



CLASSICAL

CHARTER SCHOOLS

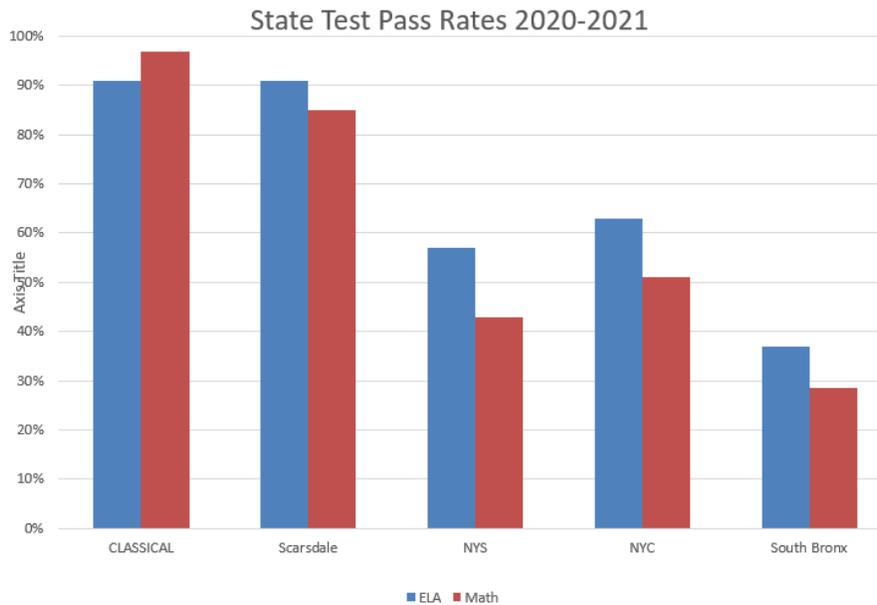
THE ROLE OF BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT IN SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

Overview

Charter schools across the nation have been given an opportunity to show that they can do better by students, particularly children in low-income communities. Many, including CCS, have been successful, and we would like to acknowledge that we owe a debt of gratitude to the still-great public-school tradition in this country that has allowed, and even encouraged, the charter experiment across our country. We also consider it an imperative to explain our progress and provide actionable advice for making mainstream public education better everywhere, and especially in the more underserved communities within our cities. This document provides the rationale behind the need for behavior management systems and their impact on achieving success in schools.

Our Track Record

Quantitative measures of our performance to date have been impressive. Below we compare our pass rates from the 2020-2021 academic year to Scarsdale, New York State, New York City, and the South Bronx.



Reasons for Success

For context, it's important to note that CCS is operating in the heart of the most financially disadvantaged Congressional district in the United States and in the lowest academic performance borough in NYC. Obviously, demographics are not destiny.

While identifying causal factors of school performance is difficult, we believe we have clear-enough evidence that behavior management systems are a critical foundational element. Behavior management contains two basic components: rules and enforcement. We believe the trick is in making the rules as close to inviolable as possible, in the minds of both scholars and parents. By acculturating all stakeholders in the rules and providing clear enforcement, our school can focus on the academic work that so many teachers in the city never get to.

Our Code of Conduct

CCS' Code of Conduct represents the framework for all efforts to accomplish the school's overriding mission: "developing liberated scholars and citizens of impeccable character." The Code sets forth specific practices and regulations that were established from the outset to:

- provide a safe, secure and respectful environment where students can feel comfortable and focus solely on learning;
- prepare students to become engaged citizens who follow rules set by their communities.

The Code provides an exhaustive list of behavioral infractions and includes a demerit system and other consequences for such infractions, including detention, suspension and, as a last resort, expulsion. Overseeing this system -- and a critical element in its effectiveness -- is the Dean of Students, who is also charged with managing the school's important and robust parent relations program.

Enforcement

Having rules and regulations is not particularly unique (although uniforms are generally unfamiliar to large inner city public schools). The trick is making these rules a way of life, a non-negotiable, enforced in such a way that they become an acceptable, and often appreciated, routine for scholars.

At CCS, orientation begins with parents agreeing to, and signing, adherence to the school's Code of Conduct. With expectations established, enforcement becomes critical. For example, strict adherence to the uniform code means that if a scholar shows up without or in an incomplete uniform, parents are contacted immediately and are expected to provide the missing item(s). This clearly and urgently sends the message that standards will not be compromised.

For other infractions, there is an arsenal of actions available to teachers and administrators. Some reflect policies that were established early in the charter movement or have been evolving as newer schools and models have emerged; some have been developed by individual CCS teachers and institutionalized here through use. Some examples: utilizing countdowns to re-direct student focus; non-verbal hand signals used by both teachers and scholars to communicate expectations; a routine "at rest, at attention" pose of hands clasped in front, on the desk; catchy, theme-related, chants and songs; individualized classroom methods to provide consequence for, or reward incentives to avoid, lesser infractions (i.e., those not requiring more serious or formal procedures as mandated by the Code of Conduct).

Teacher Training and Overall Impact of Behavior Management

New teachers are introduced to the CCS system at the outset of their training and receive ongoing support to enable them to apply it effectively, especially during their initial year. This support is provided by grade-level colleagues and team leaders along with the Dean of Students and other staff through frequent classroom observations and goal-oriented feedback.

The result of this process is the single most obvious aspect of the CCS program. It creates an atmosphere that every visitor to the school, especially those familiar with typical conditions in regular public schools, is struck by immediately and with force. Any classroom visited or observed, even at the Kindergarten level, and any other student activity, including movement throughout the corridors or in the lunchroom is characterized by the students' neat and clean appearance, quiet and attentive behavior, and overall attitude of being where they are for the express purpose of learning.

And learn they do.