



CLASSICAL

CHARTER SCHOOLS

ORGANIZATIONAL MISSION AND STRUCTURE

Successful organizations do not happen by chance, and schools are no exception. Leaders and staff dream of a new and better future reality, and then they make plans for getting there. Great organizations build, maintain, and defend interwoven structures that synergistically support the work needed to fulfill the mission.

Classical's mission references a "highly structured setting." This setting goes far beyond the classroom and colors each aspect of our work. Some parts of our structure are highly visible: formal uniforms and dress codes, orderly lines, attentiveness during lessons and, at times, requiring complete silence. Our school environment can be striking to visitors, especially those more familiar with typical conditions in public schools.

But structure means far more to us than rules and uniforms. If structure stopped there, the school loses its joy, if not its true purpose. By leaving little to chance and much to thoughtful planning, organization, and structure, we ensure scholars are joyfully 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 consistently and thoughtfully positioned posters that message our procedures and class rules. This facilitates scholar access to and use of the resources they need to be academically successful.

Time Saving Procedures

There's a beautiful choreography in well-run schools, in order to maximize learning time by minimizing time wasted in 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 the 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 7 times a day, it will save over two days of learning time every year. 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 benefit in efficiency is game-changing.

Scheduling

The number of students and staff in our school building during any day necessitates careful scheduling. Coordination requires meticulous, deep 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, and traffic jams.

Curriculum Design

Our curriculum is home-grown and based on the New York Performance Standards (often called Next Generation). Classical's 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 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

School-wide behavior codes provide clear expectations for students and that is consistent across each school site. While most schools have codes of conduct, our scholars are held to high standards that are consistently upheld. Our teachers invest time imparting to their scholars both the expectations (the how) and the rationale (the why) behind these standards, which are enforced throughout the day using a consistent system of incentives and consequences. Teachers also establish systems and routines within the classroom that align with the expectations of the code of behavior, allowing scholars to develop the ability to self-regulate and become the leaders we know they can choose to be. The resulting environment is calm, respectful, and focused. 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 preparing our scholars to be engaged and productive citizens who follow the 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 learning and growing. Therefore, we are vigilant about keeping classrooms, offices, copy rooms and common spaces clean, uncluttered and neatly organized. We want our scholars and staff to take pride in their environment and their community. 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 our teachers structured time to analyze academic progress and determine what academic interventions are needed every scholar. 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

Our professional development program is systematic and develops our both our new and our veteran teachers into successful managers and leaders. All teachers are observed at least weekly and engage in feedback meetings with coaches and other teachers. 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.

Talent, Business and Operations

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