

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2022 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program**

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

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

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

School Mailing Address 3458 Third Avenue  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Bronx                      State NY                      Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 10456-4304

County Bronx

Telephone (929) 285-3025                      Fax (929) 232-2025

Web site/URL  
<https://classicalcharterschools.org/schools/south-bronx-classical-iii/>                      E-mail rscognamiglio@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 New York City District 9                      Tel. (929) 285-3025

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 Mr. Jake Elghanayan  
(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, leave blank.*

## **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 2021 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 must include one or more of grades K-12. Schools located on the same campus (physical location and mailing address) must apply as an entire school (i.e. K-8; 6-12; K-12 school). Two (or more) schools located on separate campuses, must apply individually even if they have the same principal. A single school located on multiple campuses with one principal must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2016 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: 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 or 2021.
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. The nominated school has, or is subject to, a nondiscrimination policy (provide either a link to the policy or submit a text of the policy), is committed to equal opportunity for all students and all staff consistent with applicable law and does not have any outstanding findings of unlawful discrimination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s nomination and/or rescind a school’s award if unlawful discrimination is later discovered.

12. 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.

**The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's nomination and/or rescind a school's award if one of these eligibility requirements is later discovered to have not been met or otherwise been violated.**

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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Data should be provided for the current school year (2021-2022) unless otherwise stated.

**DISTRICT** (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools. For charter schools: If a charter school is part of the public school system, information should be provided for the public school district. If a charter school is considered its own district or part of a charter district, the information provided should reflect that.)

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

**SCHOOL** (To be completed by all schools. **Only include demographic data for the nominated school, not for the district.**)

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 in the school as of October 1, 2021 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school. Include all students enrolled, in-person, participating in a hybrid model, or online only. If online schooling or other COVID-19 school issues make this difficult to obtain, provide the most accurate and up-to-date information available:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	37	34	71
1	28	34	62
2	25	30	55
3	29	29	58
4	42	28	70
5	28	13	41
6	19	25	44
7	28	21	49
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	236	214	450

\*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):
- 0.8 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 0.6 % Asian
  - 60 % Black or African American
  - 37 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 0 % White
  - 1.6 % 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 2020 - 2021 school year: 14%

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, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	22
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	35
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	57
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2020	414
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.14
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	14

6. Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):  
Spanish, Fulani, Twi, French, Hausa, Soninke, Mandinka, Malagasy

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 94 %

Total number students who qualify: 421

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504: 19 %  
84 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. All students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504 should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- |                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>3</u> Autism                  | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>2</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>4</u> Specific Learning Disability          |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>63</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>0</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: 7
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. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	9
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	33
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	15
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	0
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

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 15:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017
Daily student attendance	95%	96%	96%	96%	97%
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 2021.

<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.

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

Classical Charter Schools prepare K-8 grade scholars 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's Performance Standards.

16. Provide a URL link to or text of the school’s nondiscrimination policy.

Equal Employment Opportunity - In order to provide equal employment and advancement opportunities to all individuals, employment decisions will be based on merit, qualifications, experience, and abilities. Classical Charter Schools does not discriminate in employment opportunities or practices on the basis of age; race; color; religion or religious practices; gender; gender identity; national origin; physical or mental disability; creed; alienage or citizenship status; marital status; sexual orientation; prior arrest or conviction record; genetic predisposition; group identity; familial status; status as a victim of sexual abuse, stalking, or domestic violence or any other characteristic protected by federal, state, or local laws. Employees with questions or concerns about any type of workplace discrimination are encouraged to bring these issues to the attention of Human Resources, the Director of Business, or the Executive Director. Employees can raise concerns and make reports without fear of reprisal. Anyone found to be engaging in any type of unlawful discrimination will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Subject to applicable law, CCS will comply with the requirement to provide reasonable accommodation to any qualified employee or applicant with a qualified disability unless it imposes an undue hardship. Individuals who believe they need an accommodation to perform their jobs should submit a written request to Human Resources, the Director of Business, or the Executive Director with appropriate medical documentation to support their request, describing the activities that can and cannot be performed. Consideration of a request for accommodation may be delayed or denied if the appropriate documentation is not provided in a timely manner.

17. **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 State public school is also qualified for admission, without charge, to a school in the South Bronx Classical III. Admission is purely on a lottery basis. We do not discriminate against or limit the admission of any student on any unlawful basis, including on the basis of ethnicity, national origin, gender, disability, intellectual ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, athletic ability, race, creed, religion or ancestry. We also do not require any action by a student or family (such as an admissions test, interview, essay, attendance at an information session, etc.) in order for an applicant to either receive or submit an application for admission to that school. At the time of application, students must be a resident of New York State. 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).

The annual lottery is held on April 1st. Admission is based on the following preferences in strict order of returning students (not applicable for entering Kindergarten class), siblings of returning students, siblings of accepted new students, and then students living in New York City District 9. South Bronx Classical III is committed to enrolling students with disabilities (“SWD”). In addition to targeted outreach and recruitment efforts, the school uses a weighted lottery for the applicants with disabilities in order to increase those students’ chances of being randomly selected for an available seat.



## **PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW**

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South Bronx Classical III is a Kindergarten through 7th grade charter school located in the South Bronx in New York. We were founded in 2015, as part of the Classical Charter Schools network, and will grow to a K-8 next year. Our mission is to prepare K-8 grade scholars 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’s Performance Standards.

South Bronx Classical III serves 450 scholars in grades Kindergarten through 7th grade living in the South Bronx. As shared in part II, our school population is predominantly Black/African America and Hispanic. Our families speak 21 different languages with a large portion being of Spanish, French, Fulani and Twi. We are honored to have many extended families in our building creating a close community feeling. Scholars walk through the halls waving at their siblings, cousins, and extended family members.

We work tirelessly to provide rigorous academic lessons to truly prepare our scholars for success in high school and college. We do this by investing tremendous time and effort into our scripted curriculum to ensure it is aligned to the New York State’s standards and offers scholars thoughtful and rigorous learning activities. We undergo annual curriculum revision processes to improve the curriculum to respond to best practices and staff feedback. Over the last five years, we have revised with an eye toward increasing scholar-lead learning opportunities to push scholars to take on most of the thinking work and discussion time through academic blocks like Number Stories, Number Routines, Close Reading, Classical Conversations, and Character Education. We believe the path to developing “liberated scholars” is one that develops critical thinking and discourse. Our instructional model is centered on the importance of exposure to rigorous content, time to grapple with the content through scholar-led conversation, and independent and group work time to practice and apply the content supported through teacher feedback, data collection and revision opportunities. In 2020, we began the process of undergoing an intensive curriculum revision process to increase cultural representation within our curriculum by choosing literary texts from non-white authors presenting diversity points of views and identities. Additionally, we believe in the importance of teacher support and development to ensure all of our scholars have the chance to experience our curriculum come to life in the best ways possible. Each teacher receives weekly support from their Grade Team Leader, Instructional Coach and Dean of Students through team meetings, individual one-on-one check ins, observations, debriefs, and at least monthly formalized professional development sessions. Our adult culture is one that embodies a love of learning and a desire to grow and improve, serving as great role models for our scholars.

We believe in the importance of scholar culture to foster calm, respectful classroom environments that in turn foster learning. We create highly structured settings that maximize scholar learning time through efficient and calm routines. These routines create a sense of safety and fairness through the consistent use of a school-wide behavior management structure. Teachers are supported by their Instructional Coaches and Deans of Students to consistently implement the behavior management system through the use of frequent and specific expectations setting, fair follow through, and thoughtful use of de-escalation strategies to respond to challenging moments. In addition to teaching literacy and math skills, we believe it is the role of K-8 teachers, in partnership with scholars’ families, to help develop scholars’ characters by providing frequent opportunities to reflect on behavior choices, debate about ways to handle situations, and build social and emotional skills required to handle adversity. We devote time without our schedule to allow for community conversations and skill building during morning meeting, Classical Conversations, character education and recess. We are so proud of our scholars and want them to feel a sense of pride in their work and in the school community. This is fostered through setting class and individual goals for academic, behavior and culture and then celebrating as a community when goals are met.

By investing in our rigorous academic curriculum, supporting teachers to create scholar-focused class environments, and creating the structures necessary to have calm, structured and supportive class communities, our scholars have been able to show true mastery of the New York State Performance standards. From 2018 to 2021, we have had a 95% pass rate on the New York State English Language Arts

test and a 98% pass rate on the New York State Math test. We utilize targeted small group support throughout the day for all scholars who need additional instruction and reteach opportunities to work to ensure every scholar is prepared to do their best on the state assessment as well as show mastery of the standards throughout the year to be prepared for the next grade. Our special education and ELL populations have the same pass rates speaking to the effectiveness of our service providers and the close collaboration between our SST team and our classroom teachers. Additionally, last year we had a 92% ELA and 95% math pass rate with over 95% of our scholars sitting for the exam despite 36% of our scholars learning fully remotely for the 2020-2021 school year. These results are testament to our remote and hybrid learning programs during COVID. Due to our scripted curriculum, we were able to transition instruction to a full day live Zoom instruction model taught by dedicated remote-only teachers with scholars completing classwork using physical paper copies that parents picked up from school or online platforms including GoFormative, Nearpod, Microsoft Forms, and Padlet. In 2020-2021, we offered parents fully in-person and fully remote learning options that ran parallel lessons and worked to adapt all our instructional structures including SEL blocks like morning meeting and character education to the remote setting. Remote and in-person scholars collaborated and celebrated together during community gatherings and class parties.

## **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:**

South Bronx Classical III ensures that our curriculum (in all grades and in all subjects) is fully aligned with the New York State standards (inclusive of the Common Core State Standards as adopted and applicable). Our strong results are due, in large part, to this alignment and the quality of our curriculum. In fact, that alignment is expressly described in our mission statement.

South Bronx Classical III’s mission endeavors to prepare its scholars to “achieve proficiency in and advanced mastery of New York State performance standards.” South Bronx Classical III has a rigorous, sequential and modular standards-based curriculum, where the standards are embedded in the unit plans, lesson plans, assessments, and even assessment data. All aspects of our curriculum have been designed and written by our leadership team and teachers to ensure it aligns directly to our vision of excellence and meets the needs of our scholars. Our curricular philosophy is to create and constantly improve upon standard-based scopes and sequences, cohesive and interrelated unit plans, and detailed and flexible lesson plans, all in an organized format for all subjects and grades. New York State standards dictate what we must teach and what the scholars must master to be promoted to the next grade, and the alignment across the curriculum gives us clear and measurable data from which we can measure scholar achievement.

We are certain that having an organized and rigorous standards-based curriculum is the first step to measuring scholar achievement. In addition, we believe that a teacher’s execution of the curriculum, the assessment of scholars’ understanding of the standards and the subsequent data that come from the assessments, and the culture of analysis that helps inform improvement of the curriculum and teacher execution, ultimately make up our instructional cycle. Our instructional leadership team (including the School Director, a Director of Curriculum and Instruction and a team of Instructional Coaches) is wholly focused on ensuring that this instructional cycle is executed thoughtfully and faithfully each day.

From its founding, Classical Charter Schools, which now includes South Bronx Classical III, designed a school model that we believe best meets the needs of our target population, and which is embedded within the guiding framework of a classical education. The key components of a classical education in the early years focus on a core curriculum, the development of strong literacy and numeracy skills, knowledge, and understanding of elementary facts. In all grades, students also develop core knowledge in the basic subjects of reading, writing, math, science, and history. We believe deeply in the importance of developing “liberated scholars” who are able to think critically, debate ideas and lead the class discussion. Starting as young as kindergarten, scholars are exposed to higher-level exploratory thinking and discussion throughout the day, including specific subject blocks tailored directly to the goal of critical thinking and scholar discourse. Additionally, all units include performance tasks to ensure scholars have opportunities to apply their knowledge to real world scenarios, develop independence in selecting topics of personal interest, and engage in public speaking.

#### **1b. Reading/English language arts curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:**

South Bronx Classical III is committed to a balanced literacy program that includes a variety of literacy blocks, including small group and whole group shared reading of texts, small group guided reading instruction, direct phonics instruction, modeled reading, independent reading, and varied forms of writing. Scholars have the opportunity to routinely make meaning and interact with big ideas about the world through reading and writing as teachers work to foster a love of literacy and build joy around its power. The program is designed to develop scholars to be confident lovers of reading and writing, powerful comprehenders, productive interpreters, and able expressers in oral and written language and is based on the pairing of a strong institutionalized scripted curriculum and the responsive development of unscripted curricula.

Scholars spend over three hours a day focusing on English Language Arts. Scholars receive instruction in the following blocks: phonics (K-1), grammar (1-8), writing (K-8), read aloud (K-5), reading (6-8), guided reading (K-6), close reading (K-6), and textual analysis (3-8). Phonics, grammar, writing, read aloud/reading, and textual analysis are all scripted lessons taught in whole group settings. Grade teams are responsible for thoughtfully planning (with support from instructional coaches) data-driven guided reading and close reading instruction that is individualized for each small group and meets each scholar's individual learning needs. We also work with the Lavinia Group, a consultant firm, to ensure our close reading instruction is as powerful as possible. The consultants visit on site to provide teachers and coaches with feedback on lessons and materials. Close reading was first introduced during the 2015-2016 school year and is a block that we feel tremendously impacts a scholar's ability to read and thoughtfully respond to complex text as evidenced by our improved test scores on the NYS ELA Assessments.

Through thoughtful lesson plans and intensive teacher development and coaching, we work to ensure our English Language Arts program includes the consistent reading of high-quality, authentic, rich texts paired with opportunities for scholars to explain their thinking in written and oral responses. Additionally, the ELA curriculum creates thoughtfully prepared opportunities for scholar-to-scholar discourse through the intentional use of shared analysis, discussion, and debate. The lessons focus on valorizing the power and importance of reading carefully and sharing thoughtfully in writing through examination of and discourse around texts, forms, and themes. And lastly, our teachers ask scholars to consistently ground their thinking in and justify their conclusions with evidence and reasoning.

In 2020, we embarked on an intensive revision project for our literacy curriculum to improve the diversity of texts to give voice to non-white authors and present a larger variety of perspective and voices. Additionally, the project increased opportunities for discourse on racism, antiracism, systems of white supremacy and social action seeking to dismantle racist systems. Classical scholars come from a diversity of backgrounds and need to see themselves represented in literature just as importantly as they need to see other cultures through the window of books that are about other times and cultures. At base, the goal is to create a diverse, inclusive, relevant and culturally global curriculum that includes opportunities to develop social-emotional skills, to apply concepts in a project-based or interdisciplinary way, and to create the support systems necessary for successful planning and implementation of these steps.

### **1c. Mathematics curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:**

South Bronx Classical III is committed to a mathematics program that balances mathematical skills, concepts, and applications, with instructional practices that emphasize explanation, justification, and number sense. This will develop scholars to be powerful quantitative thinkers and productive and confident problem solvers who are excited to engage in mathematics. This program is based on the pairing of a strong institutionalized scripted curriculum and the responsive development of unscripted curricula.

Scholars enjoy approximately 100 minutes a day of math instruction. There are three main math blocks: our daily math lesson, where scholars systematically cover all standards as outlined by the Common Core; our reteach block, where teachers have the opportunity to thoughtfully fill knowledge gaps by planning instruction in response to data from our unit and interim assessments; and, finally, Number Stories. During Number Stories, scholars have the opportunity to 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. An outside consulting group, the Lavinia Group, supports us with the implementation of Number Stories and provides consistent support with both materials and execution. In grades K-2, these math blocks are supplemented with an additional Number Routines block aimed at improve scholars' number sense and automaticity. Through math routines and math games, including counting jar, counting around the room, Today's Number, and True/False statements, scholars are able to think flexibility, use a variety of counting strategies, and justify their thinking.

Through the different math blocks, our instruction aims to valorize flexibility and intentionality through prompts for scholars to describe alternative ways to arrive at the same answer as well as promote critical thinking by providing opportunities for scholar-to-scholar discourse asking scholars to justify and explain their thinking.

In math, scholars' progress is monitored every day through careful data collection during daily Independent Practice materials. This daily data collection is used to inform teacher questioning, circulation, and conferencing during upcoming math blocks. Scholars are formally assessed at the end of every math unit with a unit assessment and three times a year with Math Interim Assessments. These assessments are used to create objective calendars and materials for our reteach block as well as inform our scholar groups for upcoming math blocks.

#### **1d. Science curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:**

South Bronx Classical III believes that science learning involves the integration of knowing and doing and that scholars will gain the skills to read, write, speak, and think about science if we anchor their instruction in the complex and puzzling inner workings of the natural world around them. We give our scholars the support they need to develop science literacy, analyze data, integrate mathematical and computational thinking, develop models and design solutions. We know scholars cannot comprehend scientific practices in depth without directly experiencing those practices for themselves; for this reason, our scholars get many opportunities to be critical thinkers, readers, writers, and speakers of scientific ideas as they grapple with authentic opportunities to consistently make meaning of and interact with scientific concepts through learning experiences.

Our science curriculum is based on Next Generation Science Standards, which pushes us as educators to expose scholars to high level conceptual themes. Each science unit includes hands-on laboratory experience as well as performance tasks that center on engineering, advocacy for change, and the real-world impact of scientific concepts. Additionally, each unit ends with a unit assessment to track mastery of unit goals. Scholars take the New York State 4th Grade Science test. In 8th grade, our scholars will also take the New York State Living Environment Regents exam, typically a high school course and assessment. By doing so, scholars will have access to higher level, more specialized science courses in high school.

Our science curriculum includes reading of high-quality, authentic, rich scientific texts paired with opportunities for scholars to justify and explain their thinking through scholar discourse in response to both micro and macro themes in science. Lessons also work to valorize the power and importance of observing carefully and thoughtfully through examination of and discourse around experiments. In all conversations, scholars are asked to consistently ground their thinking in and justify their conclusions with evidence from their experimental data or from scientific texts.

#### **1e. Social studies/history/civic learning curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:**

South Bronx Classical III is committed to a social studies program that engages all scholars in a rigorous, authentic, student-centered learning environment that fosters social understanding and civic efficacy in our multicultural, national, and global societies. This will develop scholars to effectively communicate and collaborate in diverse communities and think critically in order to understand the past, engage in the present, and impact the future. At Classical, we present scholars with a diverse range of voices and source material in our curriculum to dispel any one-sided story of history, and we expect scholars to evaluate these competing narratives to have a broader and more complete understanding of the past. Lessons include consistent analysis of historical documents aimed at exploring the point of view, bias, and ultimately the reliability of the source. Our program provides an integrated, meaningful approach to planning, teaching, learning, and assessing Social Studies through literacy skills and literature. Regular and high-quality social studies instruction, starting at Kindergarten, teaches scholars to become critical thinkers and communicators in our ever-changing society.

Our Social Studies curriculum in grades K-8 aligns to the New York State K-12 Social Studies framework and is informed by the Core Knowledge standards. Additionally, similar to our ELA curriculum, we have

recently undergone a revision process to take an in-depth look at our current content with an eye towards accessibility, perspective and voice to ensure that cultural perspectives are recognized, studied, and validated as necessary to know as modern citizens. Classical scholars come from a diversity of backgrounds and need to see themselves represented in content just as importantly as they need to see other cultures through the window of texts that are about other times and cultures.

We also have incorporated a weekly block called “Classical Conversations” that allows our teachers to plan lessons that respond to current events and areas of interest amongst the scholars. We believe engaging with current events is an essential part of educating young people to be informed and humane participants in a democracy. The goal of studying current events is more than helping students know what is going on in the world. More importantly, it is about developing in students the capacity to reflect and deliberate on today’s world within a group that might be more diverse than they encounter outside the classroom. From this practice, students can develop the skills and dispositions they need to be thoughtful participants in society. Classical Conversations provides a standing opportunity for scholars to engage in class meetings surrounding various issues including, but not limited to current events, diversity, equity, inclusion, and class culture.

We are also fortunate to be based in New York and to have access to many important cultural sites, which scholars will visit to deepen their understanding of the topics reviewed in social studies. For example, when studying different parts of the community, scholars in kindergarten will visit the local library. In 2nd grade, scholars will visit Ellis Island when studying immigration. Our middle school scholars will visit the Museum of Tolerance when revisiting immigration. In the early grades, social studies is taught for half the year, rotating with science. Beginning in 4th grade, scholars have both social studies and science daily. In 8th grade, scholars will sit for the New York State United States History Regents exam to demonstrate their depth of content and skill mastery.

**1f. For secondary schools:**

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

**2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

In addition to Math, English Language Arts, History and Science, scholars at South Bronx Classical III also participate in Music (K-8; every other day), Art (K-8; every other day), Fitness (K-8; daily), Character Education (K-8; one a week), Latin (grades 3-8; half the school year) and Debate (grades 4-8 half the school year).

South Bronx Classical III is dedicated to providing a dynamic and high-level art, music and fitness program that balances rigorous skill-based instruction with creative exploration, cooperative learning and critical thinking. Art and music curricula are rooted in art and music history, mediums and genres from all over the world. Scholars regularly apply their knowledge of the taught skills, theory, concepts and techniques to express themselves as individuals and distinct artists and musicians.

Fitness instruction combines sports-specific skill practice, game play, gross-motor development, and strength and endurance training with health education. Utilizing the Sports Ed model, the fitness program develops scholars’ personal and social responsibility skills, sportsmanship, cooperation, strategic thinking and planning, all while learning and practicing habits of a healthy lifestyle. Based on a strong scripted curriculum, scholars are developed into creative thinkers, confident expressers and collaborative and innovative problem solvers who have a life-long appreciation for art, music and fitness and take joy in expressing themselves artistically and physically.

As part of the mission to develop “liberated scholars and citizens of impeccable character,” South Bronx

Classical III is committed to providing a rigorous character education program where scholars learn to become respectful, compassionate and productive citizens. Following a strong scripted curriculum with an emphasis on social and emotional learning, scholars routinely examine, discuss and practice the six character pillars: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, caring, fairness and citizenship. This prepares scholars to enter society with a critical eye towards injustice and provides them with the confidence, tools and desire to make social change. The lesson is structured using community circles in order to build trust, foster conversation and develop social and emotional learning skills.

The debate curriculum aims to teach scholars how to leverage debate as a tool for advocating for themselves and their communities, as well as a powerful tool for self-expression. The curriculum has been revised to increase representation of viewpoints, identities and cultures in the topics taught and resources used in debate. The lessons aim to teach debate as a form of advocacy and an agent for change by teaching transferrable forms of debate that emphasize open-ended, value-based argumentation and rebuttal. Additionally, the lessons promote authentic communication and SEL skill development by creating scaffolded performance measures that track scholar progress in developing key SEL and communication skills year over year.

Latin is an integral part of the Classical Charter Schools mission and culture. The mission of the Latin program is to engage scholars with Latin and the ancient world through a rigorous curriculum emphasizing language comprehension and transferable skills. Scholars will increase their understanding of the structure of language through meaningful interaction with the Latin language and build a strong foundational knowledge that will prepare them to achieve mastery of the American Classical League's Standards for Classical Languages and the NY State Standards for Languages Other Than English. Through the purposeful and consistent study of Latin, scholars develop self-confidence and clarity of expression, become analytical readers and thinkers, and cultivate a sense of global historical perspective. The Latin curriculum will provide the tools for scholars to independently form connections across and beyond diverse academic disciplines. Scholars in 7th and 8th grade take the National Latin Exam.

### **3. Academic Supports**

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

South Bronx Classical III firmly believes all scholars can reach academic mastery with responsive and targeted teacher support. Our teachers prepare lessons with an eye towards supporting scholars who have struggled through targeted questioning, circulation and conferencing. We also utilize flexible groupings in order to provide small group instruction to scholars who need additional individualized support. We are able to utilize additional teachers on staff, within the Learning Specialist and Multigrade Learning Specialists roles, to offer additional groupings for Read Aloud, Textual Analysis, Guided Reading and Math. We utilize informal independent practice data as well as formal assessment data to determine groupings and create specific focus goals for each group.

South Bronx Classical III also has an At-Risk Program for scholars who are reading below grade reading level (regardless of Special Education designation). Scholars who are part of this program receive an additional 45 minutes of guided reading with five or fewer scholars, allowing for targeted instruction tailored to their individual growth areas. This program is taught by our literacy specialist who has intensive training and years of experience. During that time, a variety of instructional strategies are used, mostly around ensuring that scholars maximize their time reading, or thinking about their reading. In addition, struggling scholars have access to two additional programs: Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) and Preventing Academic Failure (PAF); taught by teachers with specific training in these programs. Given the additional intensive reading support, we also test these below level readers every three weeks rather than 6 weeks using Fountas and Pinell running records. This allows us to gather data more frequently to update our goals and differentiate instruction more impactfully.

We also offer an in-school tutoring program in all grades to provide additional targeted instruction for ELA and math prior to important end of year assessments. These groups are differentiated based on areas of need and allow for target reteach time. Scholars enjoy this opportunity as it increases their confidence and allows

them time to work closely with a teacher and peers.

We also utilize South Bronx Classical III's Scholar Service Team (SST) referral process for scholars who continue to struggle after intensive grade-level interventions have been put in place to ensure we are increasing supports when necessary. The referral process is data-driven, urgent, and involves high amounts of parental communication. Through monthly meetings with the SST team and the grade level teachers, they identify the lowest performing 10% of the scholars in each grade, averaged across all subjects. The teacher and SST meet with parents to obtain permission for further investigation and instructional alterations. Once parental permission is obtained, members of the SST perform classroom observations and informal screenings. Thereafter the SST provides teachers with specific strategies which are then implemented and analyzed for efficacy and informal Special Education services are started, when necessary. We hold meetings for all scholars within the referral process every 6 weeks to monitor their progress, adjust goals and ensure close and consistent collaboration amongst all teachers and SST providers.

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

We have written our curriculum across all subjects with thought toward our above grade level scholars to ensure that all lessons offer opportunities to push their understanding.

In math, our curriculum offers scholars opportunities to solve math problems individually with the goal of utilizing a variety of strategies based on scholars' fluency and number sense development. This allows our above grade level math scholars to try more advanced strategies with teacher prompting and coaching and then to share out their strategies and conjectures with the class at the end of the block. Additionally, we use leveled groupings for our scripted content math lessons to allow for increased differentiation for our above level scholars. These lessons start with "explore" problems that allow scholars to explore and struggle through problems, using the transferable Mathematician plan skills they have learned through their math instruction.

For an hour each day, scholars are engaged in Guided Reading groups and independent reading. This time is differentiated based on scholars' reading level and allows for targeted reading-level specific instruction for all scholars, including those above reading level. In upper grades, our above level readers engage in book clubs with their peers to foster scholar discourse and independence.

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

South Bronx Classical III ensures that all scholars with disabilities receive a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment possible. Therefore, to the greatest degree possible in accordance with their Individualized Education Plan (IEP), scholars with disabilities will be educated within the regular education classroom. We support our Special Education scholars through hiring and training dedicated and certified SETSS teachers, school psychologists, speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, and physical therapists.

The Special Services Team draws on their specific training and scholar-specific knowledge to adapt the curriculum to reinforce, supplement, or even introduce ("pre-teach") content being taught in the whole class during SETSS instruction. Importantly, it is critical for special populations teachers to meet and communicate thoughtfully with general education teachers, focusing on assessment data, behavioral data, and true mastery of the existing curriculum and standards. In addition, special service providers are expected to observe their scholars in the general education setting frequently to evaluate carryover. Special service providers also help to develop general educators' knowledge of specific instructional strategies to best instruct scholars with special needs through professional development sessions and monthly team meetings. Special service providers also receive high quality monthly professional development to ensure their practices stay current and relevant.

Each month, the SST team and grade level teachers meet to discuss any Special Education scholar who is in the bottom 20th percentile of the grade in either math or English language arts to create concrete and urgent next steps to increase support and alignment of instruction and goals across educators. Teachers and the



SST team share data for these scholars on a weekly basis to monitor growth on their targeted goals. This structure has helped to ensure that we are closely monitoring and adding in supports immediately for any Special Education scholar who is struggling academically.

In 2021, our Special Education scholars had a 91% pass rate on the ELA and Math New York State Tests, compared to the school-wide pass rate of a 93.5%. This close alignment speaks to the impact of the thoughtful SST instruction and the close collaboration between the SST team and the classroom teachers.

### **3d. English Language Learners, if a special program or intervention is offered:**

We believe that developing a strong proficiency in English as soon as possible will enable all ELLs scholars to reach the academic goals established for all scholars. Therefore, we will 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 provides individualized structured and sequential lessons in English for the ELLs, who remain in the "general" education classroom, being instructed using the general education curriculum with differentiated support. Teachers in structured immersion settings are provided with specific professional development tools to aid in improving the scholars' comprehension and fluency in English, such as clarity of speech training, classroom noise control, use of native language when appropriate, maintaining positive outlook, setting academic goals, use of visual aids, remedial assistance, and planning toward total "mainstreaming" or declassification due to reaching English proficiency.

We use data derived from the NYSITELL and NYSESLAT, as well as internal assessments, to inform differentiated instruction for English language learners, such as providing visual supports, intervention targeting reading and vocabulary, and multi-sensory approaches to learning.

ELL scholars may receive "push-in" English training to facilitate improvement of English, and will be frequently paired with English-speaking scholars in the classroom. Our goal is for all scholars to become proficient readers, writers, and speakers of English, as assessed by the NYSESLAT by the third grade.

In 2021, our English Language Learners had a 93% pass rate on the ELA and Math New York State Tests, compared to the school-wide pass rate of a 93.5%. This incredibly close alignment speaks to the impact of our structure immersion program and the consistent use of differentiated literacy and language based supports without our general education curriculum.

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

Our school's social worker serves as our McKinney-Vento Temporary Housing Liaison and works closely to support our families experiencing homelessness. Through this program, we work to provide families and scholars with additional resources including support with transportation to school, extra food, school supplies and uniforms. We also work closely with families to create an attendance plan to ensure that the changing logistics of their commute does not result in lost learning time. Additionally, we offer crisis counseling, when needed, to increase support for scholars in the school, teach into coping strategies and provide a safe space for communication. These added supports have helped us partner with families to ensure scholars feel supported at school and can remain engaged in the school community.

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

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

South Bronx Classical III works to create a scholar culture that is driven, internally motivated and curious, respectful of all community members, supportive of one another and consistently aiming to grow and do better each day. We do this by creating strong classroom cultures with consistent routines, joyful celebrations, incentives that acknowledge both behavior and academic effort and time devoted each day to goal set and come together as a community. Each of our classrooms is named after the teacher’s college and scholars learn about the college, wear college gear as an incentive and have chants relating to hard work, the character pillars and the college.

Starting in 2020, we restructured our schedule to start each day with a class morning meeting. This was done during remote learning to maintain a sense of community and connection for scholars during a very isolating time. Since returning in person, we have kept this structure. Morning meeting is a time to actively build class community, respond to class challenges, process current events and directly support social emotional learning goals. We have also reinvested in recess over the last two weeks to increase the impact it has on building scholar relationships and providing opportunities for social emotional learning through increasing the amount of partner and group games and physical activities.

We firmly believe in the importance of celebrations and incentives to support scholar learning and reward hard work and effort. Scholars receive bonus points throughout the day for active participation in lessons, overcoming challenging moments and showing kindness and respect to their peers. Scholars can cash in their bonus points for special privileges and prizes. Scholars often want to use their bonus points to be instructional coaches for the day and do school walkthroughs identifying areas of strength and growth! Assessments are paired with class and scholar goals and teams plan celebrations after the assessment for scholars who met their goals. Goals often align to effort indicators or percent growth to ensure they are rewarding grit and effort rather than only mastery. Additionally, we have whole school spirit events that service as a chance for the school community to come together for fun. These include monthly spirit days, family movie nights, fall and spring carnivals, and family breakfasts.

At South Bronx Classical III, we also utilize our school counselors (who have social work, scholar counseling or school psychology degrees) to offer social skill groups and crisis counseling for scholars who would benefit from additional support, who do not have an IEP for counseling. Social skill groups target specific skills through the school year including retention support group, testing anxiety, COVID-19 support and peer mediation. Scholars are identified for these groups using scholar and tester screeners. Crisis counseling is offered to scholars who are experiencing acute challenges outside of the school to provide the emotional support and introduce coping skills.

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

South Bronx Classical III must provide a safe and secure environment where all scholars can focus on their schoolwork and character development. Perhaps more than anything else, we must promise parents that their children are in safe and capable hands throughout the extended day and year that children attend the school. Our Code of Conduct was created to ensure that our school is a respectful learning space where all stakeholders feel safe; allow all teachers and scholars to focus on learning; and build “liberated scholars and citizens of impeccable character,” per our mission.

To encourage family involvement and collaboration around common messaging about learning and character, the school collaborates frequently with families. Regular family communication is a key expectation for all teachers. Teachers send out weekly updates for families sharing curriculum goals and school events. Teachers also reach out to families on a one-on-one basis to discuss their scholars’ growth at least every two weeks. Open House and Report Card Night are opportunities for parents and guardians to visit the school, meet with teachers, learn the expectations in each classroom, and discuss their child’s academic and behavioral progress. All families participate in Report Card Night twice each year.

Family events occur monthly to invite families into the community to celebrate scholar learning and have time to socialize together as a community. Community Gatherings are public celebrations which showcase the achievement of our scholars. During Community Gatherings, our school, families, and community come together to celebrate our mission. These celebrations include scholar awards and performances. Additional academic family events include scholar presentations, shared science labs, and math bees. Social events include movie nights, paint nights, carnivals, and sports events. Additionally, our Dean of Students run monthly Parent Academies to provide mission-driven educational opportunities in English and Spanish for families.

South Bronx Classical III also has a Family Advisor Council, which is a group of families that serve as advisors and supports of the school. Through the Family Advisory Counsel we are able to run many family events and provide support to families who experience challenges. These parents also provide valuable feedback on school policies and areas for continued growth.

We have close ties to our local community including partnerships with local preschools that support with recruitment and local businesses who join us for events such as career day. Additionally, during the pandemic, we used our school food structures to provide food not only to our families but to the larger Bronx community.

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

Teachers at South Bronx Classical III receive an enormous amount of support and training both in August and throughout the year to help ensure that execution, assessment of understanding and data analysis are strong. Each teacher, regardless of tenure, is assigned an instructional coach. Each teacher is observed at least weekly and spends time each week debriefing with the coach about the lesson that was observed. Coaches also execute frequent artifact observations; they analyze scholar work to determine how the curriculum and the teacher's execution is meeting scholar needs. The coach then provides detailed next steps and follows up with the teacher frequently regarding any proposed adjustments. In addition to support from an Instructional Coach, teachers receive constant support from their Grade Team Leader, a veteran teacher on the team. The Grade Team Leader helps to oversee the grade's curriculum, leads daily and weekly meetings and ensures that lessons are being executed as envisioned through weekly observations and debriefs. Each instructional day starts with team Standup Meetings that review the priorities for the day and prepare teachers to clearly execute the teaching points for each subject. These are also important opportunities to come together as a team to culturally align on daily goals and support and energize one another for the instructional day ahead.

In addition to individualized support, professional development is a critical component of our instructional development system. New teachers receive professional development for ten days in August. Our returning staff attends seven full days of professional development. In each subsequent month, teachers receive three hours of network-wide professional development. During these sessions, teachers learn instructional and curricular strategies that they can immediately implement in their classrooms. Teachers attend sessions ranging from strategies to increase math fact fluency, to motivating readers, to planning close reading effectively. Teachers pick, with support from their Grade Team Leader and Coach, sessions that will most immediately impact scholar achievement.

At South Bronx Classical III, we also deeply care about fostering a sense of community amongst our staff so everyone feels that they are working together toward a common goal and have support from their colleagues, managers and coaches. We do this through frequent personal check-ins, monthly surveys monitoring staff satisfaction at work, consistent structures to provide upward feedback including surveys, town halls, and weekly office hours with the School Director. Six times a year, we come together as a whole staff to reinvest in our mission, vision set for the upcoming months, and celebrate one another through "paper plate" awards. To infuse fun in the workplace, we have monthly spirit days, staff breakfasts, social events and a daily joy chat. We were able to transition these structures to the remote setting during 2020-2021, when needed. Additionally, to respond to the challenges of the pandemic, we have introduced

additional staff resources for mindfulness and mental health including the Employee Assistance Program and a network subscription to the CALM app.

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

South Bronx Classical III is led by the CCS Board of Trustees, comprised of 13 members, which governs the school and is responsible for ensuring that the school fulfills its mission, is faithful to its charter, and remains financially viable. The Executive Director (ED), supervised and supported by the Board of Trustees, is ultimately responsible for implementation of the school's mission.

The School Director runs all departments within the school to ensure thoughtful support and professional development of the departmental leaders including Grade Team Leaders, Instructional Coaches, Deans of Students and Operations Managers.

Organizationally, Grade Team Leaders report to the School Director. Teachers report to their Grade Team Leader. The goal of the Grade Team Leadership program is to provide the school with a more disbursed, collaborative, and ultimately effective means of improving scholar achievement. By providing a select cadre of experienced, mission-aligned teachers with additional leadership opportunities, South Bronx Classical 3 develops its faculty and eventually creates a "hire from within" culture that reduces the risk associated with administrative turnover. Grade Team Leaders take responsibility for team management and culture-setting; teacher observations; curriculum developing and vetting; meetings with the School Director; and implementation of special school-wide projects.

Teachers and Grade Team Leaders are supported and professionally developed by the School Director, Instructional Coaches, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Deans of Students, and Special Education Content Leaders. Each teacher and grade team leader is paired with one instructional coach who leads their instructional development through weekly observations, debriefs and professional development sessions. Each grade is paired with one Dean of Students who supports with behavior challenges and leads vision setting and grade-wide initiatives to develop engaged and respectful scholar cultures. The Director of Scholar Services supports the Special Service Team to improve the quality of services and coordinates all logistics connected to the referral and IEP process. The school's operations and business functioning is run by the Director of Operations, the Operations Manager, and the Director of Business.

Through weekly department meetings and monthly leadership meetings, we are able to determine areas to prioritize our support and opportunities for growth. These meetings inform our monthly priorities for each department and collaborative next steps that support improving scholar learning and culture.

#### **5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:**

In 2020, South Bronx Classical III, as part of Classical Charter Schools, underwent an intensive project to examine how we can better acknowledge and celebrate the diversity of our scholars, families and staff in our instructional and organizational practices. Teachers, staff and leadership worked together to form action groups within Curriculum Instruction, Scholar Culture, Staff Culture, the Behavior Management System, Hiring, and Family Involvement. Each action group took stock of areas of strength and wrote proposals for change to address areas for growth. Through this project, we have reimagined our curriculum and professional development to increase cultural representation and the diversity of perspectives. As shared in Section IV #1, we have revised our literary curriculum to increase exposure to non-white authors and revised our history curriculum to increase time spent on non-European history, increase analysis of competing narratives and introduce the flexible Classical Conversations block for teachers to respond to current events. Through subjects including morning meeting, character education and debate, we work to teach scholars how to engage in important and difficult conversations respectfully in order to create class communities that feel safe for all scholars.

Additionally, we have also included additional Diversity, Equity and Inclusion professional development sessions for our staff in order to provide best practices for culturally responsive teaching and also provide the space for staff to explore their own identities and reflect on how their identities impact their working

relationships and their work with our scholars. During each of our monthly professional development workshops, all staff are required to attend at least one DEI-focused session. At South Bronx Classical III, we also hold an annual book club for staff reading books focusing on fostering classrooms that celebrate diversity, allow scholars to explore their personal identities and engage in challenging, honest conversations about differing perspectives.

South Bronx Classical III also works to ensure we consistently spotlight and celebrate the contributions of individuals from diverse backgrounds. Each year, we plan a variety of celebrations for scholars during National Hispanic Heritage Month and Black History month. These events also include participation from our families and others in the community through potluck meals, dance performances and guest speakers. Additionally, we also host a vigil on Juneteenth to honor the lives of those we have lost due to injustice. Scholars led this event with spoken word, poems, visual art and song.

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

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### Maximizing Scholar Achievement Through Small Group Instruction

At South Bronx Classical III, one way we differentiate instruction to ensure success for all scholars is by prioritizing small group instruction throughout the day. We believe that having opportunities to work with scholars in groups of three to six students provides a unique opportunity to respond to classroom data, target scholars' needs and make significant growth. Small group instruction is a powerful lever for improving scholar outcomes but requires important logistical and strategic planning to get the most out of the teaching time.

South Bronx Classical III has a unique team structure in which there are one or two additional teachers on each grade team, which allows for scheduling flexibility. These additional teachers, called Learning Specialists or Multigrade Learning Specialists, do not have their own classroom but instead teach in all the classrooms on the grade. This model allows us to increase the number of sections offered for some core subjects and to strategically schedule teachers' preparation blocks so that additional targeted small groups can be taught during flex content blocks. The Learning Specialists teach scholars across all classrooms on the grade team, both in whole group and small group settings, which creates an important sense of shared responsibility for the success of our scholars across all teachers on the grade team. With this model, the goal of supporting all scholars is not weighing only on the classroom teacher but instead is shared across the team and supported through flexible groupings.

At South Bronx Classical III, we carefully analyze grade-wide data from reading, math and running record assessments and qualitative data from scholar work analyses on a monthly basis to determine priorities for the grade ) and create groupings to target these goals. This strategic decision making requires us to be very specific about the goals for each group and to put structures in place to ensure the time allotted to small group instruction is as high leverage as possible. To make groupings as impactful as possible, we consistently consider:

**What Skills to Focus On?** Small group instruction at Classical can run from 20-45 minutes for three to six weeks. For this time to have a strong impact on scholar understanding and achievement, it is essential that the goals for the group are clear and are transparently shared with staff and scholars.

**Which Scholars Would Benefit the Most?** We believe that all scholars benefit from learning in a small setting with increased individualized support from their teacher. Each month, we need to determine who would most benefit from this opportunity. By analyzing current and historically data, we can prioritize skills and determine which scholars are most in need of support. Our small group instruction model is not only used to support scholars who are struggling in a subject. Instead, small group instruction can also be used to push from "good to great" by targeting scholars with specific mastery gaps or by giving an extra push to scholars who struggle with work completion or are inconsistently showing work habits. If staffing allows, it is also a great opportunity to provide scholars with a push assignment to challenge scholars who have already demonstrated mastery.

**How to Measure the Impact?** We closely analyze the impact of small group instruction through a comparative analysis of the scholars' overall average on classroom assessments, by analyzing specific questions aligned to the group's goals from past or upcoming assessments, or through the analyses of specific work products created during the group. Determining the metric for success during the planning stage helps make the instructional takeaways clear for all.