

A Bronx Tale:

A Social-Emotional Health Model for
Working with Urban Middle School
Students

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Agenda

- o Introduction to Mott Hall
- o Middle School: Development & Challenges
- o Our 4-tier approach:
 - o Trauma and attachment focus
 - o Enhanced counseling services
 - o School-wide character development
 - o Parent engagement

Objectives

- PWBAT explain how the promotion of a trauma and attachment sensitive approach in the school setting is beneficial to all students.
- PWBAT list four initiatives that can be utilized to develop a safe and supportive school environment.
- PWBAT describe three positive outcomes associated with the successful engagement of students and families in the development of social-emotional skills.

Mott Hall Charter School

- o Middle School in Bronx, NY
- o 300 students in 6th to 8th grade
- o *SEH Goal*: Create a safe and supportive environment to ensure that every student has the opportunity to succeed in school



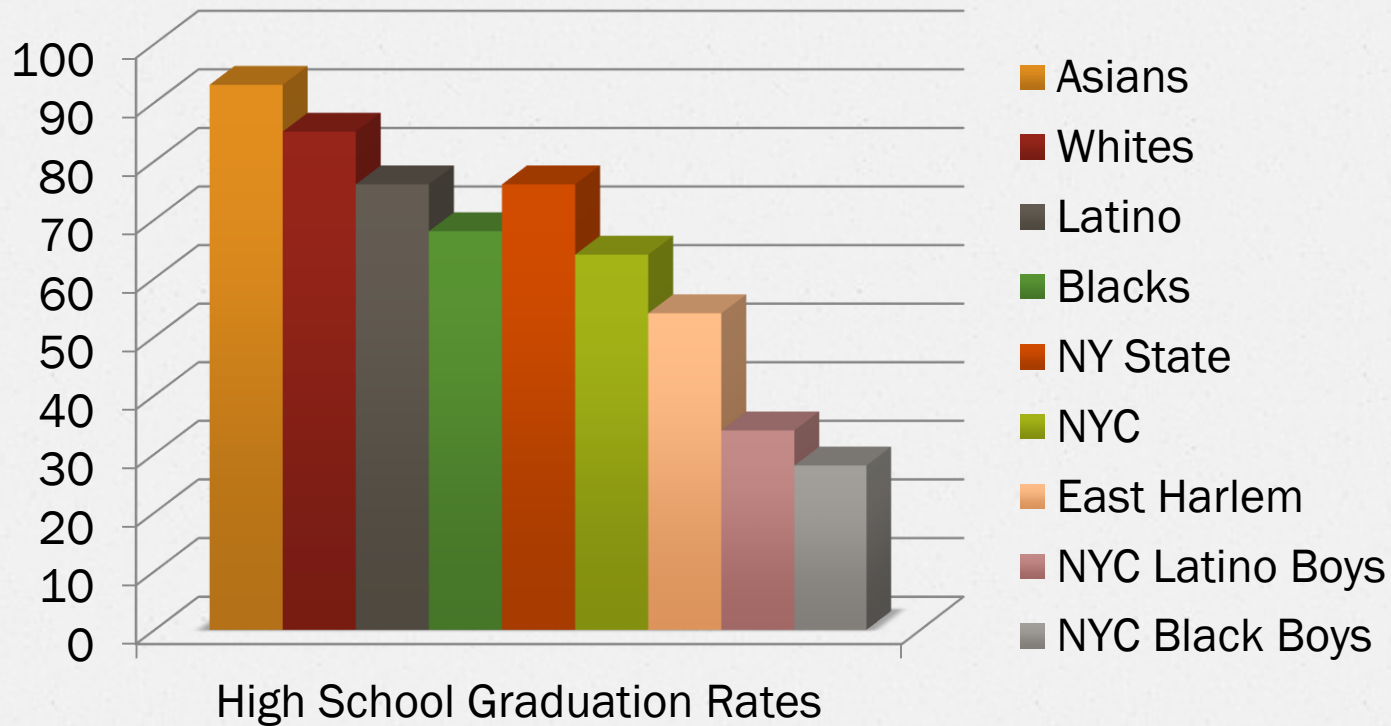
**MOTT HALL
CHARTER SCHOOL**
RISE TO THE CHALLENGE
AN INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE CANDIDATE SCHOOL



Middle School

- o Adolescent development:
 - o Period of rapid developmental changes
 - o Physical, cognitive, moral, psychological, and social-emotional
 - o Move towards independence & developing identity
- o Challenges specific to students in urban settings:
 - o Poverty and homelessness, exposure to community violence, and unfavorable statistics for students

High School Graduation Rates in New York



Our 4-Tier Approach to Advancing Social-Emotional Health at MHCS

- o Trauma and attachment focus
- o Enhanced counseling services
- o School-wide character development
- o Parent engagement

1 – Trauma & Attachment

- o Traumatization occurs when both internal and external resources are inadequate to cope with external threat (Van der Kolk, 1989)
- o Types of trauma experienced by our students:
 - o Poverty and homelessness, community violence, maltreatment and abuse, loss and other attachment failures, and illness

1 – Trauma & Attachment

- Effects of trauma in the school setting:
 - Diminished concentration and memory
 - Organizational difficulties
 - Decreased language skills
 - Learning difficulties
 - Inappropriate behaviors (aggression, impulsivity, defiance, withdrawal, perfectionism)
 - Difficulty regulating emotions
 - Difficulty forming healthy relationships
 - Difficulty understanding cause and effect

1 – Trauma & Attachment

- o Tips of working with trauma in the school setting:
 - o Provide a consistent, predictable pattern for the day
 - o Set clear expectations
 - o Use of affirming language
 - o Use of positive or neutral tone
 - o Give the scholar choices and some sense of control
 - o Model & teach appropriate social behaviors
 - o Strive to remain calm (as much as possible!) in the face of challenges, utilize self-calming techniques

2 – Enhanced Counseling Services

- o 30% of our student body participate in weekly, scheduled counseling
 - o Only 5% receive mandated counseling
- o Method of obtaining counseling:
 - o Self-referral, parent request, staff recommendation

2 – Enhanced Counseling Services

Outcomes:

- o Qualitative
 - o Improved emotional regulation, learning to express oneself
 - o Increased focus, improved organization, better grades
- o Quantitative:
 - o Positive ratings on counseling survey
 - o Increased growth on NYS standardized tests

3 – Character Education

“Throughout history, and in cultures all over the world, education rightly conceived has two great goals: to help students become smart and to help them become good.”

Program goal:

- o To develop positive character and integrate school’s core values among scholars, in order to provide them with the tools to navigate the complexities of adolescence and actively shape the future.

3 – Character Education

Program design:

- o Every scholar participates in 1 class per week for the duration of the school year
- o Smaller class size (12-14 students per class)
- o Facilitated by teachers
- o Integrated with routines and practices

Additional Details:

- o Evidenced-based practices based on character strengths
- o One character strength per week

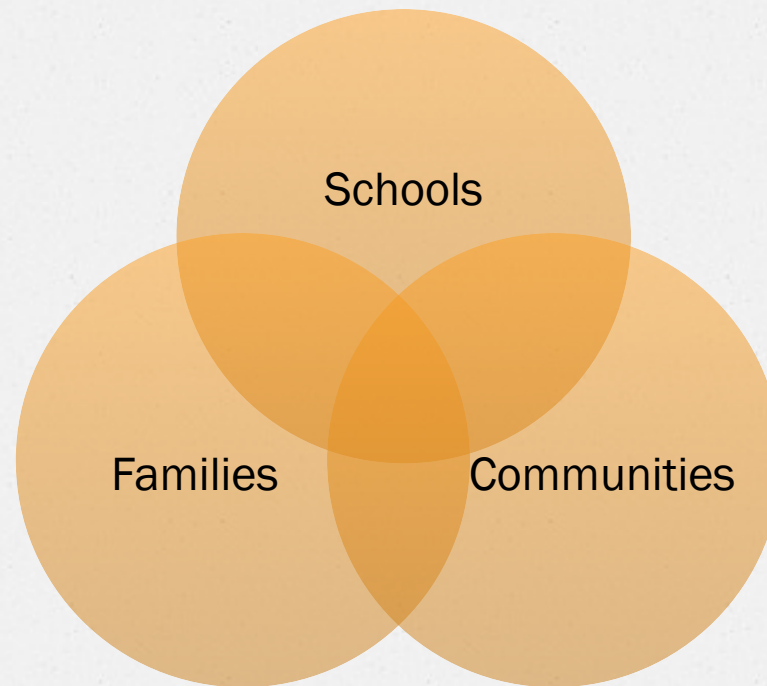
3 – Character Education

Character Strengths

- Hope
- Kindness
- Humor
- Open-Mindedness
- Forgiveness
- Bravery
- Gratitude
- Fairness
- Honesty
- Perspective
- Self-regulation
- Leadership
- Teamwork
- Social Intelligence
- Modesty
- Love
- Perseverance
- Zest
- Curiosity
- Love of learning
- Prudence
- Creativity
- Spirituality
- Appreciation of beauty and excellence

4- Parent Engagement

- o Importance of an integrative approach



4 – Parent Engagement

- o “Parent-to-Parent Dinner Series”
 - o Once a month
 - o Different social and emotional health topics each month:
 - o Peer pressure
 - o Bullying
 - o Relationships
 - o Goal: Professional and peer support

4- Parent Engagement

- o Advisory program
 - o Each scholar is assigned a staff member they remain with for their entire time at MHCS
 - o Benefit to Scholars
 - o Promotes school connectedness
 - o Benefit to parents
 - o Contact person

Q & A

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