



CLASSICAL

CHARTER SCHOOLS

STRUCTURE AND OUR MISSION

Success doesn't happen by chance. Organizations must plan for it, meticulously. Everything we do at Classical Charter Schools is highly structured to achieve our mission of providing effective teaching and learning environment. Some parts of our structure are highly visible: formal uniforms, orderly lines, attentiveness during lessons and, at times, complete silence. Our school environment is particularly striking to visitors, especially those familiar with typical conditions in public schools. However, structure means far more to us than rules and uniforms. By leaving little to chance and much to thoughtful planning, organization and structure, we ensure scholars are prepared for success in high school, college and beyond.

The Classroom

We believe in the old adage, "a place for everything and everything in its place." Our teachers organize furnishings and supplies thoughtfully to optimize space and ensure safe, efficient navigation. Materials have designated storage locations and labels for easy access. All classroom libraries are organized by reading level and genre so that scholars and teachers can quickly find the books they need. All classrooms have uniform and consistently positioned posters that reinforce procedures and support the curriculum, facilitating scholars' access to and use of resources they need to be academically successful.

Time Saving Procedures

We carefully choreograph nearly all scholar activities. The goal is to maximize learning time by minimizing time spent transitioning or distributing materials. Scholars know exactly what to do and when, and often silently, in order to save time and to be respectful of other scholars in the classroom or building who are still working. Highly structured procedures can initially feel unnatural to some teachers, but the pay-off is tremendous. If a class can line up in 15 seconds instead of 60, and this procedure is repeated 4 times a day, it will save over 9 hours over the course of a school year: more than a day's worth of learning time. When time saving procedures are applied to the myriad of daily activities – passing out papers, accessing materials, using the classroom library, finishing an assignment, moving from rug to desk, etc. – the efficiency benefit is game-changing.

Scheduling

The number of students and staff in our school building during any day necessitates careful scheduling. Coordination does not happen effortlessly, but requires meticulous planning. Class schedules are organized to optimize mastery of content while taking into consideration the availability of teacher-specialists and shared facilities like lunchrooms and restrooms. Lunch schedules and hallway transitions are timed to minimize traffic.

Curriculum Design

Our curriculum is based on the Common Core Learning Standards and New York Performance Standards. The SBCCS curriculum development flows in the order below:

- Planning a scope and sequence for each grade that includes every standard in a logical order;
- Planning each unit of study to align with the scope and sequences;
- Planning each daily objective based off of the unit goals;
- Planning individual lessons to lead scholars to mastery of the daily objectives.

This structure ensures that every teacher is prepared to teach scholars what they need to know to be successful in the next grade. Additionally, we have weekly lessons aligned to our character pillars to ensure that our scholars demonstrate character growth.

Code of Behavior

Our school-wide behavior code provides clear expectations for students, from grade to grade and classroom to classroom. While most schools have codes of conduct, SBCCS scholars are held to extremely high standards that are strictly enforced. Teachers invest time imparting to their scholars both the expectations and the rationale behind these standards, which are enforced throughout the day using a consistent system of rewards/incentives and penalties/consequences. The resulting calm, respectful and focused environment maximizes student concentration and learning. Further, our behavior code relates to character development by teaching the behaviors that true citizens are expected to demonstrate daily, thereby minimizing disruptions to learning and also prepares our scholars to be engaged citizens who follow rules set by their communities.

Appearance and Image

Dirtiness and disorder lower the morale of both scholars and teachers and distract from the focus on academics. Therefore the school is vigilant about keeping classrooms, offices, copy rooms and common spaces clean, uncluttered and neatly organized. We want scholars and staff to take pride in their environment and be able to focus on learning. Additionally, we want our scholars to take pride in their personal appearance since how one dresses affects how one is perceived. Our scholars come to school in a neat, clean and complete uniform every day, and our staff models how adults dress in professional settings.

At-Risk and Other Interventions

We have several structures in place to ensure that scholars who have extra instructional or emotional needs get the appropriate services. We test scholars on reading at predetermined times throughout the year and admit students to our At-Risk Reading program as needed. Weekly Grade Team Meetings allow teachers structured time to analyze other academic progress and determine what academic interventions are needed for an individual scholar. Further, if teachers become aware of a scholar with emotional or behavioral struggles, there is an established process for assessing their need and providing them with a behavior plan or counseling.

Professional Development Program

Our professional development program is systematic and develops all teachers into successful leader-managers of scholar growth. All teachers are observed frequently and engage in feedback meetings. Both new and veteran teachers are guaranteed the ongoing, structured support they need; they have an expert checking in with them at least weekly. Our systematic approach to professional development means that teachers expect and even request observation, rather than feeling anxious or singled out. This encourages teachers to regularly use observation feedback as a tool for improvement.

Business and Operations

Our administrative teams are focused on creating systems that help SBCCS reach its mission. The Operations Team has developed systems to efficiently deal with supply requests from teachers, to make and distribute copies for all classrooms, grade and track school wide assessments, monitor and maintain the cleanliness of school spaces, and much more. These tasks are completed more quickly when centralized and save our teachers time so they can focus on teaching. Further, our Business Team's adherence to strict financial management procedures ensures we remain financially viable. At a basic level, financial diligence has allowed us to pass audits. More substantially, it has provided financial stability and sustainability to help avoid budget cuts and provide salaries that attract and retain the best talent.