gr. Parent Breakfast

February 2 Parents as Learning Partners
February 9 4th gr. Parent Breakfast
February 11 Friends of BNS/BCS meeting
February 16 PTA meeting
February 21 - 25 no school - Midwinter recess

March 2 Parents as Learning Partners
March 7 Pre-K non-attendance day
March 9 3rd gr. Parent Breakfast
March 11 4th Grade Musical
March 15 half day Parent/Teacher Conferences
March 16 PTA meeting
March 18 Friends of BNS/BCS meeting
March 23 2nd gr. Parent Breakfast

April 6 Parents as Learning Partners
April 8 Friends of BNS/BCS meeting
April 13 – 15 3rd grade overnight
April 13 PTA meeting
April 16 – 26 no school - Spring Break

May 4 - 6 gr. 3 – 5 State ELA test
May 10 4th gr. Parent Breakfast
May 11 – 13 gr. 3 - 5 State Math test
May 13 Friends of BNS/BCS meeting
May 18 PTA meeting
May 20 Spring Fling
May 25 1st gr. Parent Breakfast
May 30 no school - Memorial Day Observed

June 1 Parents as Learning Partners
June 7 Clerical Half Day
June 8 Kindergarten Parent Breakfast
June 8 June Share
June 9 Brooklyn/Queens Day – no school for students
June 15 Pre-K Parent Breakfast
June 16 Clerical Half Day
June 17 Friends of BNS/BCS meeting
June 22 PTA meeting
June 24 BNS Graduation
June 28 LAST DAY FOR ALL STUDENTS - Half day

BNS Emergency Contacts

If a child is seriously injured or ill, call 911 and call

Sandra Gayle (School Nurse): **718-213-2313** or BNS Ext. **105**

If Sandra is not available, call the L.I.C.H. Office: **718-923-4624**

If a child is behaving in a manner that is unsafe to him/her -self or others:

- If you are on the 3rd floor, first call
Regina Godfrey (Assistant Principal): 917-734-4179 or BNS Ext. **308**
- If you are on the 1st or 2nd floor, first call
Anna Allanbrook (Principal): 917-653-9480 or BNS Ext. **221**

If Anna and Regina are not available, you can also call:

- Yolanda Holland (School Guidance Counselor) at BNS Ext. 217
- Donna Thelusma (School Psychologist) at BNS Ext. 215
- Kelly Wilmeth (School Social Worker) at BNS Ext. 246

If an older child is a danger to others, you may need to contact security:

Security Desk: BNS Ext. 129

Security Office: BNS Ext. 200

To reach a BNS extension, dial it directly on a school phone or call the school at 718-923-4750 and then dial the extension.

BNS STAFF AND SCHOOL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

SUPERVISORY SUPPORT

Issues arise on a daily basis. Anna and Regina have an open door policy to address the concerns and needs of teachers. If they are unavailable they will schedule a meeting as soon as possible. Throughout the year, Anna and Regina meet with grade level teams and individual teachers to discuss professional growth, students, and curriculum.

TEACHER ANNUAL EVALUATIONS

Observations and conversations are used to support teachers with their practice. As required by the Department of Education, tenured teachers may be observed formally once a year and untenured teachers will be observed twice a year. Teachers are also observed informally throughout the year. These observations provide teachers with constructive feedback and the opportunity to collaborate on future planning. Anna and Regina also meet with teachers for pre- and post- observation conferences.

STAFF ATTENDANCE, LATENESS, AND ABSENCE

Teachers are expected to be in the classroom by 8:30 every morning. Upon arrival, every staff member must check in at the main office, Room 206, and move his/her card so that Regina F knows which staff are/are not at assigned locations. If you know you will be late, please call so that arrangements can be made to cover your class. If you know you will be absent in advance, let Anna or Regina know. If you are calling in sick, Anna (917 653-9480), Regina Godfrey (917.734.4179) or Regina Formisano can arrange for a sub. All planned absences have to be approved by Anna. If paraprofessionals are calling in sick, they should call sub central. For planned absences, paraprofessionals follow the same procedure as teachers.

LEAVING THE BUILDING DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

Unless you are on your lunch break you must sign out when you leave the building during school hours. This includes when you are on your prep or if you leave for the day. This is to ensure that you will be covered for disability if you have an accident while you are out of the building.

SUBSTITUTE FOLDER

All teachers must have a folder containing the following items:

- A class list
- A copy of the weekly schedule
- An outline of the classroom routine
- A plan for the day (which is specific if this is a planned absence)
- Generic worksheets
- An informational sheet outlining where to find tools needed for the day (keys, math manipulatives, etc.)
- Notes on any special concerns
- Substitute folders for cluster teachers should include plans for all grades scheduled
- Dismissal procedures.

The substitute folder should be placed in an easily visible location, or the school secretary should know the location of the folder.

CLASS BREAKUP FOLDER

For those occasions when it is not possible to arrange for a substitute teacher, classroom teachers should organize students for spending the day in other classrooms. This should be planned in collaboration with the receiving teachers.

SICK OR INJURED STUDENTS

Children should not be sent to the office to call home unless the school nurse or LICH staff see them first. An adult should accompany the child to the nurse or LICH.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE PLAN

Attendance Folders are in teachers' mailboxes by 8:00 AM every morning. These should be returned to the office by 9:00 AM; afternoon attendance folders should be picked-up from the office and returned by 1:00 PM. Latenesses should be recorded.

We realize that our BNS staff communicates regularly with families, and certainly when a student has been absent from school for several days. We would like to clarify our policy for communicating with families regarding absences:

- Parents are requested to call our attendance hotline, (718) 330-0260 to report an absence. On the attendance phone recording, we ask parents to tell us the reason for the absence.
- Each day, before lunch, Mona checks the attendance line and records the names of the students reported absent. If the family has not called the attendance line or contacted the teacher directly, Mona contacts the family after a 2-day absence to ask why the child is not in school.
- Teachers are asked to report a 2 consecutive day absence to Mona, via a note in the attendance folder. If a teacher has communicated with the family regarding the absence, he/she should inform Mona when sending down the attendance folder so that she doesn't make the call.
- We ask parents to send us a doctor's note when children have been absent for several consecutive days, or if a child has excessive absences.
- Mona should be informed when a child is frequently absent or has a pattern of lateness; Mona sends letters to families to communicate our concern; Regina, BNS AP, follows-up in an official manner when necessary.
- Yolanda Holland, Guidance Counselor, follows-up on 407s (long term absences)

ACCIDENT REPORTS/OCCURRENCE REPORTS

When an injury occurs to a student or staff member, the supervising teacher or staff member must complete an accident report. This process is now done online. Regina, BNS AP is responsible for online occurrence reporting. Please report any incident or accident to her to ensure that the incident is properly reported.

COLLECTING MONEY AND WHERE TO KEEP IT

We often have to collect money for class trips and other events. Please keep all collected funds in a locked cabinet. It is important too to have an organized system for record keeping so that you know who has and hasn't paid. The school has a safe, in which money and valuables may be kept. Staff who want to use the safe, should contact Amy Sumner, the keeper of the safe.

Classroom maintenance

At the end of the day, teachers should close the windows so that rain does not enter the building. All windows are supposed to only open about six inches from the bottom. This is a policy related to child safety. At the end of the day, chairs should be put up to allow for cleaning. If you need a repair, fill out the custodial request of repairs form (see appendix) and give it to Regina F. Periodically, bulletin boards in the classroom and the hall should be updated. Work with your students to maintain the boards and keep student work visible.

PURCHASING

See Regina, BNS AP, to order supplies. She will place the order and secure the funding. Approval for reimbursable items must be obtained before a purchase is made (see appendix). Teachers should

consult with Barbara when ordering science supplies, Shirley when ordering math supplies, and Matt, for an environmental product. Regina Godfrey can support your decision-making around literacy materials.

SCHOOL SCHEDULE AND ROUTINES

MORNING ARRIVAL ROUTINES

Kindergarten and first grade teachers meet their classes in the Rapelye school yard at 8:30 AM. Pre-k students may enter the front of the building to walk upstairs with their families. All other BNS students enter the building through the back entrance in the Rapelye Street schoolyard. Three staff members are assigned to supervise students who arrive at the building early. The school yard door closes at approximately 8:40 AM. Students who arrive after that time are required to use the front door and obtain a late pass. Teachers should require students to have a late pass, indicating arrival time, in order to enter the classroom after 8:40 AM.

Breakfast is served in the cafeteria beginning at 8:00 AM. Students who arrive at school after 8:25 and need to have breakfast should go to their classrooms and obtain the teacher's written permission to go to the cafeteria.

LUNCHTIME ROUTINES

It is our belief that lunchtime should be an enjoyable time for all students. It provides an important opportunity for conversation and socialization. We also believe that the students need recess time so they can run, play, and release some of the energy that is natural for children. Therefore, we have developed lunchtime procedures that will allow the students to have a longer period of active playtime in the yard or playground.

Lunch period for Grades K through 5 starts at 11:30 AM and ends at 12:20 AM. Grades 2 through 5 eat in the cafeteria first and then go to the outdoor spaces. First grade and kindergarten students eat lunch in the cafeteria after playing outside. All teachers must pick up their students promptly at 12:20. Please observe these reminders when students are walking to the cafeteria or other out-of-the-classroom programs:

- All students are expected to be escorted to the cafeteria during their lunch periods.
- Always do a head count before and after any movement done throughout the building.
- When you're alone, make sure you can see all students.
- If during transition a student must step out of line for any reason i.e., tie shoe, bathroom, return to classroom because something was forgotten, please stop your line until that student has returned to the group.

TABLE ASSIGNMENTS

Table assignments are similar to last year, with Grade 2 sitting at the tables closest to the kitchen. Grade 3 will sit at the center section of tables. Grade 4 will sit at the tables along the wall near the exit to the schoolyard in the section close to the windows. Grade 5 will sit where they sat last year, on the same side as Grade 4, in the section of tables near the hallway. Signs will be posted in the cafeteria to indicate grade level sections. For the second lunch session, K and 1 sit on the auditorium side of the cafeteria.

CAFETERIA RULES

- Students may sit anywhere they wish in their grade area, but may not sit with a different grade. (However, the classroom teacher may assign students specific seats with their own class). Kindergarten children sit with their class.
- Students who bring home lunch should walk directly to their tables.
- Students who are getting school lunch should walk to the lunch line. They may not cut into the line, play on line, save places for others on line, or have conflicts on line. (The consequence for inappropriate behavior on the lunch line is placement at the back of the lunch line).
- If a place is available at a table, any student who wishes to sit there may do so. Students may not "save places" for other students.
- Once seated, students may not leave their seats without permission.
- If students wish to get up for any reason, they must raise their hands to receive permission (for example, to use the bathroom, to get something from the kitchen, to get water).
- We recycle all plastic container and waxed cartons. We also compost left over fruits, bread and vegetables. Reinforce this program with your students.

MANNERS

- Students should observe the same good table manners they practice at home.
- It is not polite or permitted to touch any other student's food.
- The cafeteria is a place for conversation.
- Yelling or loud talk is not permitted.
- Students are expected to clean up the area where they eat, including the table area and the floor. If there is a spill, a student may request to go to the kitchen to get a clean-up cloth (located in a bucket near the exit from the kitchen).

RECESS

After 11:50 PM, students in Grades 2 through 5 may go outside to play. At that time, when a student has finished his or her lunch, he or she may receive permission to go outside to the big or small yard, or line up to go to the other designated recess locations. The students must clear their eating area, pack up what needs to be thrown away, recycle appropriately, and then raise their hands for permission to go out or line-up. For students going to the big yard for recess, it is not necessary to wait until everyone in the cafeteria is ready to go out. As soon as a lunchroom supervisor (adult) gives permission, the student may get up, dispose of lunch refuse, and go outside to the yard. Children going to the playground or field are expected to line up and wait for an adult to escort them. Each grade level is assigned to a different play area each day of the week. For grades 2- 5, Friday is choice day and children may choose which area to go to. When recess is over, the adults in the baseball field and the playground will escort the children to class. Children in the school yard will be allowed to go by themselves to class after lunch. Children who are unable to follow lunch time rules will not participate in the Friday choice program. They will remain in the cafeteria on Fridays.

EXPECTATIONS FOR BEHAVIOR DURING RECESS

- Students should enjoy games, running, and play.
- Play should be safe.
- Play should never be mean.
- Play should never endanger another student.

- Students should never throw anything down through the fence to the cars below. This could result in a serious and life threatening car accident.
- Inappropriate behavior in the schoolyard, gym, or playground will have consequences. Students will have "time out" to sit on the bench or stay against the fence if behavior is not appropriate.

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION OF LUNCHTIME AND RECESS PROCEDURES AND ROUTINES

Teachers are asked to have a serious conversation with their students about lunchtime and recess on the first day of school before the first lunch period. It is very important that the children understand the lunch and recess procedures before they come to the cafeteria. We believe that a clear understanding of the expectations will result in a safe and pleasant lunchtime for students and staff.

RECESS SCHEDULE AND LOCATIONS

SPECIAL PRIVILEGE TO THE BIG YARD

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Grade 2	Grade 5	Grade 4	Grade 3	Choice

SPECIAL PRIVILEGE TO THE PLAYGROUND

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Grade 3	Grade 2	Grade 5	Grade 4	Choice

SPECIAL PRIVILEGE TO THE SMALL YARD

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Grade 4	Grade 3	Grade 2	Grade 5	Choice

SPECIAL PRIVILEGE TO THE BALLFIELD

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Grade 5	Grade 4	Grade 3	Grade 2	Choice

LINE-UP AT THE END OF RECESS

At the end of recess the lunchtime supervisors blow whistles to indicate it is time to line-up. All play equipment should be returned to the athletic equipment bags and the students should proceed immediately to the line-up area. There should be no further play or conversation once the whistle blows. Teachers are expected to meet their children at the assigned play area at 12:20 PM.

DRESSING FOR THE WEATHER

We will plan to go outside every day, therefore children must be dressed appropriately for the weather conditions. If there is a misty drizzle or light rain we will go out. It is best to send the children to the cafeteria with their outdoor garments. Please check to see that students bring coats or jackets if the weather is cool/cold or drizzly. In snowy weather, students need to have appropriate footwear and gloves.

INCLEMENT WEATHER PLAN

If the weather conditions require us to stay indoors, the students will go to the auditorium. There is no standing or visiting in the auditorium. Age appropriate movies may be shown during recess. Students

may have conversation with the students next to them or nearby. If it is raining or freezing, children may have a choice of whether or not to be in or out.

LUNCHTIME SUPERVISION

Anna, Regina, Melissa, Shirley, Mona, Taura, Amy S, will supervise lunch time. Paraprofessionals and student teachers will also assist. It is important to get to lunch time by 11:30 so that the period goes smoothly. Teachers assigned to kindergarten and grade one will go to either the big or small yard and then bring the children into the lunch room at 11:30. Teachers assigned to the play spaces will first go to the cafeteria and then will move to play spaces when the children go to them.

Lunch Duty	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Kindergarten	Melissa	Melissa	Melissa	Melissa	Melissa
Grade One	Taura	Taura	Taura	Taura	Taura
Grade 2-5 Big Yard	Shirley	Shirley	Shirley	Shirley	Amy S
Grade 2-5 Small Yard	Mona	Mona	Mona	Mona	Mona
Grade 2-5 Playground	Regina	Regina	Regina	Regina	Regina
Grade 2-5 BB Field	Anna	Anna	Anna	Anna	Anna

BNS DISMISSAL

EXTENDED DAY

We will continue to use the same extended day plan as we used last year, allowing for extended time for all students. School will officially end at 2:50 PM and parents may pick up their children from the classroom at that time. Pre-k, kindergarten and first grade dismiss from the classroom beginning at 2:50 PM. Teachers can bring the remaining children to the cafeteria by 3:15 PM. Second through fifth grade children are dismissed from the cafeteria. Monique will watch over the students who go to After School. They should go to the back tables by the window. Children waiting for BCS siblings should sit at the first middle table. Teachers should have a dismissal system, which includes having each child say goodbye so that the teacher knows that all of their children are accounted for. All teachers must remain with their students until 3:20. At that time they can bring the remaining students to the front of the cafeteria. Regina Godfrey will supervise children who are awaiting pickup. They should sit at the front tables (by wall adjacent to the auditorium). There is discussion regarding rethinking the Extended Day. When this plan is fully realized or enacted, teachers and/or parents will be informed.

DISMISSAL SCHEDULE

- All bus students should be at their buses by 3:10 PM
- Grades ,2, 3,4, ,and 5 should be seated in the cafeteria awaiting pick-up by 3:15 PM
- Students in Grades K and 1, who have not been picked-up from their classrooms, should be brought to the cafeteria by 3:15 PM.

Any child who is not picked up from school by 3:30 p.m. will be brought to the principal's office, and families will sign late pick-up. Repeated late pick-up will be appropriately addressed by the school administration.

BNS Bus ROUTINES

Students come down to buses no later than 3:10 PM. Teachers need to make sure that students are packed up and ready to leave. If they miss the bus they will not have a ride home. We will assign different staff members to work with different grade levels at the end of the day and to help with bussing. Please have your children ready to go down the stairs to the busses. It is very important that each grade level come downstairs to the busses together so that the people doing bus duty can tell if everyone is there.

Teachers are responsible to know their students' bus arrangements and to be sure that their children take the bus if they are supposed to. It's a good idea to keep a list of each child's PM arrangements. We ask parents of younger children to pin a bus information label to their child's backpack so that we can get each child onto the correct bus safely.

BNS Bus BEHAVIOR CONTRACT

Students who take the bus and their parents agree to the safety and behavior guidelines outlined in the bus behavior contract. Bussing for the Brooklyn New School is a privilege, not a right. If students do not follow the rules and behave appropriately they will lose their bus privileges.

SCHOOL SAFETY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The School is legally responsible for the safety and welfare of the students during the school day and during extended school time.

FIRE DRILLS - EXIT ROUTES ARE PROVIDED IN THE APPENDIX OF THIS HANDBOOK.

When the fire drill bell is sounded, students should line up and walk with the teacher to the assigned exit. Follow the instructions of the security guards. Fire drill plans and exit route must be located at the door of each classroom.

At the beginning of the year, plan a meeting to go over and explain procedures, such as walking silently, getting up, pushing in chairs, walking to the door (line order doesn't matter), and not stopping to get coats or other items. It might be helpful to have the students generate a list of safe fire drill procedures and discuss the importance of practicing these procedures.

INCIDENT/OCCURRENCE REPORTS GUIDELINES

An incident or occurrence report needs to be completed when a student or adult incurs an injury during the school day or on school property. As well, a report must be completed if a student is in violation of the Chancellors Regulations for School Discipline. Each teacher will receive a copy of these regulations.

The process for reporting an occurrence follows:

- 1) Contact Anna or Regina immediately when an incident occurs.
- 2) A report is generated using an administrative computer.
- 3) Be prepared to provide the following information for the occurrence report:
 - Names and identification numbers of the students involved in the incident.
 - DOE employee file number of the teacher reporting the incident.
 - A description of the incident.
 - Where the incident occurred (on or off school grounds).
 - First aid or medical treatment provided.
 - Whether the principal and/or parents were contacted.
 - Whether the police were contacted. (If yes, include name and badge number of the officer.)

Required Forms for Students:

At the beginning of the school year we send out many forms to families. It is the job of the classroom teacher to collect these forms and to make sure that each form is returned for each child. It is also important that the forms are given to the main office in a timely manner or in the case of permission slips, kept in the safe place in the classroom.

The following is a Checklist of Required Forms:

- Emergency Card: must be updated as information changes.
- School Lunch Form: must be filled out by all families, regardless of whether child(ren) will eat school lunch. Federal funding data is derived from these forms.
- Bus Registration: must be filled out for BNS students in kindergarten and above who desire bus transportation
- Trip Permission Slip: General form gives permission for leaving the school building for neighborhood trips and leaving the building. Additional permission and trip communication is provided as trips are planned.
- Photo Release Form: Allows candid photos of child at school which may be used in school-approved publications.

TRIPS

Trips are an integral part of learning at BNS. Grade level teams usually plan curriculum related trips together. Planning usually includes some type of pre-trip preparation, a trip sheet, and follow-up to process the learning.

During the year, classes at BNS go on many trips. Neighborhood walks, class trips throughout the city and well beyond are an integral part of the teaching and learning in our school.

It is important to provide Anna with a schedule of any trips or in-school events at least a week in advance so that the events may be included in the weekly schedule and parent letter. Permission slips are required for all trips.

TRIP PROCEDURES:

- We travel by bus, subway, and by foot on our many excursions. To do this safely, it is important that there are enough adults. Pre-k and kindergarten classes will only be able to go on a trip if five or more adults accompany them. First grade will go with at least three adults. Second grade and up will have at least two adults on every trip. Parents who agree to accompany the class must return with the class to the school building. Pre-k and kindergarten groups will assign parents to individual children. Parents are expected to adhere to the teacher's rules when on a class trip.
- All pre-k and kindergarten children will wear labels and/or school t-shirts when on class trips. Teachers always carry with them emergency information for each and every child. They also travel with an emergency first aid kit, including an epi-pen.
- Children need lunch when they go on a class trip. Parents should pack food and drink that is easy to carry and they should not pack glass bottles, soda or candy. Parents should not send in extra food to share unless they send enough for the whole class. Teachers must provide lunch for children who do not have lunch by ordering school lunch at least three days ahead of the trip. The form for requesting bag lunches is available in the office (and see appendix).
- Sometimes a grade level will go on a trip together. Teachers will determine how the classes travel and whether or not to share a subway car or school bus. Pre-k and kindergarten classes will travel by school bus when possible and especially if the destination requires three or more subway transfers. When traveling by subway, an adult must be designated to be the "last one on and off the train." This adult must ensure that the platform and door are clear of children and should be standing in the doorway of the train while doing so.

Trips are fundamental to the school curriculum and parents are fundamental to trips. We ask parents to volunteer to accompany their child's class at least once a year and if they can, send in extra money so that all children can participate.

- At the beginning of the year every classroom teacher sends home a general permission slip form, which covers walking and neighborhood trips. However, it is still necessary to inform families and obtain permission for specific trips.
- Trip money should be collected well in advance. Some teachers ask parents to send in a little extra money to provide for those families who are unable to pay.
- Fundraising efforts are coordinated through the whole school for the environmental overnight trips and other events.
- Class parents may be asked to coordinate parent volunteers to accompany the class on trips.
- If there are special circumstances that do not allow a student to participate in a class trip, it is important to inform Anna or Regina and to make arrangements for the student's placement in another class.

TRIP EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

- Always take with you the first-aid packs and emergency contact cards.
- A trip form must be submitted before leaving the building.
- Trips are meant to be educational and extensions of our curriculum. Therefore, keeping a child from going on a field trip as a method of discipline is not acceptable.
- Whenever going on a neighborhood walk, the office must always be notified.
- Before leaving the building, enter information into the login book, including time left, and the number of students on the trip. When returning please do the same. (Time returned, and how many children returned.)
- If for any reason there are children who cannot attend the trip, log in the book the student's name and the classroom that the student is left in.
- If your class is traveling by train, safety procedures must be reviewed with the students before leaving.

EMERGENCY PROTOCOL

1. Don't panic
2. Contact host
3. Call 911
4. Call school

(There should be constant communication with the school.)

TRIP TRANSPORTATION

The DOE provides 2 buses per school per day. Please make the bus arrangements at least 6 weeks in advance. Frances also has subway passes available in the main office.

INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT

CURRICULUM AT THE BROOKLYN NEW SCHOOL

At the hub of each BNS class is its interdisciplinary core curriculum.

Developmentally appropriate social studies and/or science topics give a focus to the learning experience. The classroom becomes a community of learners. We believe that less is more, that when

children study fewer topics in greater depth they learn how to focus and they develop the work habits they will need throughout their lives.

Students work alone and in groups, they collect data, do authentic research from a variety of sources and record information in many different formats. This is quite different from textbook learning in which many topics are covered in little depth and children are expected to memorize many unrelated facts.

Children and adults join in the investigation of a topic that incorporates social studies (geography, anthropology and history) and science (earth science, life science and physical science). Some of our units are science dominant and others focus more on social studies. At times teachers choose to do two distinct units simultaneously, one social studies and one science. They do this when there is no natural way to relate the topics.

Our youngest students learn about here and now and about the world closest to them. As children get older the topics become more complex, abstract and remote. They develop a sense of long ago and far away, of history and geography. We teach history in a social context that explains how people lived and how their lives were affected by specific events and gradual changes.

TYPICAL GRADE LEVEL CURRICULUM THEMES

PRE-KINDERGARTEN: the self, important adults in our lives, houses and homes.

KINDERGARTEN: the self, families, pets, playgrounds, the neighborhood.

FIRST GRADE: the self, the family, the community, the school, the city and country.

SECOND GRADE: transportation, architecture, New York City.

THIRD GRADE: communities around the world; specifically China and Africa.

FOURTH GRADE: New York history (Colonial New York), Native Americans.

FIFTH GRADE: The Maya; the Holocaust

These themes reflect state and city curriculum guidelines for the teaching of social studies and science. Over the years teachers have worked together to create a list of topics that create a sequence. They also give children exposure to many disciplines and methods of inquiry.

Each unit of study is constructed to meet the diverse needs of children who have varied learning styles, abilities and strengths. While some children will be most drawn into the learning experience by doing and writing about science experiments, others will learn best by taking trips and creating a record using visual art. Some children absorb most from reading and others from talking and listening. Whenever possible, we give children chances to meet and question experts in their field of study. All children are given opportunities to develop their strengths, to take risks as learners and to do activities which challenge them and inspire them to grow.

Teachers fill their classrooms with quality children's literature related to the curriculum. Nonfiction books are used instead of the limited material found in social studies and science textbooks. The books we use are richly illustrated and are written on a variety of levels. Students also read and listen to poetry and fiction related to the topics they are studying.

Writing is an essential element of every interdisciplinary study. At the beginning of a unit we ask children what they already know, what they want to find out and how they think they can find answers to their questions. They post lists of their ideas and questions on the walls of their classroom. Children record information about trips and scientific observations. They do research and write reports. They learn to analyze, summarize and compare. They make graphs and many kinds of charts. Older children write historical fiction and drama set in the period they are studying.

Trips are a vital part of each study. They provide children with experiences that cannot be duplicated in the classroom. We make the city and its surroundings our laboratory, our studio, our theater and our gymnasium. We travel to parks, museums, restaurants, theaters, beaches, tall buildings, forests, archaeology labs, historic sites, markets and gardens.

Children connect the information they collect on trips to that which they find in books and talk about in class meetings. For example, when children study Native Americans, they visit the American Museum of Natural History more than once, research Native American activities and culture, build a wigwam in Prospect Park and experience the primitive technology used by these people.

Though much of our work is planned by teachers, children's opinions and interests also help to shape our investigations. Project time or choice time gives each student the chance to pursue areas of the curriculum of personal interest. Children use what they have learned about the visual and performing arts to create murals, sculptures, maps, models and diagrams. They make up board games, they create plays and skits related to the times and places they are studying.

Assessment is ongoing. Teachers watch and listen to children. They record children's spoken words and write observations of children at work. Throughout each unit students reflect on what they learn and take time to process, talk and write.

At the conclusion of each unit, we share what we know with each other, with children in other classes and with families. This sharing takes many forms. We make class museums, put on plays, show portfolios of work and create written documents. Time after time we are impressed by the breadth and depth of our students' knowledge and by their understanding developed through exposure to rich, authentic and varied sources of information.

MEETING TIME

Meeting Time is the time when children in all classes gather to listen, to share ideas, to plan their time and to talk about issues relevant to their lives and stages of development. Teachers also use Meeting Time to model the conversations children will have with each other, to teach the skills of conferring and of working in a group. These skills are used in every aspect of the curriculum.

Central to the idea of Meeting Time is respect for the intelligence and voice of every member of our community. In order to engage in productive discussions, children must respect themselves, each other and their teachers. They must learn to listen actively, with focus on the speaker and to wait for turns to speak. We use a variety of strategies to make sure everyone is heard. For example, sometimes we do go-rounds, when the expectation is for each child to add a short comment before anyone speaks twice.

As adults, we work very hard to help children be successful during meeting. We have to structure our meetings to engage children. We know that younger children have shorter attention spans than older children, so they need shorter meeting times. We know that many of them have not had the experience of speaking in such large groups so they may be shy or unfamiliar with waiting and listening.

We know how important it is for children to leave elementary school able to clearly convey information and to express their opinions. When children have lots of opportunities to engage in productive accountable conversations, in both small and large groups, they become powerful, articulate adults.

BALANCED LITERACY

Balanced Literacy is a term used to describe a well-constructed reading and writing program that includes:

- Independent reading (of books children can read easily)
- Instructional reading in small and whole class groups (known as guided and shared reading)
- Teachers reading aloud
- Writers' workshop
- Shared and adult modeled writing
- Lots and lots of discussion

Children learn how to read and write just as they learn how to talk. Babies listen; they babble, experimenting over and over with the sounds they can make. They refine their attempts and they try again and again to recreate the kind of language they hear. At times we help them by repeating or rephrasing what they say, but most of their correction is self-correction, based on the modeling all around them. Every time you talk to and with your child you are teaching him/her how to talk.

In every classroom we create print-rich environments designed to pull children into the literate world — just as the conversations at home gave them the foundation for oral language. Reading instruction does not occur just once a day, but is prevalent throughout the day. Children read alone, with their teacher and with others. Children learn by reading books that are just right for them, choosing from the leveled libraries in their classrooms. Children are learning about reading when they discuss meaning in a whole group and they learn about reading when they focus on word study and look for patterns in words. Children are learning about reading when they listen to books their teacher reads aloud to them. And they are learning about reading when they use books to research and find out about the world around them.

As adults, we read in order to make sense of the world around us, whether we're following the news, catching up on a sports event, using a recipe, reading a professional journal or simply enjoying a good book. As adults, we don't read word by word, or sentence by sentence. Children read just as we read; to make sense of the world. They read for information and pleasure. When they read, they compare what they have read to what they already know. They think about the world around them as they try to understand new text. They learn by comparing a variety of books and resources.

Every class does word study, a time for children to look at the structure and patterns of English letters and words. We want our children to be confident readers who are able to use reading in many aspects of their lives — for entertainment, in their professional lives, to get information about any topic they choose, to be knowledgeable and active citizens. As a school, we have to give them experiences with every kind of reading they will need to do later. We weave reading into every aspect of the curriculum, fill our rooms with a variety of interesting books and make sure children have chances every day for listening to stories read aloud, for reading with others and for reading independently. When we read to children and when they read in groups, we encourage them to think and talk about their books. We help them engage in active, lively discussions about characters, language, authors' craft, language and

information. Their comments about books reveal what they understand, what confuses them and how they make connections between what they are learning and what they already know.

When children hear adults read aloud, they are making meaning of written language, even if it is language too rich and complex for them to read independently. In the same way we talk to our newborns, knowing full well they do not understand every word, we read to children who cannot yet read every word. Study after study tells us children who are read to develop excellent comprehension skills. When we read aloud to children we give them information about their world, we introduce them to books they can later read independently, we help them understand the relationship between oral and written language, we model fluency and expression, we show them many kinds of book and story structures, we build their vocabulary and we share our enjoyment of reading. Reading aloud in a classroom builds community. We are all connected by the stories we share.

MATH

Students learn math through a process of investigation. In their lessons they examine, discuss and compare mathematical ideas. All classes use the TERC curriculum.

Students explore problems in depth. They find more than one solution to many of their problems. Students invent their own strategies and approaches. They do not rely on memorized procedures. Often they use more than one strategy to double check their work. Children express their mathematical thinking through drawing, writing and talking. They use cubes, blocks, measuring tools and other materials for many of these activities. They work in a variety of groupings, working independently, with a partner, in a small group or with the whole class. As students approach problems, they consider their own reasoning and the reasoning of others. They move around the classroom to explore the mathematics in their environment and talk with their peers.

The curriculum at each grade level is organized into units. These units cover number, data, analysis, geometry and change. Each unit of study is pursued through a series of structured investigations or inquiries. Some investigations are structured around a set of related problems, such as making geometric shapes on coordinate grids. Some use mathematical relationships, such as building or constructing an array of fraction number lines. Some are based on games designed to involve students in mathematical thinking. And some investigations require students to collect and represent data, such as a comparing the heights of younger and older children.

At the end of a unit, a student might be asked to extend the learning by doing a project that requires application of the skills learned. For example, after studying solids and boxes, students might be asked to create a model city from box patterns drawn on graph paper.

A central objective of the study of number is the learning of number relationships, the base ten number system and number operations. While a large amount of time is spent on developing the students' own strategies for solving problems, we know that students do need to learn their addition and multiplication facts. Fluency is important. Students develop strategies for computation. They learn to estimate. They work with calculators and other mathematical tools. They keep track of their work by recording the intermediate steps of a problem. And they learn to use more than one strategy to solve a problem. Students also focus on the relationship of number and use "landmark" numbers, such as 10, 25, 50 and 100 to solve problems.

From the earliest grades, students can collect, display, describe and interpret data. They pose their own questions, collect the data, critique and refine the data and compare different ways of displaying the data.

Geometry is the study of spatial objects, relationships and transformations. Through the study of measurement, children learn to apply numerical concepts. Investigations in geometry and measurement provide opportunities for students to analyze their spatial environment, to describe the characteristics and relationships of geometric objects and to use number concepts in a geometric context. In their studies of geometry students learn about polygons, polyhedra and symmetry. In their study of measurement, they measure length and distance, perimeter, area and volume, angles, weight and capacity. Children use a variety of strategies to locate objects in space, on paper or on coordinate grids.

Change is a constant part of our lives and a major aspect of mathematical thinking. Students study changes in the number line, temperature changes, changes over time and other patterns of change. Students learn to construct and interpret graphs of changing populations, plant growth, as well as geometric patterns and motion.

Each unit includes several kinds of assessment. Teachers observe students and ask questions that enable them to modify instruction according to the students' needs. Children write and reflect on the lesson showing how much they do or do not understand the concept. Sometimes students are asked to solve a problem and the creation and explanation of the product shows their teacher what is understood. Portfolios help to document the students' work.

Speed and memorization are not emphasized before conceptual understanding is in place. A focus on getting the right answer quickly undermines the value of thinking deeply about a problem. Slowing the pace so that students can work on a few complex problems carefully is critical both for changing students' view of the nature of mathematical study and for including all students in mathematical investigations.

ASSESSMENT AT BNS:

Brooklyn New School uses formative assessment on a daily and periodic basis. BNS teachers identify specific learning behaviors and needs for their children and maintain profiles for each student. Each child has a portfolio that includes a checklist, anecdotal records, student work, the BNS Reading Continuum, and an observation report of progress.

Literacy assessments may include the Developmental Reading Assessment, the Qualitative Reading Inventory, Teachers College Reading/Writing Project Assessments (TCRWP), the Fountas and Pinnell Assessment System, and the Writing and Reading Assessment Program (WRAP), which are administered at regular intervals. The decision to use multiple assessments has been made in recognition of the need to assess different learning styles through multiple modalities. This ensures a better understanding of each child's instructional needs and progress.

Like our students, our teachers have different approaches to recording student performance. To this end, each teacher records what he or she knows in a way that works for that teacher. Some have color-coded systems, some have checklists, and some have class lists with anecdotal comments. That said, all teachers maintain an assessment filing system, which includes evidence of ELA work, teacher comments in relation to that work, and as well, teacher plans for next steps. The file is a place for progress reports and notes on meeting with parents. Always, these notes focus on goals and next steps. For example, a Grade 2 teacher may study the running record and comprehension responses of

a student's Level J reading assessment, then analyze the pattern of miscues, note areas of strength or weakness in comprehension, then plan instruction according to findings.

In weekly whole school meetings, teachers compare and study student work and assessments. As well, during grade level meetings, the focus is planning and often the work of the students, themselves. When we talk about the individual children, we study them as learners and as human beings. This ensures that on a weekly basis, we are paying attention to what children are learning and where their struggles are. We pay extra special attention to the children who are struggling. We look at who our strugglers are, what interventions we have in place, and whether or not these interventions are working. Often, we rethink our plans as we discuss progress. We also pay close attention to students who are performing well on quantitative assessments, but are still struggling with the deeper level demands of the classroom. These include participating in a lengthy discussion, defending a point of view, writing a persuasive essay, and explaining an idea. Teachers give students many opportunities to pursue this kind of work in order to ensure that their students are able to understand a subject deeply.

Decision-making at BNS is realized by teachers understanding the needs of our students. This understanding is achieved through analysis of data derived from various assessment tools. Teachers confer with readers and writers regularly. They maintain running records, anecdotal records, and records of skill mastery.

Teachers write a lengthy progress report, which addresses student performance with anecdotes. In parent teacher conferences, which are one half hour for each family, teachers share goals that they have set for their students and progress towards those goals.

In order to ensure that the periodic assessments are consistent and appropriately administered, interpreted, and applied, teachers meet once a week to review the literacy assessment process. This has included a focus on the use of the BNS Reading Continuum to ensure that teachers correctly assess students and to plan differentiated instruction. Literacy instructional materials include classroom leveled libraries, curriculum materials related to areas of study in science and social studies, and remedial materials such as the Wilson and Edmark programs.

Brooklyn New School participates in the LIU DY0 (Design Your Own) literacy assessment project. Once a month, teachers go to a professional development meeting with other schools in the Long Island University literacy DY0 to learn about assessing growth in literacy and planning next steps. The work of this literacy assessment is also a part of staff and team meetings. Examination of our assessment practices, reviewing the effectiveness of these practices, and the process of communication of assessment practice and outcome to families is ongoing work for the BNS staff.

BNS uses multiple criteria for math assessment, including daily observation of performance, as well as end-of-unit and teacher designed tests. We are active participants in the Math in the City DY0 math assessment project. This DY0 group has learned numerous lessons at multiple levels as a result of this cross-school, cross-grade, ground-up formative assessment project that began in the fall of 2006. The pre-eminent objective of this undertaking continues to be the construction and utilization of a *descriptive framework* for mathematical learning and teaching in grades 3-5 so that every student's needs are identified and addressed. Thus, the design (and subsequent field-testing) of periodic assessment tasks which reveal student mathematical thinking (i.e., strategizing) over time and from different angles/entry points is paramount, as is the professional development for teachers associated with comprehending a rubric or landscape of such mathematical thinking, and the appropriate options for instructional next steps.

In partnership with Mathematics in the City, of City College of New York, this DY0 group has implemented and refined structures such as the Steering Committee (principal volunteers, lead partner, network team facilitator), Design Team (math coaches, lead teachers, partner

rep, network team facilitator), and Instructional Implications meetings (for lead math teachers in every school in the DY0, facilitated by the Design Team), which have enabled the group to overcome the inherent management, design, and professional development challenges of scaling out and up.

Shirley Soo-Hoo, our math coach, oversees the implementation of these periodic assessments. She also works with third to fifth grade teachers to grade these assessments, document the work, and determine the implications for instruction.

HOMEWORK POLICY AT BNS

Homework varies in content and quantity through the different grades, but our general homework philosophy, as outlined below, is consistent throughout the elementary years.

HOMEWORK GRADES 2 THROUGH 5:

- Provides students with the opportunity to practice and extend independently what they have learned in school.
- Helps students to develop the habit of reading, which is a life-long learning goal.
- Allows parents to see the kind of work we do in school and can provide opportunities for parents to share and participate in their child's learning.
- Provides a checkpoint for teachers to identify whether or not students have mastered a concept or topic and if there is a need for re-teaching.
- Promotes the development of habits and routines students will need throughout their education.
- All homework is planned and reviewed by grade level teams. Most teams send home a joint weekly parent letter that outlines class curriculum and happenings and includes the weekly homework.
- Homework is not busy work. Most homework is teacher generated - not copied from commercially prepared materials.

HOMEWORK EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS

- Students are responsible for reading their homework sheet. If they are unable to read it independently, they are expected to read it with an adult.
- Students are expected to write in their own words. Grade levels set their own expectations for time and appropriate grade level expectations for spelling, editing, and revision.
- Students need to read independently each night and record what they have read on their reading charts.
- On most math assignments students are expected to show how they got their answer. They are expected to try a variety of strategies they have learned to figure out math problems. No math should be sent home unless it has been introduced in class.
- Children are expected to do their best work, the kind they would do in the classroom.

WHAT WE DO WITH HOMEWORK IN SCHOOL

- We share homework in class meetings. Sometimes children read their pieces aloud to the whole class. Sometimes they read answers to specific questions.
- Children may share in small groups or with partners.
- We talk about the concepts covered in homework writing and math.
- Homework is collected and/or checked. The teacher and student teacher make sure that the work is done, and sometimes they write brief comments.

- We talk about what we are doing in our writer’s notebooks, share entries, and share ideas for kinds of entries.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN HOMEWORK IS NOT DONE

Sometimes children bring in notes from parents, explaining that they had to go out, or that an assignment was too difficult. Some notes ask for extensions of time; others ask for us to go over a particular concept or area of confusion. When children give such notes, they are excused. We take as much time as possible to clear up confusions.

When children come in without homework and without a note explaining why it is missing, we make an effort to give them time to do it during that school day. Sometimes they sit aside during meeting time, and instead of taking part in the discussion, they do the writing that would have prepared them for the discussion. Sometimes they do their homework during project time. Many days, children who have not done their homework, spend recess with their teacher in the classroom finishing their homework. When a substantial number of students have difficulty with a particular assignment, the day’s plans are changed to include time for work on that topic or assignment.

Homework is mainly meant to be independent. Parents are often asked to support and supervise their children’s homework. Most of the time this works well and children know that their parents and their teacher are united. We all want to help them learn. We don’t want parents to fight with their children about homework. If it becomes a problem we suggest that parents step out of it. They can let their child know they are there to help when and if their child wants help. Persistent problems with parents and students over homework should be referred to Anna and Regina.

FIRST GRADE HOMEWORK

Generally first grade does not begin homework until after January, and even then they have very little homework. Unlike the independent homework in the older grades, first grade homework is designed to be done with an adult and is mainly related to current studies going on in the classroom. Oftentimes, students are asked to choose from a selection of books related to the class study. An adult reads the book with them and the student might write a response either in pictures and/or words. Sometimes the homework involves math concepts in the context of their study.

KINDERGARTEN HOMEWORK

We do not give homework in kindergarten.

PROGRESS REPORTS/PARENT –TEACHER CONFERENCES

At the Brooklyn New School, teachers gain an in depth understanding of their students as learners. Assessment is ongoing. Teachers use both formal and informal measures to assess students’ products and processes.

In order to accurately report what we know about each student, teachers send home progress reports in November, March, and finally in June, summarizing the year’s performance. The progress reports are comprised of some checklists customized for each grade level and curriculum and include a section for anecdotal information. The report format was design by teachers in their grade level teams and is updated and revised as needed.

We are in the process of redesigning the progress report formats for this academic year and plan to use the new format in November. All reports should be written in a timely manner and given to Anna or Regina for editing and proofreading. Finished reports should be given to Beth Foresta so the school has a digital copy. Two copies of the report should be printed out so that a hard copy of the report can be placed in the child’s folder of student work.

The staff agrees to have extended parent-teacher conferences at least two times a year. In order to accommodate the 30-minute conferences, additional afternoon and evening time is scheduled.

In addition, all families are scheduled for a ten minute session with their child’s teacher in the first two weeks of school. The purpose of this meeting is to allow parents to express their goals and wishes for

their child. It's an opportunity for the teacher to listen and to learn. We ask two questions and provide parents in advance with a form for their notes:

- What can you tell me about your child that will help me to understand him/her better and support the work we do in school?
- What are your goals for your child during this school year?

As we further our practice and strive to improve communication with all families, we have read, discussed, and continue to refer to *Essential Conversations* by Sarah Lightfoot, a book that grapples with this issue of teacher/family communication.

RECORD-KEEPING

In September teachers are given two sets of folders: the Cumulative Record Cards and the student portfolios. Teachers should check to see that there is a record card for every child and let Frances, Student Accounting Secretary, know the names of the students whose cumulative folders are missing. The record card of a child who is no longer in your class should be returned to Frances.

Every time teachers meet with a family, a Conference form making a note of the goals for the child and any important comments should be completed. It is also important to make a note of the conference date on the student's form in the cumulative record card. This way there is a record of all parent-teacher conferences.

Parent-teacher conferences are also usually held without the child present, although the teacher and parent may agree in advance to involve the child in the conference.

SPECIAL CURRICULUM EVENTS

CURRICULUM NIGHT

In September, Curriculum Night gives parents the opportunity to meet their child's teacher and to hear a thorough description of what the curriculum will be for the year. It is also a time where parents can ask questions about teaching methods and classroom routines at BNS. This evening is a 'parents only' event.

In June, an end of the year June Share showcases children's work and celebrates the year in each classroom. Many teachers choose to make this a potluck, with each family contributing something for all to share. Children are proud to share their efforts and thrilled to bring their families to see their work.

CURRICULUM SHARES

During the year, parents and families are invited into the classroom to see what the students have been learning and working on. These occasions differ from grade to grade but they have recently taken the form of authors' breakfasts, class museums, and even dramatic re-enactments. These events provide an important link between school and home and allow families to understand our project-based curriculum.

COMMUNITY SERVICE AT BNS

We believe that community service is a vital part of every young person's education. It is a way for them to give back, to build confidence and to understand the needs of others. As students get older, they have more choices about how and where to perform this service. Within the school, students help out by playing in the playground with younger children, reading to a youngster in the pre-K and Kindergarten classes, helping other children create a project, scanning photos in the computer lab or doing clerical jobs in the office. Students commit one period a week to this type of community service.

They are responsible for reporting to work and to consulting with the teacher who is in charge of the class to which they are offering community service

Community Service also enables us to raise the consciousness of our students. Students raise money to give to charities of their choice. In the fall they participate in the Penny Harvest, a fundraiser sponsored by Common Cents. In addition to collecting pennies, they participate in a roundtable discussion to decide how to allocate funds. They think about some of the problems that exist in the world and brainstorm possible solutions. They discuss homelessness, illiteracy, animal testing, animal and nature preserves, AIDS, drug-addicted babies, the rain forest, global warming, natural disasters, refugees, illegal immigrants, human rights, hospitals, libraries, schools, clean water sources, vaccinations and famine. They present ideas, ask questions, discuss issues, debate and prioritize concerns. They recognize the interconnectedness of many of these issues and look at short- and long-term solutions.

Our students research areas of concern; in former years they focused on organizations that help children caught in wars and children who have been forced to be soldiers. Other community service projects include a clothing drive and collecting school supplies and books to be donated to those in need.

Each year our students learn the importance of action through community service. They begin to understand and recognize how it is possible for each of them to effect change through community service.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND MEDIATION AT BNS

Providing a safe and nurturing learning environment is a primary goal at BNS. A sense of order is necessary for children to feel secure and direct their full attention to learning.

We believe the foundation of an orderly environment is self-discipline. Teachers and other adults in the school model self-control and respect for others. They also actively teach children self-discipline by giving them opportunities to make choices and by guiding their decisions with questions, suggestions and discussions about consequences. Students are given more responsibility as they progress toward independence and demonstrate their ability to make appropriate choices. Interactions between all the members of the BNS/BCS community are founded on respect, fairness and cooperation.

One part of conflict resolution is the Peer Mediation Program, in which a group of the oldest students are trained to mediate disputes between other students. They learn to use a process designed to help the adversaries understand each other's point of view and come to a mutually satisfying resolution. When there is a conflict between children, they are expected to resolve it in a non-violent way and they are assisted in this when necessary by the trained peer mediators as well as by teachers and other adults.

The goal is for children to develop inner controls and an understanding of how to express ideas and feelings and interact with others in a positive, constructive way. This provides the best environment for the pursuit of learning.

We enforce an absolute rule: No hitting and no hitting back.

AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

Our fee-for-service After School Program is managed by Jennifer Fleming, Veronica Trevino and Kavan Greene. and is supervised by our licensed teachers. It is available to all students. After School is open from dismissal until 5:45 p.m. Registration forms are required in order for children to attend the after school program. Full details about the program and special after school workshops are distributed through backpack mail early in the school year.

COMMUNICATING WITH FAMILIES

Backpack Mail

Every child is asked to have a notice folder or notebook that they carry back and forth to school every day. The school will use this folder or notebook to send home information about school events, a weekly letter from the principal, and other news. Teachers should use this system to give parents information about what is going on in the class.

Parent Teacher Conferences

Conferences are held twice a year — in November and March. Teachers should send a notice home to schedule these conferences. If a student is at risk for repeating the grade, another conference is scheduled for the end of January.

School E-Groups

The school has two egroups which offer another way to stay connected to the school and community:

- The BNS/BCS egroup is a place for school related announcements and is moderator post only. To subscribe send an email to BNS_BCS-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. Please describe your connection to the schools. Within a short while you'll be on the email list and you'll learn how to receive each email as it is sent, or as a daily or weekly digest.
- The BNS/BCS Community egroup allows for direct postings of information of interest to the school community (apartments available, fantastic show for children, etc.). To subscribe send an email to BNS_BCSCCommunity-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. If you need assistance or have questions about the school egroups please contact Parent Coordinator Amy Sumner 718.923.4750 x207.

School Website—this may need to be updated !!!!

You can visit the school website at www.bns146.org.

BNS Student Support Services

ACADEMIC INTERVENTION SERVICES (AIS):

Students who do not have IEPs may be referred by their teacher for academic intervention support. Students receiving intervention will work with the intervention teachers for specific periods of time with the goal of addressing a need and then discontinuing the service.

Early in the school year, the intervention teachers offer teachers assistance in assessing students in reading and math. Assessments are provided for new students, students who were previously given intervention, or for students whose level of understanding in reading and/or math needs greater clarification. Subsequently, the AIS teacher and classroom teacher meet to discuss findings and a plan for intervention (see Student Academic Intervention Plan in appendix). Parents are informed that the child has been recommended for additional academic support through AIS.

Students may be referred by the classroom teacher for AIS at any time throughout the school year. Support services are offered as push-in or pull-out, according to the agreed upon plan of the AIS and classroom teachers.

AIS teachers and classroom teachers meet regularly to discuss the progress of students receiving intervention and to determine next steps. Intervention teachers should provide classroom teachers with an update of progress in the area of intervention and should be available for conferencing with the family along with the classroom teacher. It is important that AIS teachers and classroom teachers not give mixed messages to families regarding the student's progress. Therefore, communication with families should pass through the classroom teacher primarily.

SPECIAL EDUCATION AT BNS

Special Education programs and services offered at BNS include: Resource Room (SETSS), Collaborative Team Teaching (CTT), 12:1:1 Kindergarten/Grade 1, 12:1 Grades 2-3 and 12:1 Grades 4-5; Speech, Counseling, Occupational Therapy, and Physical Therapy. In addition, as indicated on a student's Individual Educational Plan (IEP), a student may be eligible for extended time on testing, assistive technology, audiological equipment, and other special equipment. In addition to her role as SETSS teacher, Regina Gori is coordinator of special education services at BNS.

REFERRAL FOR EVALUATION PROCESS

Melissa is the Individual Educational Plan (IEP) coordinator. Her primary role as IEP coordinator is to keep track of, organize and distribute all paperwork that relates to IEPs from initial referral for evaluation to implementation of services, including continuation and modification of services.

It is very important to keep Regina Godfrey, as the head of AIS, and Melissa Hart informed of anything to do with referrals. They should NEVER be surprised by a referral being submitted.

An initial referral to the Committee on Special Education (CSE) is done to determine if a student is in need of or qualifies for special education services.

BEFORE A REFERRAL IS INITIATED, ALL RELEVANT GENERAL ED INTERVENTIONS, SUPPORTS AND MODIFICATIONS MUST BE FULLY EXPLORED. This may include but is not limited to:

- a behavior management plan
- a personal intervention plan
- reading support (AIS, extended day, Wilson, guided reading, great leaps, etc.)
- math support (AIS, extended day, pull out, stern, great leaps, etc.)
- implementing schools attuned accommodations and strategies
- at- risk services (speech, OT, PT, counseling, SETSS)
- repeating a grade

If intervention has been in place and the student appears to need further or different support please bring your concerns to Regina Godfrey and Melissa. We have two committees that can be very helpful in exploring appropriate supports for individual students: Academic Intervention Services (AIS) and the Pupil Personal Committee (PPC). The AIS is comprised of the intervention staff, IEP coordinator, Math coach, Regina Godfrey, and Anna. The PPC is comprised of the IEP coordinator, special education service providers, evaluators, Regina Godfrey, and Anna.

Our on staff service providers can also perform an informal screening to help determine if further testing is necessary. These include Speech and Language, Occupational Therapy, Resource Room and Counseling screenings.

PLEASE DISCUSS THE POSSIBILITY OF A REFERRAL WITH REGINA GODFREY OR MELISSA HART BEFORE BRINGING IT UP TO A STUDENT'S FAMILY. If a parent/guardian comes to you with a request for a referral for their child, please ask them if they would be willing to meet to discuss the possibility of general education support services, and at risk services. A parent's request for evaluation cannot be refused: if they want an evaluation done, it must be done. An evaluation may only be delayed with parental consent. If a teacher wishes to initiate a referral, concerns should be brought to Regina Godfrey or Melissa Hart. After a review of concerns and interventions in place, it may be determined to increase general education interventions or to begin the referral process.

DIAGNOSIS, SERVICE AND PLACEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS CANNOT BE MADE WITHOUT COMPLETED TESTING. PLEASE DO NOT PREDICT THE OUTCOME OF A REFERRAL FOR A STUDENT'S FAMILY. Please remember that a referral is a question: What does this student need to be successful in school?

REFERRAL PROCEDURE:

When it is agreed that a referral for evaluation is the appropriate next step, or if a parent requests an evaluation, we will need all of the following:

A letter of request from a parent or guardian in their own words and hand writing (this can be brief and on loose leaf paper) – it must include the date, a request, the parent's signature and current contact information.

- PARENT LETTERS MUST BE FOWARDED TO MELISSA WITHIN 24 HOURS.
- *a completed referral form from the classroom teacher. You can get this from Melissa or you can download it at: <http://uft.org/member/forms/SPEDInitial%20RefFormCSE726062.pdf>
- COMPLETED REFERRAL FORMS MUST BE SUBMITTED WITHIN 5 DAYS OF THE PARENT LETTER.
- Relevant anecdotes (dated descriptions of learning behaviors and/or work samples)
- The student's cumulative folder with health card
- Copies of any private evaluations that the parent may have had done (this is not required but can be useful)

All of the above is forwarded to Melissa Hart. She will assemble a packet and submit it to CSE. It can take about two weeks for the paperwork to be officially clocked in, and thirty working days from that "clock-in date" for the evaluation to be completed. At that time, an Educational Planning Conference (EPC) will be scheduled to present the findings and recommended services. This EPC should be coordinated with Melissa Hart, the classroom teacher, and other support-services staff

Questions about referrals as well as documents, or any form of communication that relates to referrals, IEPs, or special education services should be shared with Melissa.

INDIVIDUAL EDUCATIONAL PLANS (IEPS)

Teachers receive copies of the IEPS with the students' cumulative folders. Please report missing IEPS to Melissa. Upon receiving an IEP, a teacher should read the document in order to fully understand the issues addressed, as well as classroom implications and support services to be provided to the student. The IEP should be referred to throughout the school year, including when writing progress reports and planning parent/teacher conferences.

IEPs are confidential legal documents. They should be stored in a secure place – perhaps with cumulative folders. If teachers find any errors on an IEP or the overview sheet, Melissa should be informed as soon as possible. As well, questions regarding the implications of the IEP and services required should be referred promptly to Melissa.

Some important information in an IEP:

- Page 1 – Placement Information – such as GE = general education or special class, and the staffing ratio, children : teachers : paras.
- Page 3 – Academic Performance – this page will have the results of the most recent testing done by the SBST or Committee on Special Education.
- Page 4 – Social Emotional – this page may have suggestions for meeting/managing social emotional needs of the student.
- Page 5 – Health and Physical Development – this page may have information around physical development issues, as well as, health issues such as asthma.
- Page 6 – Goals – there may be several Page 6's. Each area of service – resource room, speech, OT, etc. will have a goal section. These pages can provide important information for your

classroom planning, and help the classroom teacher align their expectations with those of the service providers.

- Page 7 – School Environment and Service Recommendations: this page contains a breakdown of periods spent in SE and in GE, as well as aids and supports, such as a crisis para.
- Page 9 – Participation in school activities, related service recommendations and participations in assessments: this page contains a summary of services the student receives, how often, how long and group size. As well, it will include any testing accommodations the student receives and promotional criteria.

Please let Melissa know if you have any questions about these IEPs. As annual reviews are done, Melissa will bring you copies of the new IEPs.

BNS IEP TIMELINES – INITIALS, TYPE III'S AND ANNUALS

INITIAL CASE

Day 1 - Parent writes letter requesting evaluation of their child, including date, request, signature and current contact information. Forward to Melissa immediately.

Day 2 – Parent letter is submitted to CSE by Melissa. Teacher receives blank referral form and request for cumulative folder.

Days 3-5 – Teacher works on referral form and assembles anecdotes and work samples. Child has a vision and hearing screening.

Day 6 – Teacher hands in completed referral form to Melissa. Packet is submitted to CSE.

Days 10-23 – Social history is taken and evaluations completed.

Day 30 (from clock in date) – EPC is held presenting results of evaluation and recommendations.

TYPE III (RE-EVALUATION OR CHANGE IN PROGRAM OR SERVICES)

Day 1 - Parent writes letter requesting re-evaluation or a specific evaluation of their child, including date, request, signature and current contact information. Forward to Melissa immediately.

Day 2 – Parent letter is submitted to CSE by Melissa. Teacher receives blank Type III form.

Days 3 -5 – Teacher completes and hands in Type III form to Melissa

Day 6 – Type III is submitted to SBST and possibly CSE.

Day 30 (from clock-in date) – EPC is held presenting results of evaluation and recommendations.

ANNUAL REVIEW (COUNTDOWN)

-30 days – Primary service provider arranges a conference with parents and service providers to be held in next two weeks. Primary service provider completes and distributes Notice of IEP Meeting, copying Anna, Donna, Sandra and Melissa. Donna may schedule a triennial to coincide with the annual.

-29 – 15 days – Primary service providers prepares/drafts Pages 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 (if student is in good health), 6, 7, 8, 9. Related service providers prepare Page 6's and Page 5 if student has health concerns. Team holds a pre-conference.

-14 – 10 days - Annual review is held. Attendees should include a general education and a special education teacher, parents/guardians, related service providers and a district representative.

-10 – 7 days – Completed IEP is submitted to Melissa to review for completion and accuracy. If necessary, corrections are made.

-6 days – completed IEP is submitted to SBST for entry in CAP and filing.

-5 days – Melissa distributes copies of completed IEPs to classroom teachers and related service providers.

0 days – IEP is entered and distributed within compliance date.

INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATIONAL PLAN MEETING AGENDA

1. Team Member Introductions: title and role at the IEP Meeting
2. Purpose of IEP Meeting and summary of the IEP Team obligations
3. Review of Procedural Safeguards with parent(s) (Ensure that the parent has a copy)
4. Identification and review of evaluations and other information for consideration
5. Determination of student eligibility (For Initial IEP Meetings only):
 - whether the student has an identified disability; and
 - whether the student requires special education services
6. IEP Development
 - Recommended services and level of service delivery
 - Annual goals*: If goals are currently in draft form, please inform the parent that they are draft only until reviewed, discussed and finalized by the team at the conference. Draft IEP goals are to be brought to Annual Review meetings by the special education teacher and/or Related Service Providers to be discussed and finalized at the meeting with the parent
 - Accommodations, if necessary
 - Promotion Criteria
 - Level 1 Vocational Assessment (age 12+) or Diploma Objective/Transition Plan (age 14+)
 - Develop recommendations by consensus*
 - The DOE has ultimate responsibility to ensure that the IEP includes the services that meet the needs of the student
7. Summary of IEP determinations and opportunity for questions from parents and all other participants
8. Next Steps, as necessary
9. Finalized IEP to be distributed at the end of the meeting or sent to parent
10. Complete "Notice of Recommendation of IEP Meeting" and give/send to parent with a copy of the IEP

BNS FM SYSTEM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

1. Student is identified with a disorder, such as Auditory Processing Disorder, by a licensed audiologist. That audiologist recommends a FM or amplification system.
2. The report is reviewed by a CSE Audiologist to determine if the recommendation is appropriate.
3. If found to be appropriate, the CSE Audiologist in conjunction with the school psychologist determines the type of unit and how it should be utilized by the classroom teacher. This determination includes:
 - Individual and/or classroom amplification systems
 - Times when unit or units are to be used – whole class activities, half group activities, art, Spanish, music class, etc
 - Times when unit is not to be used – gym, recess, classroom work time, etc
 - Training period – unit at home
 - IEP Goals regarding unit or units
4. The IEP will contain this information on pages 1,3,5,7 and 9.

- Page 1 – assistive technology checked off
- Page 3 – academic management needs section
- Page 5 - Health/Physical management needs
- Page 7 – supplementary aids and services – including type of unit and frequency
- Page 9 – testing accommodations

12:1 AND CTT CLASSES AT BNS

BNS has one CTT class on every grade level from Kindergarten to grade 5. We also have one kindergarten and first grade 12:1:1 class, one second and third grade 12:1 class, and one fourth and fifth grade 12:1 class. We strive to include special education students as much as possible into general education classes. Their curriculum is based on the same concepts and topics, and instruction is modified to meet the individual needs of students. CTT and 12:1 classes include “hands-on” activities, classroom trips within and outside of the local community. These activities and trips reinforce different components of the curriculum.

504 PLANS

Education Law 504 (according to the Americans with Disabilities Act) requires that parents/guardians of students with recognized handicapping conditions may apply for appropriate accommodations for their child.

Health related Section 504 applications are available through the office of the BNS DOE nurse, Sandra Gayle. Eligible conditions include asthma, allergies, vision issues, seizures, and many health handicapping conditions. Approval of application may allow for treatment of these health conditions through the school health services..

Section 504 applications requesting accommodations for instructional or testing accommodations may be obtained through the IEP coordinator. Development of a 504 plan for these purposes requires review and approval by the 504 Committee.

All Section 504 applications must be renewed annually.

How and When to Refer for Occupational Therapy (O.T.) Services

School-based OT services for students are ***special education*** services and are recommended only for students with IEPs. Before recommending OT services for non- special education students, teachers must consider whether the student’s function in class warrants requesting a complete special education evaluation, including a social history and psychoeducational testing. If the student does not qualify for Special Education services, the student does not qualify for school based occupational therapy services.

Questions to consider before referring any student are:

- Is this student performing below grade level in any or all subjects?
- Have I consulted with occupational therapists regarding pre-referral intervention strategies, and have these been implemented?
- Does this student have a disability that may be impacting school based functioning?

If answers to the above are yes, the next step is to contact an O.T. regarding your continuing concerns and to request a screening. Parents should be contacted at this time to notify them of your request for a screening, and reasons for your concern. Screenings take place in the classroom, so parent permission is not required but is recommended.

If an O.T. evaluation is recommended by the O.T., parents must request a complete special education evaluation from the School-Based Support Team. This must be done in writing. Once the SBST notifies the O.T. department that a request has been received, the O.T. portion of the evaluation will be done by one of our school-based occupational therapists.

When the entire evaluation is completed, parents and teacher will be invited to attend an Educational Planning Conference, at which point an IEP will be written if services are recommended. The school-based occupational therapists are a resource for teachers in the meantime, and can be consulted to develop strategies to address the student's difficulties in the classroom.

What Is the Role of Occupational Therapists in the School?

- I. School-based occupational therapists can provide staff training and can consult with teachers and parents regarding *all* students in the school.
- II. School-based occupational therapists provide direct intervention services for students mandated to receive OT services according to their IEPs. These services are provided under a doctor's prescription. According to occupational therapy licensing guidelines, we cannot provide pull-out "at-risk" services to students who have not been evaluated and do not have a prescription for services; however,
- III. School-based occupational therapists are school employees, and as such can provide indirect and direct services *in the classroom* to all students.
- IV. School-based occupational therapists address fine and gross motor and motor planning concerns; behavioral problems, particularly as they relate to sensory processing; assistive technology; environmental and ergonomic adaptations; psychosocial supports, including group work; assistance with developing skills for Activities of Daily Living, such as organizational skills.

How Classroom Teachers and School Staff Can Support the Work of OTs

- I. Read and familiarize yourself with mandated students' OT goals and objectives. These should coincide with your own. Review progress and concerns with therapists regularly.
- II. Notify OTs when evaluations are being requested and when meetings are being held. Although OTs are not mandated to attend parent conferences after school hours, we will attend when possible and need to know whenever parent or team meetings are being held. Students are best served when the entire team is involved in all aspects of service.
- III. Consult with the school-based OTs before referring students for O.T. evaluations or screenings. Much time and energy can be saved if teamwork begins from the moment of initial concern.
- IV. Use us! We are here to consult regarding all of our treatment areas, to work to reduce referrals through pre-referral interventions and to evaluate and treat students in need of special education services.

HEALTH SERVICES AT BNS

The Department of Education nurse on the first floor provides first aid and can dispense asthma and other prescription medicine with a note or order from a child's health care provider.

There is a pediatric clinic run by Long Island College Hospital on the 2nd floor. The medical assistant there provides first aid and the pediatric nurse practitioner can treat illness, dispense over the counter and prescription medications (without a note or 504 from a doctor), do physical exams ("check ups"), give vaccinations, do lab work, and complete after school/sports/summer camp forms. These forms cannot be completed by the pediatric nurse practitioner unless a check up has been done in clinic. There is also a social worker who provides individual and group counseling. A child cannot be seen in the LICH Clinic unless the parent has completed a School Based Health Center consent ahead of time.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT AT BNS

Part of what makes BNS unique is the involvement of parents in every aspect of the school. They play an important role at BNS and, you will find, that they are so crucial to efficient communication in the school between parents, teachers and other staff. They are our most priceless resource.

BNS PTA Co-chairs

Briam Moser	646 287-6861	briam@hotmail.com
Jessica Dineen	347.275.0770	Jessicadineen@aol.com

BNS School Leadership Team parent members

Kristin Krase	718.965.9077	kmkrase@yahoo.com
Teri West	917 4143570	Teri@westgrp.net
Caroline Thaler	917 362 1255	cnthaler@yahoo.com

PTA Committees & Contact People

Co-Presidents, Friends of BNS/BCS	Benita Miller	benita@bymcinc.org
Sarah Cassidy	cassidyny@earthlink.net	Chair,
Parent Involvement Committee: Kathy McCullagh	718-499-2820	kathymacz@yahoo.com ,
Chair Arts Committee: Mike Shapiro	718-369-9313	ArtsCommittee@bnsbcs.org
Chair, Fair Trade Catalog Committee: Jamie Luft		jamieluft@verizon.net
Chair, Food and Green Committee: Sheehan, Matt	646 670-1655	sheehan.matthew@yahoo.com

PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

One of the main reasons the Brooklyn New School is considered an alternative school is the unusually high level of parent participation in its governance. Unlike most public schools, BNS is run by a coalition of staff and parents who set the tone of the school, strive to maintain a safe and productive learning environment, set policy and hire personnel. Within this framework, everyone involved with BNS has an opportunity to contribute to and influence the quality of education our children receive. The involvement of parents occurs at all levels, from baking cookies for a fundraiser to assisting the classroom teacher to participating in the BNS Parent Teacher Association (PTA) or the BNS School Leadership Team, which addresses school-specific issues and prepares the annual Comprehensive Education Plan and budgets for BNS.

BNS PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION

Every parent and teacher is automatically a member of the BNS PTA and it is within this body that the greater BNS community discusses issues, sets priorities, forms committees and votes on major resolutions. Here the pulse of the school community is taken.

The PTA meets monthly. It has co-chairs, a treasurer and a secretary. These are elected offices. Elections are held in the spring of the school year. The PTA forms committees at different times to meet the changing needs of the school.

ALL members of the BNS community are welcome and encouraged to attend PTA meetings, which generally happen once a month, on Wednesday mornings.

THE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TEAM (SLT) OF BNS

The School Leadership Team (SLT) of BNS welcomes all parents to attend its meetings to discuss issues specific to BNS.

The 'official' members of the SLT comprise an equal numbers of parents and staff. Included are the principal, the staff United Federation of Teachers representative, staff representatives elected by the staff as a whole, the BNS PTA chair/s and parent members. The parent members are elected by the parent body as a whole. At the end of the year, the SLT is responsible for completing the Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP) and the school budgets. ALL members of the BNS community are welcome and encouraged to attend SLT meetings, which generally happen once a month, in the afternoon.

CLASS PARENTS

A crucial link in the chain of communication within BNS is the Class Parent. Parents can volunteer to be a class parent for their child's classroom. This responsibility can be shared by two or more parents per class. It is a year's commitment to be the liaison between the parents of that class and the teacher as well as the larger community. It is important for the class parents to initiate contact with the teacher and other parents in the class and then to work together to find ways to support the teacher and involve parents. Some specific duties may include preparing class phone lists and phone trees, organizing class events, potlucks, snacks, supplies and chaperones for class trips. Class parents organize the funding and purchase of a class gift prior to the winter break.

Class parents are important connections to the parent body when it comes time to get the word out about school-wide fundraisers and other events that rely on parent participation. They play a big role in preparing for the Spring Fling fundraiser. Each class is asked to create a basket of items to be auctioned at the evening's silent auction. The class parents coordinate this effort for their class, in consultation with the Spring Fling organizers.

FRIENDS OF BNS/BCS

The Friends of BNS/BCS is a non-profit organization dedicated to the support of BNS/BCS and the PTA. Friends has provided important financial support to the PTA and BNS/BCS making possible the funding of our overnight trips to environmental camps, improvements to our facilities and other projects/purchases not affordable through normal DOE appropriations. In these times of severe budgetary constraints, the financial support of our parent body has become increasingly crucial to the continued standard of excellence our schools provide in their curriculum.

As a 501{c}3 (a legal non-profit organizational status) Friends of BNS/BCS can not only fundraise through annual school events, but can also apply for foundation grants and tax-deductible donations.

Teachers interested in getting involved in fundraising activities are encouraged to attend Friends of BNS/BCS monthly meetings and volunteer for fundraising events at school. Officers of Friends of BNS/BCS are appointed by its board, which includes BNS/BCS parents. Very often the school will be able to use DOE funds to pay for supplies and other resources. Periodically the school needs to ask Friends to fund a particular activity, material or resource. Please use the appropriate form (see Appendix) when asking PTA for funds or for reimbursement and pass-through monies. All check requests should be approved by Anna or Regina.

OTHER PARENT COMMITTEES

The Arts Committee

The BNS-BCS Arts Committee is a team of parents and teachers working closely to support arts enrichment for our students and our community. Our success depends in large part on parent involvement from all the grades, Pre-K through 12th. A few representative projects: ceramics programming for the elementary and high schools, lights and sound improvements for the auditorium, equipment for the middle school music program, and a new museum to showcase work by students, teachers, and visiting artists. We'd love to hear from you!

The Food and Green Committee

The Food and Green Committees have merged, finding that they share a common interest in creating a healthy and environmentally conscious school experience. Some of the past projects of these committees have included offering afterschool cooking classes, installing planters in the front of the building, supporting building recycling efforts and organizing a community celebration of Earth Day.

The Fair Trade Committee

The fair trade committee organizes the fair trade catalog sale in the fall in which the school community sells fairly traded coffee, tea, and chocolate from Equal Exchange to raise money for our schools and to support small farmers in the developing world. We also sponsor a fair trade table at other school events such as the Harvest Festival and Earth Day.

SPECIAL FAMILY EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Traditions continue to develop at BNS. Among these are events that involve the entire BNS community: children, their families, teachers and other staff. In the recent past some very successful events have been an Earth Day event, a family science night, and a Children's Extravaganza. In other years a holiday potluck dinner and a summer picnic have brought families together.

The PTA is organizing two community building fund-raising events:

- The Apple Festival brings families out for a day of fun early in the school year.
- The Spring Fling is a grown-ups' night out, with a silent auction, restaurant tastings, and dancing to live music.

All these events are important because in addition to celebrating our various histories and cultures, they help families to get to know each other and the school and as a result build the community that is BNS/BCS.

