

Parent Handbook 2009-2010



P.S. 295

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Our Mission

Strengthened by the diversity of our school community, we believe that each child has the potential to meet high standards. With a deep commitment to the arts, our school strives to provide quality, academically rigorous, developmentally appropriate, standards-based instruction through integrated teaching practices that are experiential, child-centered and project-based. With the support of strong parent involvement and community partnerships, we create an environment that nurtures the soul artistically and academically. An ongoing, teacher-driven professional development program inspires a commitment to learning and ensures a sustainable future for all our students.

Our Vision

PS 295 is a community that embraces diversity by nurturing strengths and talents to educate the whole child socially, academically, culturally and artistically through differentiation in all facets of learning. In recognizing that all children learn in different ways, we believe that an arts integrated curriculum cultivates a more meaningful discovery of self, enhances prior knowledge, supports content and language development and encourages a strong respect and appreciation for the arts. Strengthened by the commitment of our parent community, we value their participation and are dedicated to developing a strong partnership between home and school. Through collaboration and communication each member feels supported and encouraged to take risks, share ideas and become an active participant in their own learning. Our strong professional development program provides ongoing learning and leadership opportunities for all members, while offering students an exemplar for becoming lifelong learners and leaders of the future.

The School Leadership Team (SLT)

PS 295 is governed by a School Leadership Team (SLT) comprised of the Principal, Assistant Principal, two PTA officers, elected teachers and parents. The core responsibility of the SLT is to develop the school's Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) that is aligned with school budget. In that role the team evaluates the effectiveness of the school's educational programs and their impact on student achievement. The SLT sets priorities for budget, staffing, curriculum, parent involvement, building maintenance, security and future growth. Elections are held in the late spring. Elected members serve a term of two years. Meetings are open to all parents to observe; however, only SLT members may vote and participate in conversation during meetings.

How to Access Your SLT

If you have a subject to be addressed by the SLT, please place a written request in the SLT mailbox located in the main office at least two weeks in advance of scheduled meetings. Please refer to our school website, www.ps295.org, for the SLT schedule of meetings.

The Parent Teacher Association (PTA)

PS 295 enjoys the strong support of its Parent Teacher Association (PTA). PTA members raise money, organize events and work to enhance our school community. PS 295's PTA actively encourages all parents to join at any time. Dues are on a pay-what-you-can basis (ranging from \$5 - \$100+). Meetings are held monthly throughout the school year, with Spanish translation provided.

The PTA Bulletin Board is a place to find school notices, after-school forms, minutes of PTA and SLT meetings, community news, etc... It is located in the cafeteria, near the 18th Street entrance.

The officers of the PTA comprise its **Executive Committee** (also called the **Executive Board**). The members of the Executive Committee of the PTA for 2009-2010 are:

- **Presidents:** Ruth Conroy & Amy Ortiz Castro
- **Vice Presidents:** Yuna Weiss & Donna Waterman
- **Treasurer:** Charlotte Mendelaar & Christina Miller
- **Secretaries:** Tricia Fox
- **Parent Liaison:** Ana Rosales
- **Fundraising Chair:** Kim Quiros

A slate of proposed PTA officers is developed each spring by a Nominating Committee of the PTA, and the election for PTA officers is held at the PTA's annual meeting in June.

School Procedures

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

In an effort to ensure safety for all children we will continue with the same arrival and dismissal procedures. The overall goals of these procedures are for parents to remain outside of the building during arrival and dismissal to provide smooth and safe transitions for staff and children while continuing to welcome parents into the building to be a part of their child's education. The procedures below have been collaboratively developed with the School Leadership Team with the following themes in mind: safety, respect for family, existing community bond, and the importance of communication with staff and other parents.

****PS 295 entrance for arrival and dismissal will be held on the 19th street courtyard only. ****

Parents who enter through the 18th street entrance during arrival or dismissal will be asked to walk around the building to the 19th street entrance.

Morning Arrival

Pre-K - 5

The **school day** is from 8:15 AM to 3:05 PM on Monday thru Friday. Be sure to have your child to school by 8:10 in order to be ready to start the day on time. Students may arrive for **breakfast** in the cafeteria no earlier than **7:45 AM**. Students eating breakfast must enter door "B" unescorted. No parents will be allowed to enter the building for breakfast with their children. This is a Department of Education regulation.

K-5 Only

Morning drop-off for grades K through 5 is in the 19th Street courtyard beginning at 7:45 AM. Students must not arrive in the 19th street courtyard before 7:45 AM. At 7:45 AM there will be a school aide and administrator in the courtyard to supervise the children. We encourage you to drop off your child in the courtyard; however, you are welcome to wait with your child in the courtyard until the teacher arrives for pick up. During inclement weather, students only may enter the building through door "A". Your child will be escorted or sent to their table to wait for the teacher. Parents will not be permitted to wait in the building for their child's teacher during inclement weather. There will be no exceptions. If and only if you have an appointment with your child's teacher you may enter through the 18th street entrance, sign in and go into the main office so the secretary can phone ahead to your child's teacher. You will not be permitted to wait with your child in the cafeteria during arrival.

Teachers lead Kindergarten through Grade 5 students to their classrooms at 8:15 AM. Parents should encourage their children to line up and proceed promptly to their classrooms so that the instructional day can begin on time.

Pre-K Only

Pre-K students must be escorted to their classroom by their parent/guardian. Pre-K parents will enter through door "C" located on the 19th street courtyard no earlier than 8:10 AM. Parents must show their Pre-K Parent Pass to enter the building. There will be a PS 295 staff member to check the pass each day. Please escort your child all the way up to the classroom door. Students can enter their classroom at 8:15 AM. If you arrive past 8:15 AM, you may enter through door "A". In the event that you do not have your pass you must sign in at the security desk at the 18th street entrance.

Lateness: Punctuality is strongly encouraged. All latenesses are recorded on your child's record and can affect entrance into middle school. Students who are late for school must obtain a **late pass** from from the school aide at the table at the 19th street entrance. The 19th street entrance will be locked after 8:45 AM. To enter the building after 8:45 AM you must use the 18th street entrance. At this point a late pass will be issued at the security desk on the 18th street entrance.

Afternoon Dismissal

K-5 Only

Afternoon pick-up is in the 19th Street courtyard at 3:05 PM. Students in grades K-5 will be escorted out of the building by their teachers. Parents will not be permitted to wait inside the building during dismissal. You can pick your child up in the courtyard. During inclement weather each grade will use a particular door to exit from (see below). All parents must wait in the courtyard for their child. Please prepare to wait outside during inclement weather by arriving as close to dismissal time as possible and by bringing an umbrella. During exceptionally inclement weather (snow, torrential rain, etc.), dismissal will be indoors. Students will be seated in the cafeteria by grade. Staff members will quickly dismiss your child to you. Please be prompt and leave immediately after securing your child to avoid overcrowding in the small area.

Kindergarten	Door A
Grade 1	Door C
Grade 2	Door B
Grade 3	Door D
Grades 4 and 5	Door E

Teachers must be informed in advance of any alternate pick-up plans (after-school programs, babysitters, etc.). Please be prompt.

Half-day dismissal is at 12:00 noon.

To leave school before dismissal, children must be signed-out in the main office by their parent/guardian. Except in case of emergency, no student can be signed out after 2:35 PM.

Please note that the 19th street entrance will be unlocked from 7:45-8:45 AM and 2:45-3:30 PM. At all other times the 18th street entrance will be available for use.

Parent Lateness at Dismissal

Dismissal is at 3:05 daily. Parents must arrive on time to pick up their child each day. Children who have not been picked up on time wait in the cafeteria by the 19th street entrance until 3:30 PM. After which time, the 19th street entrance is locked, children report to the main office and parents must enter on the 18th street side. Parents will be required to sign their child out in the "late book" as parent lateness is recorded. Please keep in mind that consistent lateness can be upsetting for the child and is disruptive to the staff. As always, in an emergency situation, please call the main office and explain your lateness and we will be happy to work with you and care for your child.

Attendance and Absence

Regular attendance is critical for a child's self esteem and academic success. If your child is absent, please provide the teacher with a note of explanation. All absences are recorded. Absences can be recorded as "excused" if a doctor's note is submitted as well as a note for religious observances or death in the family; however the absence will still remain on your child's attendance record. Parents can access their child's attendance by inquiring with the classroom teacher or by logging on to www.arisparentlink.org.

If your child has been out of school with a contagious disease (such as chicken pox, strep throat, scarlet fever, etc.) you must bring a doctor's note. Please watch for excessive scratching, which is a sign of head lice. If your child has had head lice and is returning back to school, he or she must report to the nurse before returning to class.

Security

The security of our building is a top priority of our school community. Our security procedures are as follows:

- Pre-K parents will receive a pass to enter the school. All other parents and visitors must sign in with a valid ID with the security guard when entering and leaving the building. When you sign in, the security guard will give you a stick-on pass, which you must wear when you are in the school building.
- If a parent is a regularly scheduled classroom volunteer, that parent's name and volunteer schedule will be given to the Parent Coordinator. While these volunteers are in the school, they must either carry a laminated pass or wear the stick-on pass. Volunteers are also required to sign in and out at the security desk. The Parent Coordinator or the teachers will inform the security guard when parents will be expected (for example, at celebrations, to volunteer with projects, etc.).
- The 19th Street entrance is to be used by PS 295 for the morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up only. At all other times, all parents and visitors must enter and exit from the 18th Street entrance.

Medications

Neither teachers nor the school nurse may dispense any medications unless the student has a "**504 form**" on file. If your child needs any medication, please speak with the school nurse. If your child has a medical problem such as asthma, please also inform the classroom teacher directly so that s/he will be aware of any medical needs your child might have during the day.

CPR and AED

The NYC Department of Education (DOE) has made a concerted effort to increase awareness of sudden cardiac arrest, and help schools be prepared to respond immediately to any incident of such with prompt defibrillation. In accordance with DOE regulations, the following PS 295 staff members have been trained in the use of cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and automated external defibrillator (AED): Lesley Oram, Christine Ellrodt and Amelia Hecker along with other members of the MS 443 staff.

The AED unit is located next to the security desk at the 18th Street entrance (the main entrance). In the event of a medical emergency, staff members are instructed to contact the main office or one of the principals' or assistant principals' offices if no trained responders are in the vicinity.

Student Meals

Free breakfast is available to all PS 295 students from 7:45 AM to 8:15 AM in the cafeteria. Students should not arrive for breakfast before 7:45 AM. Parents are not permitted in the breakfast area.

PS 295 is a Universal Free Meals school and breakfast and lunch are free for all students. Children can opt to bring lunch from home on any day. Weekly menus are posted on the wall in the cafeteria and are available online at www.opt-osfns.org/osfns/ (select "**Brooklyn II/S.I.**" under "Menus by Borough"). Please note that menus are subject to change.

Pre-K students eat lunch in their classrooms (school meals are brought upstairs). For all other students, there are two lunch periods:

Period 3: 10:00 AM – 10:50 AM is for grades K, 1 and 2.

Period 4: 10:50 AM – 11:40 PM is for grades 3, 4 and 5.

Due to an early lunch period for K-2 students, school snack will be provided in the afternoon. Snack menus are also available online at www.opt-osfns.org/osfns/.

Communication

Emergencies

If you need to reach your child **in an emergency**, call the main office at **718-965-0390** and a message will be delivered to your child's classroom as quickly as possible. If you cannot reach the main office, you may also call the PS 295 Parent Coordinator at **347-563-5367**. If she is not available, please call the MS 443/New Voices Parent Coordinator at **347-563-5377**.

If a student has a **minor accident during school hours**, a classmate will escort the student to the nurse's office for first aid. The school nurse will notify you via telephone or letter.

If a student has an **emergency during school hours**, the school will contact the parents/guardians and others listed on the child's **Emergency Contact Card**.

Blue emergency contact cards are extremely important. They must be up to date at all times with current phone numbers and addresses. They also must include any allergies!!

Student Progress

Student Progress: PS 295 issues **Report Cards** three times per year: November, March and June. **Parent-Teacher Conferences**, held in November and March, give parents and teachers the opportunity to review each student's report card and discuss the student's individual progress.

Afternoon and evening appointments are available to accommodate all parents' schedules. Report cards are distributed at Parent Teacher Conferences. If you arrive 10 minutes early to your appointment, you can review the report card before the conference. In addition, you will receive a written progress report three times per year on October 22nd, February 25th and May 27th. This report is a brief snapshot of your child's progress.

Classroom visits

Every year during the month of November, all New York City schools host **Open School Week**. This is a time when parents are invited to visit their child's school and observe the classes in session. We encourage all parents to take advantage of **Open School Week** and come in to see our school in action! During other times of the year, if you would like to visit your child's class, you must set up a time that is convenient for both you and the teacher in advance. During your visit, please be respectful of the teaching and ongoing classroom curriculum. Please do not bring younger siblings into the classroom, as small children can be disruptive to the classroom atmosphere. Additionally, PS 295 hosts "Bagel Bits" once a month. Parents are invited to the school library for breakfast from 8:00-8:30 AM and then visit classrooms from 8:30-9:00 AM during different activities. Your children should remain downstairs, and will be supervised until the teachers pick them up at 8:15.

Requesting a meeting with your child's teacher

When there is something you wish discuss with your child's teacher, please follow these procedures: First, write a note to the teacher requesting a time to meet. If the teacher doesn't respond to your note promptly, please leave a phone message for the teacher in the main office. If you still need assistance reaching the teacher then contact the PS 295 Parent Coordinator (347-563-5367 or 718-965-0390 x4105), who will help to arrange a mutually acceptable time for a meeting between you and your child's teacher.

If you would like to contact your child's teacher via email about a non-urgent matter, please refer to the PS 295 website (www.ps295.org) for a listing of email addresses. Staff members will respond within one week.

Communication Procedures

Notices from the Principal, teachers and PTA will be sent home once a week on Thursdays. This is called "Thursday News". We are hoping to eliminate an excessive amount of paper being used and the misplacing of important notices. Sending home notices once a week will also provide teachers and students with a structured time to carefully hand out and pack up notices in their folders. In the event that your child is absent on a Thursday, please check your child's orange folder the following day. Each Thursday we urge you to check your child's orange folder for the "Thursday News" for a variety of information from the school.

Also use the orange folder as a resource for communication with the teacher any day of the week. Please feel free to write your child's teacher a note and place it in the orange folder at any time.

A PS 295 Calendar of Events will be sent home with the Thursday News each month. This calendar will provide you will important school events. You will also receive a "Grade Newsletter" every other month with curriculum and other classroom updates.

PS 295 Website

The PS 295 Website (www.ps295.org) completed its first year and begins its second year with improved features based in part from the feedback we have received from parents and teachers. Our goal is to provide useful and timely information, chronicle the many events and accomplishments throughout the year, and offer a means of communication between parents, teachers, students, and the administration. For a website, success is measured in how many people visit and use the tools that

we offer. Our 'traffic' has grown steadily, and we strive to continue this curve. Early in the school year, we will offer a website orientation to introduce the new features, and hope that you find them as useful as we are hoping. Working on the site this year will be David Conroy (david@ps295.org), and Tal (tal@295.org). We always welcome your comments and suggestions.

School Climate and Guidelines

PBIS

"PBIS Initiative" and Student Behavior

Positive Behavior Intervention Support is a school-wide initiative to maximize academic achievement and behavioral competence. It is a school-wide strategy for helping all students achieve important social and learning goals. We know that when good behavior and good teaching come together, our students will excel in their learning.

As part of the PBIS program, we will establish several guiding principles for the behavior we expect in all areas of our school. We will explicitly teach those expectations to the students and reward them frequently with positive notes and prizes for their great behavior. The expectations for all student behavior will be clear throughout our building and playground areas, cafeteria, gymnasium, and classrooms. You will be able to ask your student, "What are the rules in your school?" "How do you follow those rules?" "What happens when a teacher sees you following the rules?"

Our school rules will specifically address negative behaviors by providing a clear overview of what being responsible, respectful and safe means throughout our school building. Our ultimate goal is for all students to enjoy a safer school environment and have more time for instruction. We will apply consistent consequences and positive reinforcement for all kids. By detailing every expected behavior and teaching to kids in a positive way, we will provide a common language for everyone in our building, including students, teachers, front office staff and our paraprofessionals.

We believe that by helping students practice good behavior, we will build a school community where all students have an environment where they can succeed and grow

We encourage parents and guardians to remind their children that disruptive or unacceptable behavior hurts all children. When it does occur, it will be discussed with the children involved and their parents or guardians. In setting standards of behavior and discipline procedures, PS 295 follows the NYC Department of Education's *Citywide Standards of Discipline and Intervention Measures*. This document is distributed to all parents and is also available online at:

www.nycenet.edu/parents/PDFs/DisciplineCode.pdf

Homework

Homework is an important part of a student's academic year. The purpose for assigning homework is to give children the opportunity to extend the lessons and practice skills learned in the classroom, engage in critical thinking, and develop good work habits. Homework can also serve as one form of communication between the teacher and the family. It is important that homework does not add stress to family life. Therefore, it is up to the student, family and teacher to share the responsibilities for homework.

Student's Responsibilities	Family's Responsibilities	Teacher's Responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To understand all homework assignments by listening to directions, asking questions when something is unclear and reading directions. To gather all materials necessary to complete assignments before leaving the classroom at the end of the school day. To complete all assignments to the best of your ability. To make up any missed homework that your teacher requires. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide a routine and an environment that is conducive to doing homework (a quiet and consistent place and time, and all necessary materials). To offer assistance but <i>not</i> do the actual homework. To edit your child's work for spelling, punctuation, neatness, etc. To notify your child's teacher if the homework presents a problem. To read all school notices and to respond in a timely manner. To empty your child's backpack regularly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide purposeful homework. To include clear directions and instruction. To implement a system for routinely checking homework. To communicate to the student and family what is expected for completing homework successfully. To communicate with families when students are not consistently completing assignments. To offer students support when struggling with homework independently. To differentiate homework based on needs of students when necessary.

Grading Homework

Consistently completing homework builds good work habits and responsibility. Just as students are responsible for the completion of homework, teachers are accountable for checking and grading homework on a consistent basis. In all grades, homework is a key component on the report card and teachers must assign a grade based on the child's ability to complete the homework. Your child will receive one of the following grades: E (excellent), G (good), S (satisfactory) or N (needs improvement). In Kindergarten and first grade this grade is determined mostly by rate of completion to ensure students are building good habits and routines. Teachers will check homework daily in these grades. On occasion you will receive feedback. In grades 2-5 the report card grade is determined by their rate of completion and their level of accuracy as well. Students are responsible for transferring the information learned during the school day and trying their best to accurately and neatly complete assignments. When teachers notice inaccurate homework, they intervene by supporting the student in class and reaching out to parents.

Each grade team works together to create homework for the entire grade. For example, all first grade teachers require the same exact homework. This builds consistency on each grade level and occurs on all grades. However, homework on each grade level varies. So, as your child moves from 1st to 2nd grade the homework may look very different. Some grades will be given homework packets or homework plans. These methods are intended to help students develop pacing and study habits. Sample homework packets and plans are posted on the school website and will be discussed on curriculum night.

The same consistency is true for homework grading and marking policies. All teachers in grades K-5 work together to create a policy for grading homework and age appropriate consequences for making up homework when necessary. On all grade levels, teachers contact parents, either verbally or written, when their child is struggling or not completing homework. As students move from lower to upper grades they are responsible for making up homework during the school day. In grades 1-3, students who consistently complete homework will receive a monthly certificate for their efforts. Students who consistently do not complete homework may have to make it up during their snack break or center time.

In grades 4 and 5 there is an increase in the amount of homework students are expected to complete. In preparation for the rigors of middle school and the advanced curriculum, students are provided

with a weekly homework plan that explains the expectations for each night. The problem of the week, reading response and social studies assignments are carefully graded and returned to students. All other homework is checked daily for completion and will not be graded. In both grades, students who consistently do not submit homework will be expected to complete it during their recess time. This does not occur unless three or more assignments are missing and the parent has been contacted either written or verbally. As always, there are exceptions and unforeseen circumstances. If anything arises, please send a note or call your child's teacher.

Brief Description of Homework

Homework includes reading every night, as this is an important part of helping each child develop the habit of being a lifelong reader. In grades 1-5, filling in a nightly reading log is a requirement. The written assignments over the course of a week include a balance of assignments in other content areas such as spelling, math, science and social studies, as well as long-term projects. In grades 3-5, writing each night is a requirement.

In Kindergarten, homework is for parents and children to spend time together with books. From September - December, homework is optional in Kindergarten to establish routines. Then from January-June it becomes mandatory. Often, especially in the beginning of the year, this will mean parents reading aloud to children. As the year progresses and kindergarten children bring books home from school, children may be reading both to and with their parents or guardians.

There is no doubt that different children will take different amounts of time to complete homework. Please reach out to the teacher if your child is struggling with completing homework in a timely manner or with the content of it. The following chart shows what we believe is approximately the appropriate amount of time for children in each grade to be spending on homework.

Grade	Reading (to, with or by children)	Written Work	Total
Kindergarten	Parents and children spend time together with books for 10-15 minutes	0-10 minutes	10-15 minutes
Grade 1	10-15 minutes	10 minutes	20-25 minutes
Grade 2	15-20 minutes	10-15 minutes	25-35 minutes
Grade 3	20-25 minutes	20-25 minutes	35-45 minutes
Grade 4	25-30 minutes	25-35 minutes	45-60 minutes
Grade 5	30+ minutes	35-40 minutes	60-70 minutes

Suggested "Climate" at PS 295 Performances

Throughout the school year, PS 295 students share plays, dances and artwork with citywide audiences, the school community and each other. As part of our mission to integrate the arts as a rigorous component of the children's education, we would like our parent community to keep in mind that these events are intended to give your children the experience of performing before a live audience. For the arts staff and the participating students, our culminating performances are much like a "test," with weeks of preparation and hard work leading up to the event. As much as possible, we would like performances to be formal events with a quiet and attentive audience much like one would encounter in the "real world."

Whenever possible, we recommend the following:

- Please do not bring very young children to performances, as they can be very disruptive for the performers. If possible, please take advantage of **on-site babysitting services** which are usually arranged by the PS 295 PTA.

- Please be respectful of the performance space and, unless the teacher has requested your assistance, please do not go backstage during performances.
- Frequent letters go home about performances. Please read them and respond to them. It is a great way to communicate with the arts staff regarding what your child may need (costume, lunch, etc.).

Be sure to talk to your children about their upcoming performance; help them prepare and let them know you take their work seriously. And finally, please come watch and enjoy the show!

Parent Involvement & Policies

Parent Volunteers

We are very proud of the active partnership at PS 295 between parents and the school. Parents help at PS 295 by volunteering for special initiatives or events, joining the PTA and its committees, assisting at lunch and recess, helping in the library, serving on the PTA Executive Committee or joining the School Leadership Team (SLT).

Many parents volunteer in the classrooms in response to a teacher's request. Teachers who would like to have volunteers in their class will plan the time when they most need volunteers so that the Parent Coordinator knows which volunteers are coming and when. Teachers will let the parent volunteers know what is expected of them in the classroom or on trips. If a parent is a regularly scheduled classroom volunteer, that parent's name and volunteer schedule will be given to the Parent Coordinator.

Parents who are not able to come in during school hours might be able to assist with other projects such as developing class lists, making phone calls to other parents about upcoming events, preparing book orders, seeking grants or donations, and assisting with other classroom-related clerical work.

Class Parents

Class Parents help teachers communicate with parents and help parents communicate with each other regarding field trips, parties, classroom supplies, school-wide events, etc. Class Parents are an important link between the PTA and the parent body, helping to spread information about upcoming activities and events. This is a very valuable position □ please tell your child's teacher if you are able to serve as the Class Parent for your child's class.

Parent Coordinator

We encourage parents to meet with or contact the PS 295 Parent Coordinator: Shari Fields Pulido. The Parent Coordinator's role is to assist parents and guardians with school-related problems, and to enhance communication among parents, teachers and the school. In conjunction with the academic coaches, teachers and the principal, the Parent Coordinator at PS 295 will organize workshops to help parents improve the literacy and learning environment at home. Other workshops and meetings will keep parents informed of the school curriculum and will offer parents strategies for getting more involved with their children's education. The Parent Coordinator works closely with the PTA, the School Leadership Team (SLT) and the Class Parents. The PS 295 Parent Coordinator may be reached by cell phone at **347-563-5367** or by email at spulido@schools.nyc.gov

Special Events and Programs

Harvest Festival

The Harvest Festival is our first fundraiser, which takes place in October. This event is packed with fun activities, such as games, music, a Halloween costume parade, storytelling, arts and crafts, raffles, good food, pony rides and much more! We also celebrate The Day of the Dead, where the children participate in traditional Day of the Dead activities. One Day of the Dead activity that is particularly popular is the construction of family dioramas.

We will start planning this event early in September. Please come to the first PTA meeting and find out how you can volunteer to help make this event a great success for the children.

Spring Arts Festival

Produced by the PTA and teachers, the Spring Arts Festival is a weekend affair with games, prizes, crafts, raffles, food, music and more. All students are included. For many families, this event is one of the highlights of the year and a favorite opportunity for parent volunteering. There are some performances by the students, along with a showing of their art work.

Dance-a-thon

Sponsored by the PTA, the Annual Dance-a-thon is the PTA's largest fund raiser of the year. It is a day of music, dancing, food and fun.

After-School Programs

Prospect Park YMCA After-School Program at PS 295: This year the Prospect Park YMCA received funding from the NYC Department of Youth & Community Development to provide an Out-of-School-Time (OST) Program for approximately 75 students here at PS 295. The program will run five days per week, 3:00 PM - 5:45 PM. Recreational activities, arts and crafts, and homework time are offered to the children. The program begins in late September and ends in late June. Information regarding offerings and sign-up will be sent home and posted on the YMCA bulletin board, or parents can call the Prospect Park YMCA at 718-768-7100.

After School Adventurers Program: This year we will continue with our parent-lead after school program that is flexible and provides enriching classes and activities. More information, including cost and schedule of activities will follow in a separate packet.

Field Trips

Several times during the year, each grade enjoys field trips to cultural institutions. Students must have written consent from a parent or guardian to go on trips. Parents will be notified in advance about the trip itself, the cost of the trip (if any), and whether parent chaperones are needed. All parents must sign a permission slip in order for the child to attend. If in the event, there is not a permission slip, your child will remain at the school engaged in class work provided by the teacher.

Curriculum Overview

The curriculum at PS 295 utilizes a balanced literacy approach, with arts integration in the content areas. It is designed to help students become confident, competent readers and independent learners. Small group instruction and cooperative learning approaches allow for effective assessment and teaching.

PS 295's **Curriculum Night** will be held on Thursday September 24th. Parents are invited to hear a description of the school curriculum and have the opportunity to ask questions about teaching methods, classroom schedules, etc.

Regular **workshops for parents** on various aspects of the PS 295 curriculum are offered monthly by various staff members. A schedule will follow shortly.

The Arts: PS 295 students have creative movement, art and drama classes weekly. The arts are an integral part of the core curriculum at PS 295. We also follow the "Citywide Blueprint" curriculum written by the NYC Department of Education to provide every child with a quality arts education. For more on this, go to www.nycenet.edu/projectarts/PAGES/A-childFirst.htm. You may also want to look at www.nycenet.edu/projectarts/.

Science: Grades Pre-K through 5 have weekly science classes where they engage in hands-on learning and are provided with opportunities for exploration.

Literacy: PS 295 follows the workshop model for teaching literacy based on the balanced literacy approach. Teachers implement reading and writing workshops by collaboratively planning units of study. Instruction is differentiated to meet the needs of the diverse student population.

Math: PS 295 follows the workshop model for teaching mathematics and uses Everyday Mathematics as well as our own investigative math. Each class starts the day with "morning math" and includes at least one period of daily math instruction.

Library: PS 295's beautiful library is stacked with books and we have a full-time librarian on staff. Students in particular grades will have opportunities to visit the Library regularly. Materials continue to be obtained and catalogued by the PTA Library Committee. These same volunteers assist with staffing the library, so that as many students as possible can have access and borrowing privileges both during and after school. Any parents with as little as 15 minutes can make a difference. Please drop a note in Susan Weseen's or Shari Fields Pulido's mailbox (main office) if you would like to support our growing library.

Staff Development

PS 295 provides ongoing opportunities for teachers' professional development. Our collaboration with Columbia University's Teachers College focuses on children's reading and writing projects; Also, PS 295 will continue to participate in a collaboration with City College and Math in the City . Other teacher development opportunities include workshops in literature, math in-service training, mentoring, conferences and site visits.

Student Support

PS 295 is dedicated to helping students achieve their best performance and meet New York State and City standards. Programs that address this commitment include:

English as a Second Language (ESL) - assists students who are learning English as a second language.

Speech and Language - assists students with additional needs in speech and language development.

Occupational and Physical Therapy-assists students with fine and gross motor skills.

Guidance Counseling - Our **Guidance Counselor's** office is located in the library. She offers counseling to students, runs a variety of guidance groups, and mediates conflicts between students. PS 295 also has a **Bi-Lingual Social Worker** and a **School Psychologist** as part of our **School-Based Support Team (SBST)**.

Collaborative Team Teaching (CTT) - currently runs through grade 5. These inclusion classes have two teachers integrating special education and general education students, serving children at all levels.

Free or low-cost medical insurance is available for every child through "Child Health Plus." Please see the **Nurse** or the Parent Coordinator for information.

Checklist of Required Forms

It is necessary that you complete these forms in a timely manner. The Community Walk permission slip and the Photo Release forms are attached. Return them to your child's teacher by placing them in your child's orange folder. You will receive all other forms in the early days of school. Complete them upon receipt, and return in your child's orange folder.

- Permission Slip for Community Walks** This allows your child to accompany his/ her class on neighborhood walks and on trips to the playground.

- Photo Release Form** This permits the photographing of your child to document activities and display artwork and achievements around the school building and possibly on the school web-site.

- Emergency "Blue Card"** This enables the school to contact you should the need arise. Be sure to include at least three emergency contacts.

- School-Parent Compact** Please read carefully, sign and return to your child's teacher.

PS 295

The Studio School of Arts and Culture

330 18th Street, Brooklyn New York 11215 718 965-0390 FAX 718 965-0603

Deanna Marco, Principal

Lisa Pagano, Assistant Principal

Permission Slip for Community Walks

My child, _____, may accompany his/ her class on all neighborhood walks and trips to the playground from September 2009 through June 2010.

Parent Signature _____

Date _____

Photography and Videotaping Release Form

My child, _____, may be photographed and/ or videotaped for the purpose of documenting and displaying class work and activities done during the 2009-2010 school year. I am aware that photos may be displayed in the building and on the school web-site.

Parent's Signature _____

Date _____

PS 295 Staff

2009-2010

Classroom Teachers					
Class #	Room #	Teacher	Class #	Room #	Teacher
PreK 001	115	Vera Bittner*	3-301	103	Damaris Alejandro
PreK 002	116	Lori Santos	3-302	105	Natalie Meade
K-012	108	Brigitte Paino	3-303	104	Christine Ellrodt
K-013	110	Priscilla Shen	3-303	104	Giana Knoblauch (SE)*
K-014	114	Stacy Gonzalez*	4-401	208	Valerie Jadamba
K-014	114	Joan Radigan (SE)	4-402	206	Colette Kenny*
1-101	112	Lesley Oram	4-402	206	Kasey Van Kleeck (SE)
1-102	111	Molly Mackaman	4/5-451	214	Angela Ciambrone
1-103	113	Amelia Hecker	5-501	216	Williy Pang*
1-103	113	Allie Gold (SE)*	5-502	215	Linda Mazza
2-201	106	Allison Straussman	5-502	215	Sherese Jackson (SE)
2-202	101	Karen Mercurio			
2-203	102	Claire Dougherty*			
2-203	102	Javier Pacheco (SE)			

Clusters			Support Services	
Science	Rm 107	Kerri Hecker	<u>Speech:</u> Deborah Spyliopoulos/ Jocelyn Wood <u>ESL:</u> Lauren Sweeney/ Norma Levine <u>Guidance Counselor:</u> Heather Stoelting	<u>Occupational Therapists:</u> Susan Campbell/Vacancy <u>Resource Room/</u> <u>CTT Push-In:</u> Gail Bookman
Art	Rm 109	Carol Parlato		
Drama	Studio	Caitlin Barton-Landfield		
Movement	Studio/Gym	Jenn Higgins		
Library	Library	Susan Weseen		

School Based Support Team		Paraprofessionals		
		Corinne Logozo	Edwin Barnes	Nieves Velez
Psychologist	Chris Pacifico	Bertha Plasencia	Tyrone Watson	Maribel Pineda
Social Worker	Maritza Quinones-Buckley	Rachia Hazel	Idanes Font	Michele Martell
		Maria Moreno	Edwin Gonzalez	Melissa Torres
		Nicholas Durand		Talal Alassari

Cafeteria Staff		School Secretaries	School Aides
Fran DiCesare	Michael Horan	Ellen Buddenhagen	Marilyn Henry
Maria Rodriguez	Savitri Gupta	Marlina Basile	Sonia Caban
Arlene Urano			

Custodial Staff		School Nurse	Safety Officers	Parent Coordinator
Fireman	Adel Almathil	TBA	TBA	Shari Fields Pulido
Cleaner	Charlie Barbieri			

School-Parent Compact

2009-2010

School Responsibilities/PS 295 will:

- ⇒ Provide high quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment that enables the participating children to meet the State's student academic achievement standards as follows:

By providing small class size where possible in heterogeneously grouped classes, as well as intensive professional development for teachers, we will provide our students with a child centered, arts enriched, risk free learning environment that encourages independence and fosters academic achievement.

- ⇒ Provide parents with frequent reports on their children's progress and hold parent-teacher conferences to discuss the individual child's achievement. Specifically, the school will provide reports as follows:

Three report cards in November, March and June with report card grades and a narrative on individual progress as well as two additional progress reports in January and April.

- ⇒ Provide parents reasonable access to staff and means for communication. Specifically, staff will be available for consultation with parents as follows:

Parents can contact staff through the school secretary or the parent coordinator to schedule meetings. Using the orange communication folder, parents can also send in a note to the teacher. Additionally, the school is in the process of developing a school web-site with valuable information along with DOE emails of staff members to support consistent communication.

Every other month teachers create a grade newsletter to update parents on special events and curricular initiatives.

- ⇒ Provide parents opportunities to volunteer and participate in their child's class, and to observe classroom activities as follows:

Each month parents are invited to Bagel Bits to observe and participate in different aspects of the curriculum. Both the drama and dance programs have multiple grade sharings each year. Parents are also invited to volunteer by sharing an expertise in our Enrichment program. Each month grades engage in publishing parties to share their writing with families. We also encourage and invite parents to attend holiday celebrations, class trips and help with special classroom projects. Family Science Night three times per year allows parents to engage in hands-on activities with their children. Monthly parent workshops provide parents with learning opportunities to support their child's academic progress.

Parent Responsibilities

We as parents will support our children's learning in the following ways:

- ⇒ Make education a priority in our home by:
 - making sure my child is on time and prepared every day for school;
 - promoting good attendance;
 - talking with my child about his/her activities every day;
 - scheduling daily homework time;
 - providing an environment conducive for study;
 - making sure that homework is completed.
- ⇒ Volunteer in my child's classroom when possible;
- ⇒ Participate, as appropriate, in decisions relating to my children's education;
- ⇒ Participate in school activities on a regular basis;
- ⇒ Stay informed about my child's education and communicate with the school by promptly reading all notices from the school or the DOE either received by my child or by mail and responding as appropriate;
- ⇒ Read together with my child every day;
- ⇒ Communicate positive values and character traits, such as respect for others, hard work and responsibility;
- ⇒ Help my child accept consequences for negative behavior;
- ⇒ Be aware of and follow the rules and regulations of the school;
- ⇒ Support the school's discipline policy;
- ⇒ Express high expectations and offer praise and encouragement for achievement;
- ⇒ Communicate pertinent information to school in regards to social and academic achievement.

School Staff-Print Name	Signature	Date
Parent(s) - Print Name		
Student (if applicable)- Print Name		

(NOTE: The NCLB law does not require school personnel and parents to sign the School-Parent Compact. However, signatures are encouraged.)