

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2020 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program**

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [ ] Title I    [X] Charter    [ ] Magnet [ ] Choice

Name of Principal Mr. Lester Long  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name South Bronx Classical Charter School  
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 977 Fox Street  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Bronx                      State NY                      Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 10459-3320

County Bronx

Telephone (718) 860-4340                      Fax (718) 860-4125

Web site/URL https://classicalcharterschools.org/    E-mail llong@southbronxclassical.org

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent\* Lester Long                      E-mail llong@southbronxclassical.org  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name South Bronx Classical Charter School                      Tel. (718) 860-4340

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board  
President/Chairperson Ms. Ingrid Bateman  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

*\*Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

## **PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION**

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The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school’s eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2020 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
3. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2014 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, or 2019.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district, as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2019-2020) unless otherwise stated.

**DISTRICT** (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools)

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 1 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 0 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 0 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 1 TOTAL

**SCHOOL** (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located. If unsure, refer to NCES database for correct category: <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/> (Find your school and check “Locale”)

- Urban (city or town)  
 Suburban  
 Rural

3. Number of students as of October 1, 2019 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	36	35	71
1	42	24	66
2	32	37	69
3	27	32	59
4	34	27	61
5	17	20	37
6	18	20	38
7	26	24	50
8	9	16	25
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	241	235	476

\*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0.2 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 3.6 % Asian
  - 44.3 % Black or African American
  - 51.3 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 0.2 % White
  - 0.4 % Two or more races
  - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2018 - 2019 school year: 6%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain:

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	0
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	30
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	30
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	466
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.06
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	6

6. Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):  
Ewe, French, Fulani, Haitian Creole, Malinke, Mandinka, Spanish, Tonga, Twi, Wolof, Yoruba

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 20 %  
94 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 87 %

Total number students who qualify: 414

8. Students receiving special education services: 16 %

78 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- |                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <u>2</u> Autism                   | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                 | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness           | <u>0</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay      | <u>8</u> Specific Learning Disability          |
| <u>3</u> Emotional Disturbance    | <u>31</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>12</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>22</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 14

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	7
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	38
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	13
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	4
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	8

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 13:1

12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

<b>Required Information</b>	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	96%	95%	95%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2019.

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes  No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award. 2014

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school’s mission or vision statement.

South Bronx Classical Charter School prepares K-8th grade students in the South Bronx to excel in college-preparatory high schools. Through a classical curriculum and highly structured setting, students become liberated scholars and citizens of impeccable character who achieve proficiency in and advanced mastery of New York State Performance Standards.

16. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

Any child who is legally qualified for admission into any New York City public school is also qualified for admission, without charge, to South Bronx Classical Charter School (“SBCCS”). Admission of students to SBCCS is not limited on the basis of intellectual ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, athletic ability, disability, race, creed, gender, national origin, religion or ancestry. Admission is purely on a lottery basis. SBCCS accepts applications for each grade that it enrolls. To be eligible for Kindergarten, the student must turn age five (5) by December of the academic year of enrollment. At the time of application, students must be a resident of New York City. Parents are required to evidence proof of residency by providing copies of current leases or utility bills as of the previous 2 months (except in the case of homeless students).

All applications must be received by April 1 to be entered in the lottery for admission for the following academic year. If the number of applications is greater than the number of available seats, then a public lottery is held. The lottery is conducted in the public domain and administered by a third party.

Admission is based on the following preferences in strict order:

- 1) Returning students (not applicable for entering Kindergarten class)
- 2) Siblings of returning students
- 3) Siblings of accepted new students

4) Students in the Community School District in which SBCCS is located (CSD 12)

5) Students living in New York City, but not in the District set forth above

If the number of applications is less than the number of available seats, then all students will be admitted, and a second round of information sessions will be held to fill any remaining seats will be held. If a second lottery process is necessary, the Public Lottery will be held between May 1 and May 15.

## **PART III - SUMMARY**

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South Bronx Classical Charter School (“SBCCS”) is a high-performing charter school that opened in August 2006 in the Longwood neighborhood of the Bronx. Currently, the school has 486 scholars (chosen via lottery) from kindergarten to eighth grade. SBCCS is a tuition-free, independent public charter school that receives support from the city and state. Located in the America’s poorest Congressional District, we continue to serve high-need students in the South Bronx: 100% are minority, 16% are classified as Special Education students, 20% are English Language Learners, and 87% qualify for Free or Reduced Lunch. We are proud of our strong performance on State assessments, high attendance rate, passionate parent involvement, exceptional data-driven instruction and intervention, and solid financial footing.

SBCCS has consistently demonstrated a record of academic success since its founding, outperforming its peers in CSD 12, New York City, and New York State on the New York State English Language Arts (“ELA”) and Math exams in each year its students have sat for the exams. We attribute much of this success to our school culture, strong curriculum, instructional practices, and teacher development. Because of our strong academic performance, learning environment and school culture, we continue to enjoy extremely high student demand for admittance into our school. This year we received over 2,500 applications for 75 available seats. We work hard to ensure that our scholars get the best education possible. We expect all scholars to attend school on time, every day, in a clean and complete uniform, and be ready to learn. With these clear expectations in place, over the past several years, we have enjoyed an average daily attendance rate of at least 95%.

We provide a safe and structured learning environment for our scholars with high behavioral expectations. Within our disciplined environment, teachers are able to teach, and scholars are able to learn. We encourage positive scholar behavior through modeling and explicit behavioral instruction through our daily Character Education classes. The scholars strive to follow the character pillars of Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, and Citizenship. Scholars’ social and emotional development is monitored through data analysis and concerns are urgently addressed through individual and group counseling support. We enforce discipline through a positive and transparent set of expectations shared with families and scholars at orientations and throughout the year. These rules include recognition of the school’s core values and clear consequences for infractions. Our Board of Trustees, of which 40% are founding members in their 16th year, is comprised of a diverse group of experienced professionals with expertise in education, law, finance, real estate, and community relations. We are authorized by New York State Education Department, and must meet or exceed high standards set forth in our accountability plan, which includes high academic achievement and improvement, an emphasis on the recruitment and retainment of At-Risk students, and a focus on character education, community service, high student attendance rates, financial sustainability and transparency, and strong and supportive family and community relationships. We believe that family involvement is critical to our scholars’ success. For young children to succeed academically, the school and parents must form positive and communicative relationships. All families receive regular communication regarding their scholar’s academic and behavioral progress. Importantly, we have an active Family Advisory Council (FAC) which liaises between parents and administration and hosts several school and community events each year, as well as a monthly Parent Academy, which features experts educating parents on topics such as asthma prevention, financial literacy, and healthy nutrition for children.

Additionally, while our teachers are able to achieve outcomes among the very best in the city and state, we are passionate about making their job as sustainable as possible to ensure their satisfaction and tenure with us. SBCCS was awarded a National Blue Ribbon Schools award in 2014 and a National Blue Ribbon Award for Excellence in 2016. We have learned a great deal about operating an effective and instructionally sound school over the past 14 years and have largely focused on strengthening several critical best practices in the past four years. We continue to be self-reflective and growth-minded in our approach to ensure we continue to build a world-class school for the scholars in our community.

## **PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

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### **1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.**

**1a.** Overall approach, which may include overarching philosophy or approaches common across subject areas

The overarching curricular philosophy and approach at SBCCS revolves around two seemingly opposing concepts: a rigorous, scripted curriculum in all subjects and all grades and customized, small-group instruction using data to inform specific instructional decisions. Yet SBCCS is able to ensure that all scholars get a lock-step curriculum, everything from ELA/Math to Latin/Debate/Fitness, so there is a truly ‘core curriculum’ that every graduating SBCCS school can be assured to have been taught.

We believe that great instruction requires a great curriculum, so we developed standards-based scopes and sequences, cohesive and interrelated unit plans, and detailed and flexible lesson plans, all in an organized and modular format, for all subjects and grades. Our curriculum is sequential, systematic, and rigorous. Latin instruction begins in 3rd grade, to improve vocabulary. Debate classes begin in 4th grade, to develop critical thinking skills and emotional maturity. Scholars in all grades receive Character Education, as the development of respectful, compassionate, and productive citizens is core to our mission.

We regularly, and rigorously, assess our scholars and use the data collected to powerfully inform further instruction. Strong test results stem from effective instruction and effective instruction stems from effective data analysis. To that end, our teachers meet weekly to discuss scholar data and create actionable steps for future instruction.

#### **1b.** Reading/English language arts

SBCCS focuses on scholars’ reading through three (3) hours of daily Reading and English Language Arts instruction and a balanced approach to literacy instruction. Our Phonics curriculum, which is taught to kindergarten and 1st grade students, was adapted from the Words Their Way scope and sequence guide for word study and shaped with the Common Core Reading Foundational Standards.

Scholars in kindergarten through eighth grades receive explicit writing instruction that reflects the Common Core Learning Standards. Instruction is thematic in nature, covering everything from realistic fiction to non-fiction research-based articles and extended summary reports in the upper grades. The structure of our writing block reflects Lucy Calkin’s Writing Workshop. Also starting in first grade, all scholars receive explicit grammar instruction, which includes everything from parts of speech to verb moods.

Reading aloud to scholars builds many foundational skills, introduces vocabulary, provides a model of expressive, fluent reading, and exposes scholars to complex texts that are beyond their decoding ability but within their comprehension ability. As scholars move into upper elementary and middle school grades, the read aloud block is replaced by reading.

For one hour each day, scholars in kindergarten through 6th grade receive guided reading. Teachers thoughtfully group scholars according to reading level, strengths and deficits, and tailor instruction and center activities to systematically fill skill gaps. Reading levels are assessed using Fountas and Pinnell’s Benchmark Assessment System. For scholars in 7th and 8th grades who have not yet reached the expected reading level, guided reading will be offered as an intervention.

Close reading was introduced during the 2015-2016 school year and it has improved our scholars’ ability to read and thoughtfully respond to complex text as evidenced by our improved test scores across grades 3-6 on the NYS ELA Assessments.

All scholars are given unit assessments at the close of each unit in Reading and Writing, and take three standards based Interim Assessments each year, to assess mastery towards standards and longitudinal growth. Following a deep analysis of the data, differentiated groups and intervention groups are made to

target specific skills and teachers and Instructional Coaches heavily monitor progress towards mastery through daily scholar work analysis. Scholars in grades K-2 take an End of Year ELA assessment, which assesses proficiency on the major standards taught during the year. We closely review individual scholar performance, and global year-over-year trends to ensure the efficacy of our teaching and learning and determine where improvements are needed. Scholars in 3rd – 8th grades take the NYS ELA assessment. We are able to conduct item-based analysis of released questions and draw correlations between performance on internal assessments and the State assessment, allowing us to make necessary adjustments to our curriculum.

### **1c. Mathematics**

SBCCS's K-8 math curriculum systematically covers all standards as outlined by the Common Core. Explicitly, the goal at SBCCS is for each student to be fully prepared for pre-algebra and have an introduction to geometry by the fifth grade. Math builds on itself (e.g., addition is repeated counting, multiplication is repeated addition, exponents are repeated multiplication), and a strong foundation in math numeracy is absolutely essential for success in later grades. Scholars highly skilled in the fundamentals of arithmetic, general numeracy, and pre-algebra will be prepared for demanding middle/secondary schools and colleges. The math curriculum emphasizes procedural fluency, conceptual understanding, an ability to reason logically, and capacity to justify ones thinking through models or verbal explanations.

In our Number Stories lesson, scholars creatively solve a rigorous word problem. As scholars are solving the problem, teachers are actively circulating and conferring to determine which scholars should share during the discourse portion of the block. For the last 20 minutes of the block, scholars are expected to thoughtfully share their strategies and work with their peers to come up with math conjectures. While scholars are sharing their strategies, the teacher is charting the strategies which scholars can then reference in future lessons to solve future problem types.

Similar to ELA, all scholars are given unit assessments at the close of each unit Math and take three standards based Interim Assessments each year, to assess mastery towards standards and longitudinal growth. Following a deep analysis of the data, differentiated groups and intervention groups are made to target specific skills and teachers and Instructional Coaches heavily monitor progress towards mastery through daily scholar work analysis. Scholars in grades K-2 take an End of Year ELA assessment, which assesses proficiency on the major standards taught during the year. We closely review individual scholar performance, and global year-over-year trends to ensure the efficacy of our teaching and learning and determine where improvements are needed. Scholars in 3rd – 8th grades take the NYS Math assessment. We are able to conduct item-based analysis of released questions and draw correlations between performance on internal assessments and the State assessment, allowing us to make necessary adjustments to our curriculum.

### **1d. Science**

Based on Next Generation Science Standards, our science curriculum is almost entirely hands on, and scholars learn basic physics, chemistry, and biology through experiments and natural observations. The scientific method is discovered by repetition, and safety is explicitly taught. Scholars categorize their findings as typically described (e.g., the periodic table and the biological classifications), and learn the history of science through replicating simple classic experiments.

In addition to assessments following each major unit of study, scholars in 4th grade take the NYS Science Assessment, and scholars in 8th grade take the NYS Living Environment Science Regents Exam. The data resulting from both exams allows us to evaluate the rigor and quality of our Science curriculum.

### **1e. Social studies/history/civic learning and engagement**

History is taught chronologically and across cultures. Ancient Egypt, Ancient Greece, the Roman Empire, the Chinese Dynasties, and the African tribal cultures are all part of this curriculum. This classical curriculum brings the discoveries, wonders and genius of parts of the globe together, recognizing the rich contributions of all peoples. Through our classical history curriculum, we aim to develop our scholars' critical thinking, emotional maturity and tolerance, as well as their ability to respectfully, persuasively and

articulately express opinions. The content of this block is based on Core Knowledge and NYS Social Studies Framework and addresses the standards and historical thinking skills outlined by the city and state.

**1f. For secondary schools:**

**1g. For schools that offer preschool for three- and/or four-year old students:**

**2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

One mission-critical feature and strength of SBCCS is our “classical” component. As our students excel and grow, and the fundamentals have been increasingly mastered, more and more of the classical aspects of our school begin to flourish. The first, and most notable, of these aspects is Latin instruction, which begins in third grade. The language-rich curriculum of a classical education is further supported through the careful study of Latin, which helps students improve their English grammar and vocabulary skills as well as learn other languages. There are many reasons for promoting Latin in urban elementary schools. One reason is simply vocabulary. Over 60% of all English words are derived from Latin, as are 90% of those over two syllables. Latin’s beneficial effect on scholars’ verbal aptitude is well-documented. The increased level of literacy is highlighted on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), documented in studies by LaFleur (1981, 1982), and is reported in articles by Barrett (1996). Tests conducted by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) from 1988 to 1997 show that scholars studying Latin outperform all others on the verbal portion of the SAT. Through regular exposure to Latin, students learn the building blocks of English, its Latin roots, prefixes and suffixes. For third through fifth grade, we have built our own standards-based curriculum that is aligned with the specifics of our school. For our middle school years, we base our curriculum on “Ecce Romani”, a popular Latin textbook.

In fourth grade, scholars begin debate, a block that develops both critical thinking and public speaking skills and continues through eighth grade. In fourth through sixth grades, the focus is on the history of debate, the basics of argument development, and the best practices of public speaking. Scholars engage in a combination of reading, writing, video analysis, and speech delivery to access the content. In seventh grade, scholars will focus their work on Parliamentary Debate, which emphasizes sophisticated argument development, responsive argumentation, and the ability to deliver a speech with minimal preparation through a reliance on strong speaking skills. In eighth grade, the focus shifts to Policy Debate, which requires in-depth research and an ability to string together multiple sources to create a cogent argument. On the whole, the debate program prepares scholars to be competent consumers of nonfiction and media sources, good writers who can state and defend a comprehensive claim, and strong public speakers who speak clearly, directly, and with passion.

Our Arts and Physical Education curricula are also standards-based. Music incorporates a heavy emphasis on vocal and instrumental performance, with monthly school-wide performances. An extra school-derived internal goal is to have students singing in harmony by third grade. Art classes are similarly focused on skills and creation more than appreciation; however, our curriculum includes art history in each grade level. Inherent in our Art and Music curriculum is an emphasis on artistic exploration and critical thinking. Our Physical Education curriculum is built on skills development. Each year, students explore units on stretching, running, tennis, kickball, basketball, hockey, and soccer and health. There is also a heavy emphasis on gross motor skills development, athletic development, and establishing life-long healthy lifestyles.

We believe that the development of respectful, compassionate, and productive citizens is a fundamental purpose of education. This is fully consistent with the ideals of an SBCCS education. All scholars receive 45 minutes of character education per week, taught by a Dean of Students. Our Character Education Curriculum is also standards-based and developed based on Character Counts Standards. Our scholars engage in direct instruction based on lessons on our character pillars of citizenship, trustworthiness, respect, caring, fairness, and responsibility as well as project-based learning and community service.

### **3. Academic Supports:**

#### **3a. Students performing below grade level**

SBCCS seeks to ensure that it is meeting the needs of all its students through targeted instruction, daily intervention and regularly evaluating the effectiveness of its programs that support special student populations. SBCCS evaluates the effectiveness of its programs through progress monitoring, special populations' achievement data, special education teacher and related service provider evaluation data, and parent and teacher survey feedback.

SBCCS offers early entry into our Summer Learning Academy for scholars new to our school or for entering kindergarteners who have not yet mastered pre-Kindergarten skills. This program allows scholars to become acclimated to our school culture and expectations and ensure they are starting kindergarten having mastered pre-kindergarten skills.

SBCCS employs At-Risk Learning Specialists who provide intensive reading support to any scholar who is reading below grade level expectations. Scholars' reading levels are assessed every 3-6 weeks by scholars' primary teachers, using the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System.

The At-Risk program was designed to ensure these scholars are afforded every opportunity to reach their potential and make accelerated progress. At SBCCS, we believe that all children can make accelerated progress given the right instructional approach. To accomplish this, the At-Risk Learning Specialist provides pull-out, small-group literacy instruction and designs an instructional plan that targets the precise strengths and deficits of each child and collects data to monitor each scholar's progress.

#### **3b. Students performing above grade level**

SBCCS is data-driven, and as such, we track scholar growth, year over year. This includes scholars who perform above grade level; our highest performing scholars. Our instructional model is built for differentiation at all levels of academic performance. As mentioned in prior sections, teachers on every grade level, including the Learning Specialist have the flexibility to group scholars in all core subjects to allow for targeted differentiated instruction. Scholars who are performing above grade level are typically in the 'high' group of instruction and paired with a teacher who is able to continue to push their thinking, which allows for continued growth. Given the focus SBCCS has on New York State assessment performance, as it provides key indicators for scholar proficiency in math and ELA, we also keep a sharp focus on growth between proficiency levels and measure scholar success, not only on overall proficiency, but also on scholar growth over time. Scholars are pushed to improve each year and are celebrated when they reach the next level of proficiency.

SBCCS is a K-8 and we seek to place our scholars in the highest performing high schools in New York City. With the support of our High School Placement Counselor, we encourage our highest performing scholars to apply to elite prep and high school placement programs, such as Prep For Prep, Regis High School REACH program, the TEAK Fellowship, and Breakthrough New York. SBCCS also partners with institutions like Kaplan, as well as private tutors, to ensure our scholars are prepared for the Specialized High School Admission Test, to allow our highest performing scholars opportunities to be competitive in applying for New York City's Specialized High Schools. SBCCS scholars have gained entry to some of New York City's top performing high schools due to their growth and success at SBCCS.

#### **3c. Special education**

Students with Disabilities are educated within the general education classrooms, using the general education curriculum, when appropriate, and given the appropriate services as per their Individualized Education Plans. SBCCS offers Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETSS), Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, and Physical Therapy. We are highly data-driven and are responsive to the needs of special student populations as performance data necessities. We work to ensure that data derived from NYSED mandated ELL assessments, as well IEPs, progress towards goals, and internal assessments,

informs differentiated instruction for Students with Disabilities, such as providing visual supports, intervention targeting reading and vocabulary, and multi-sensory approaches to learning.

**3d.** ELLs, if a special program or intervention is offered

Our programmatic design allows us the flexibility to address the needs of all students, even when they are significantly behind. Each grade has a Learning Specialist who provides small-group instruction for most of the day. All teachers teach a daily 45-minute block of ELA or math intervention, which allows them the opportunity to differentiate and target instruction for scholars who need additional support. Intervention groups are designed to provide support services to all scholars, including scholars who have disabilities or are English Language Learners.

Developing a strong proficiency in English by third grade will enable all English Language Learners to reach the academic goals established for all scholars. Therefore, we provide structured immersion to improve a child's English proficiency. Structured immersion is a methodology for teaching ELL scholars the English language through in-classroom English-only immersion. The classroom teacher(s) provide individualized structured and sequential lessons in English for ELL scholars, and the ELL scholars remain in the general education classroom, being instructed using the general education curriculum with differentiated support.

**3e.** Other populations (e.g., migrant), if a special program or intervention is offered

## **PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE**

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### **1. Engaging Students:**

SBCCS works hard to establish a culture of high academic and behavioral expectations, in which scholars are motivated to excel. Teachers give direct and frequent feedback to students to keep them well-informed of their progress and motivate them to give their best effort and produce their best work. Our scholars adhere to a strict code of conduct that sets clear behavioral expectations, consistent across each grade and classroom. Exemplary behavior, strong work ethic, and high academic achievement are celebrated school-wide through daily praise, incentives, and Community Gathering celebrations.

We believe that the development of respectful, compassionate, and productive citizens is a fundamental purpose of education. This is fully consistent with the ideals of classical education. All scholars receive one hour of weekly character education per week. We have found that as our students acclimate to our culture of positive behavior and character, less direct instruction and teacher intervention is required.

Our Deans of Students are responsible for disciplinary concerns. The Deans collaborate with teachers, families and scholars to help create a safe and orderly learning environment. The Deans are authorized to decide on the appropriate consequences, in accordance with our Code of Conduct, for inappropriate scholar behavior, and confers with the School Director as needed. To further support scholars' social-emotional and behavioral well-being, SBCCS's School Psychologists and School Counselors provide counseling services to scholars who are struggling to behave and be a productive learner in the classroom, form friendships with their peers, or handle a traumatizing situation either within or outside of the school environment. Deans of Students and our School Counseling team offer high-level parental support to families through face-to-face meetings, applicable strategies for the home, and a list of outside resources for places where scholars can receive additional behavioral or social-emotional assistance they may need.

SBCCS values the culture that our teachers and staff have all collectively created and works hard to maintain. We are committed to creating an environment where all staff feel valued and supported. Through school-wide and targeted professional development, teachers and staff are supported by Coaches, Grade Team Leaders, Managers, Deans, Support Services, and the School Director. We strive to have a high-level of transparency where staff can openly share feedback, both upwards and downwards through individual coaching sessions, school-wide town hall meetings, and a bi-annual staff survey.

### **2. Engaging Families and Community:**

SBCCS was designed to serve South Bronx families who face financial, emotional, or relational challenges or a lack of quality school choice. We have learned that by working together, the school and community can accelerate learning and increase educational success for its scholars. To this end, we have worked hard at developing strong relationships with our families and community leaders.

SBCCS continues to have a culture of transparency and openly and honestly communicates its expectations for students and families through mandatory orientations, mandatory parent-teacher conferences, and frequent communication regarding student academic and behavioral progress. We have found that having a clear set of expectations, as described and acknowledged in our Family Agreement, that are expressly articulated to each family in our school has greatly improved our learning environment and our staff, scholars' and families' perception, understanding, and commitment to our learning environment.

We implement measures to ensure that parents are actively engaged with the school and remain informed of their scholar's achievements and challenges. SBCCS hosts two mandatory parent-teacher conferences each year to ensure that parents and teachers formally meet to discuss scholar progress. Additionally, teachers are expected to communicate with parents throughout the year, and after each major assessment, to ensure there is constant communication regarding scholar academic progress, successes, and concerns. We hold six Community Gatherings per year as a way for the entire school community (scholars, teachers, staff, and parents) to come together and celebrate scholars' character achievement and growth. We also have a Family

Advisory Council (FAC) that meets weekly with the Deans of Students to relay parental concerns as well as develop mission-aligned programs to support our scholars and families.

All grade levels host parent events, which include a combination of academic focused seminars, such as ‘Supporting Struggling Readers’ and ‘Breaking Down Common Core Math’ as well as culture building events, such as ‘Game Night’ and ‘Movie Night’.

We also rely on parent feedback, including the data from the New York City Learning Environment Survey to assess, measure, and evaluate family satisfaction with our school’s learning environment. As we have had a high response rate each year, this data is statistically significant and we regularly refer to it to evaluate all aspects of the school, including family satisfaction with the school. The results of these surveys drive real change within our school and keep families highly engaged.

### **3. Creating Professional Culture:**

SBCCS believes strong professional development will lead to improved student outcomes and improved teacher retention. SBCCS’s professional development provides a career path for all staff. Educators may start as Associate Teachers, and become teachers, and then Grade Team Leaders. Grade Team Leaders who are interested in administrative roles can be developed to become Instructional Coaches, Deans of Students, or School Directors. We believe that this plan fosters a level of professionalism that reduces staff attrition. By providing a select cadre of experienced, home-grown, and mission-aligned teachers with additional leadership opportunities, we both develop our faculty and foster a ‘hire from within’ culture that reduces administrative turnover. We conduct three weeks of summer professional development seminars for all new staff. During summer professional development, staff are onboarded to our school’s mission, vision, and core values, the achievement gap, data analysis, and a variety of classroom management and instructional practices. Professional development sessions are led by Instructional Coaches, Deans of Students, School Directors, Special Services Staff, and our Director of Data. Grade team leaders hold weekly ‘Practice Prep’ meetings to ensure that teams are continuously developing skills learned in professional development. Meeting topics might include guided reading planning, unit plan launches, close reading prep, student work analysis, and data analysis. The first Friday of each month is a half day for scholars, and teachers and staff participate in professional development from 1:45pm – 4:30pm. Monthly professional development is dedicated to specific topics that teachers have asked for through survey feedback and based on the development needs of our teachers, as evidenced by instructional coach observations and data analysis. Direct classroom instructional and curricular feedback is provided by the Instructional Coaches and Grade Team Leaders, while the School Director provides weekly support and training to Grade Team Leaders focused on management and leadership. Teachers debrief weekly with their Instructional Coach and Grade Team Leaders to review their performance and scholars’ performance on internal assessments.

All staff receive a comprehensive rubric, twice a year, that is specifically designed for their role. This development tool assesses teacher and staff performance across a range of specific required responsibilities and characteristics, using substantive feedback from the Instructional Coaches and Grade Team Leaders. Following the rubric meetings, teachers create their own Individual Professional Improvement Plan (“IPIP”) and review their goals periodically with their Instructional Coach and Grade Team Leader to ensure progress is being made.

### **4. School Leadership:**

SBCCS is part of Classical Charter Schools, a merged network of four high-performing charter schools. Our Talent, Business, Human Resources, and Curriculum and Instructional oversight are provided at the network level, and our school-based leadership team includes an Executive Director, four Instructional Coaches, four Deans of Students, and an Operations Manager.

The SBCCS leadership structure is called a matrix organizational structure. This model provides the school with a more disbursed, collaborative, and ultimately effective means of improving scholar achievement. Grade Team Leaders take responsibility for team management and culture-setting, teacher observations and development, and curriculum development and vetting.

The matrix organizational structure is well developed in other industries and is used in many organizations that execute multiple projects, such as architectural or engineering firms, or in firms where management expertise requirements differ greatly from technical expertise, such as hospitals or investment banks. The managerial structure of SBCCS is similar to most schools and organizations. Teachers report to their Grade Team Leader, who in turn reports to the School Director. Instructional Coaches develop Grade Team Leaders' instructional practices while the School Director and Director of Curriculum and Instruction develop Grade Team Leaders' in their management and leadership.

Deans of Students provide critical behavioral, social, and emotional support to scholars and support teachers develop their classroom management techniques. Our Operations Manager ensures that scholars, teachers, and staff have all the resources required to singularly focus on scholar achievement. This structure optimizes coordination of tasks and operational efficiencies.

The technical organizational structure provides experts in several facets of education to assist teachers in ways that a typical principal is rarely able to navigate. These experts include a Directors of Curriculum and Instruction, Instructional Coaches, Special Education Coordinators, Speech and Language Pathologists, Social Workers, and external consultants, all of whom provide technical advice and support, without actually managing teachers. Thus, teachers are given expert advice, and are then empowered to accept or reject it, while held accountable for scholar growth. The overall organizational structure allows managers to develop their teams while pedagogical experts focus on delivering the highest level of specific feedback to teachers and staff. We find that this organizational structure is highly empowering to teachers and leaders, ensures teachers are held accountable for scholar outcomes, and allows teachers to develop their leadership skills if they wish to.

## **PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

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SBCCS attributes its improvement, achievements, and successful student outcomes to many practices, contributed to and improved upon by all its staff. If we were to attribute our success to one practice that has consistently proven to lead our school to exceptional outcomes, it would be our quality of teaching.

Foundational to our quality of teaching is the development of curriculum. SBCCS has developed a standards-based curriculum in-house, complete with scopes and sequences, unit plans, lesson plans, and assessments in all grades and subjects. While our curriculum has been built and utilized for many years, it is continually going through a process of revision, directly based on student performance. Throughout each academic year, Grade Team Leaders and Instructional Coaches evaluate the efficacy of our lessons and the quality of our assessments by auditing the curriculum following each unit of study. They place comments on the unit plans, lesson plans, and assessments to ensure improvements are made the following year. Each summer, the Director of Curriculum and Instruction, along with Instructional Coaches, decide which parts of the curriculum will be revised, based on curricular audit comments and student performance data. This adaptability of our curriculum has consistently provided teachers with a high-quality curriculum in all grades and subjects, thus improving their quality of teaching.

Equally important to our quality of teaching is the professional development of our teachers. We are deeply committed to the belief that excellent teaching will result in exceptional scholar outcomes, and thus are highly focused on giving our teachers the tools and resources to be exceptional teachers. Our professional development program is world-class and includes targeted, research-based presentations on a variety of topics related to teaching and learning, individualized coaching by Grade Team Leaders and Instructional Coaches, focused grade team meetings on data analysis and lesson preparation, and intensive support when teachers are struggling professionally or in the classroom. We believe that a teacher's failure is the school's failure and provide substantial resources to ensure that teachers are supported, feel supported, and understand that their development leads to an improved quality of teaching.