The School Climate Program:

The Relationship of a Rewards and Consequences Program to School Climate

in an Urban Middle School

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June, 2008

Abstract

A group of teachers initiated a school-wide rewards and consequences program with the aim of improving the school climate of MS 144 (1,064 students and 105 teachers), a middle school in the Bronx, NY. The rewards included token rewards called Gotchas that students earned for acts of good citizenship for which they were rewarded with raffles, parties, and participation in Academy field-days outside. The consequences involved a Demerit system in which students were penalized for violating school rules and policies for which they served lunch detention. Increased student involvement and communication efforts were made. Results from the New York City Learning Environment Survey from 2007 were compared to February, 2008 results to assess changes in teacher and student perceptions of school climate. Teacher (N = 43) perceptions improved by 7%, exceeding the citywide average, which suggests a possible relationship. Student (N = 663) perceptions did not change. A collaborative learning community formed through the process of implementation that included teachers and administration but not students. A lack of student input and involvement as well as delays in implementation may explain the lack of change for students.

Impact of student behavior on school climate and student achievement

The behavioral norms that preside over a school can greatly impact student achievement and the way children perceive their rights and responsibilities. Peer and contextual effects are recognized as having a significant influence on how students behave and perform, as children mimic the actions they see around them (Hoxby, 2000). Some researchers have found that neighborhood and familial influences bear greater weight for student outcomes than any efforts made by schools (Coleman, 1966). Schools that are plagued by misbehavior can be characterized as having a poor "climate," and are more likely to have low levels of student achievement, lower retention rates, and higher teacher turnover (Greene, 2008). Such schools frequently lack clear policies for dealing with antisocial behavior, including explicit rules that are and regularly enforced, or structured reward systems that impact student behavior in a significant way (Reinke & Herman, 2002). However, recent teacher-led school-based initiatives, including the one discussed in this study, have attempted to address problems of student achievement by altering the school-wide behavioral norms that lead to widespread misbehavior.

History of teacher-led school-wide initiatives

Traditionally, principals have carried the greatest responsibility for overall school climate, as individual teachers maintained control over their own classrooms but were less likely to take on school-wide roles of authority. However, in the early 90's, a shift occurred as teachers were given greater flexibility in adopting roles beyond their own classrooms (Clift et al., 1992). This movement was closely related to teacher action-research initiatives, which called for educators to lend their professional expertise to the academic study of pedagogy and practice (Burnaford, 2001). Teachers became interested in taking on responsibilities that would increase

professional collaboration and initiate both classroom and school-wide improvements (Muijs & Harris, 2003b). Ideally, teacher-led school-wide initiatives can lead to greater school and teacher effectiveness, and higher levels of teacher motivation and retention (Muijs & Harris, 2003a). Teachers are generally credited as the ground-level decision makers of which education policies will succeed or fail, so teacher-led initiatives are often regarded as powerful grassroots efforts to increase student achievement (Hinde, 2003).

School-wide behavior systems: do they work?

Rewards. Although school-wide reward systems vary widely, and have different effects in different schools, research has generally shown that school-wide reward systems that celebrate student academic and behavioral accomplishments lead to improvements in student behavior and learning by adjusting the social norms of the school (Halinger & Murphy, 1986). This is especially true when the rewards are given publicly, and students are encouraged to become more engaged in success (McCormack-Larkin & Kritek, 1982).

School-wide reward systems can work in a variety of ways, but here we will consider initiatives that focus specifically on rewards for good behavior. Such systems expend great energy on prevention measures, which include creating and teaching clear behavioral expectations, and acknowledging and rewarding students on each occasion that they meet those expectations (Sprague & Horner, 2006). This has been found to lead to notable increases in student achievement and decreases in disciplinary measures and problem behaviors in the urban middle school setting (Lassen, Steele, & Sailor, 2006).

Rewards can be in the form of tangible goods or special privileges. There is often the concern that promising rewards will prevent students from developing an intrinsic motivation to

behave well and invest in their own academic success (Cameron, 1997). However, utilizing

reward systems is often a simple and efficient way to improve student behavior when few viable

alternatives are available. Therefore, a balance is often struck between using rewards in a manner

that encourages delayed gratification and effort towards an ultimate goal, as well as focusing on

individual recognition of the child's successful behavior (Pelham et al., 2005).

Consequences. Reward systems are invariably linked to clear disciplinary systems

intended to make behavioral expectations explicit. However, consequence systems are

increasingly playing a secondary role as the focus of school-wide initiatives is placed on the

benefits and rewards of good behavior (Sugai & Horner, 2002). Nevertheless, longitudinal

research has shown that students are much more likely to avoid anti-social behaviors when there

are clear, consistent consequences for poor behavior, and the frequency of behavior problems

decreases each year that a school maintains a consistent discipline system (Luiselli, Putnam, &

Sunderland, 2002). The most frequent forms of discipline for misbehavior are detention and/or

suspension, but administrators must be wary of applying these consequences fairly, as African-

American males tend to endure exclusionary discipline with a much higher frequency than other

groups (Fenning & Rose, 2007).

Present Study

The ills of poverty are frequently manifested in urban schools where at-risk children

demonstrate disruptive behaviors and poor academic performance (Pelham et al., 2005). The

setting for this study, M.S. 144 in the Bronx, New York, deals with such problems on a daily

basis, as it serves a low-income community primarily composed of Black (70%) and Hispanic

(23%) families. The population of 1,067 6th to 8th grade students contains 5% English Language

Learners and 13.5% Special Education students. MS 144 receives Title 1 funding due to a free or

reduced lunch percentage of 67%. The average attendance rate for 2006-2007 was 91% (Bradley, 2007).

Five years ago, MS 144 was broken into small learning communities called Academies that are divided by floor, each run by an Assistant Principal. This restructuring came as a result of the school being classified as a School in Need of Improvement due to failure to meet state testing standards mandated under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NYCDOE, 2006).

The initiative on which this study is based commenced as a response to teacher and student concerns over poor school climate at MS 144. The concerns were that extreme or habitual behaviors were punished, but there was no consistent response for lesser offenses. As a result, many students became increasingly defiant and disrespectful towards teachers, who in turn felt helpless to maintain order. The consistent opinion amongst teachers can be summarized in an anonymous quote given in a teacher survey from August 2007, "Too many students who are routinely disruptive and disrespectful merely get a slap on the wrist and are looked up to by others for 'getting over.' The general population does not see the benefits to behaving when their misbehaving schoolmates continue to cut class, roam the halls, and hang out wherever they choose, on a daily basis."

This sentiment can also be observed in the results of the New York City School Environment Survey (NYCDOE, 2007) administered for the first time to all teachers by the New York City Department of Education (DOE) in June of 2007. On a scale of 0 to 10, 10 being the most positive, teachers reported a score of 3.3 to the statement, "order and discipline are maintained at my school." They also reported a score of 4.0 for the statement, "most students at my school treat teachers with respect." The average overall score for questions concerned with "Safety and Respect" came to 5.6, below the citywide average of 6.4. Students, who took a

similar NYCLES, also reported lower average scores (5.3) than the citywide average (6.0) in

these areas, due to similarly low answers regarding interactions between other students and

teachers. For example, the item, "most students in my school treat each other with respect,"

yielded a 3.5 while "students get into physical fights at my school," yielded a 2.6. Students

reported an average score of 3.7 on "most students in my school treat teachers with respect."

Interventions

A group of seven teachers at M.S. 144 decided to address these problems by instituting a

school-wide behavior management program that stressed clear expectations and consistent

enforcement of infractions. The program, eventually called the School Climate Program (SCP),

contained new interventions for rewards, consequences, student involvement, and increased

communication among administration, staff and students.

Rewards. The rewards program was created to mirror a token rewards program currently

in use at Frederick Douglass Academy (FDA), a public middle school in Harlem, NYC (The

Frederick Douglass Academy, n.d.). Token raffle tickets called Gotchas were given for positive

behaviors displaying good citizenship. Gotchas led to monthly raffle drawings and monthly

reward parties. In addition to the Gotcha program, students were invited to attend outside field

days called Academy Day. Held twice during the school year, students went outside for three

periods and played with other members of their Academy in organized activities. Posters

(Appendix E) were also displayed throughout the building to present the areas of good

citizenship that would be rewarded.

Consequences. The consequence system consisted of a Demerits program in which

teachers assigned demerits to students who displayed negative behaviors. The demerit program

was also loosely based upon an FDA (The Frederick Douglass Academy, n.d.) program that used

Demerits to enforce school policies. Posters displayed school policies that students must uphold throughout the building as well. (Appendix F) Students who earned enough Demerits each week were required to attend lunch detention as a consequence.

Student Involvement. Student involvement was increased by expanding the roles of members of student government to support the Rewards and Consequences systems. Class Vice Presidents were asked to keep track of the number of Gotchas earned by students while class Presidents kept track of the Demerits.

Communication. Instituting a series of school-wide interventions required increased communication amongst staff and students. Academy assemblies were held for the first time at the beginning of the year as a way for Assistant Principals to welcome students back to school and to allow the School Climate Committee to introduce the new reward and consequence systems. Two informational meetings, one in June 2007 and one in August 2007, as well as a staff professional development in March 2008, were held to inform teachers of the new changes and to gain feedback on best practices.

The purpose of these interventions is to answer the question, "Is there a relationship between a school-wide rewards and consequences program and school climate, as perceived by teachers and students?" It is predicted that, even though there are myriad factors that influence school climate, the interventions instituted will yield a strong relationship for both teachers and students.

<div align="center">*Methods*</div>

To establish baseline data for this study, the investigators utilized the New York City Learning Environment Survey (NYCDOE, 2007) to assess school climate. The NYCLES is an annual survey administered by the Department of Education. The survey underwent an extensive

development process. It was introduced last year (June 2007) to parents, students, and teachers. It was chosen for this study because the June 2007 scores could serve as a baseline for both target groups, teachers and students. Questions on the surveys differed slightly between the target groups.

The NYCLES asks questions concerned with four domains: safety and respect, academic expectations, engagement, and communication. Participants are asked to rate their answers on a four-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree, and percentage scores are yielded for each possible rating. The percentages are then converted to a single score out of ten according to DOE criteria.

An additional eight questions that are specific to the interventions used at MS 144 were added to the NYCLES for the purposes of this study. The same questions were administered to teachers and students. All survey materials can be found in Appendices A and B.

The teacher survey was administered in February of 2008 via the internet survey software at www.zoomerang.com. There was a response rate of 43 teachers out of a total 105 teachers at M.S. 144 (N = 43). Teachers were given a memo with a link to the site and a password which allowed access from any computer with internet access. Shortcuts were placed on the desktops of fifteen library computers and the computers in the teacher's lounge as well. Zoomerang compiled all data in percentage form for each possible answer. The percentages were converted by the investigators to scale scores out of ten.

The student survey was administered in February of 2008 in students' homerooms using paper surveys and Scantron answer documents to 663 students out of 1,067 (N = 663). Students were given 45 minutes to complete the survey. The student survey initially contained 66 items, which could not be completed in the allotted time, so the items were separated into Survey A and

Survey B, except for the MS 144 specific School Climate questions that were included in both

surveys. As a result, both Survey A and Survey B contained 40 items. A Scantron machine was

used to compile the survey results into percentage form for each possible answer. The

percentages were converted to scale scores out of ten by the investigators.

The methods for collecting data for the Demerit program evolved over the course of the

year. Initially, demerits were tracked each day by four teachers in Microsoft Excel. The

document was accessible via the internet using Google Documents

(www.google.com/documents). Google documents allows for real-time entry, which eliminates

redundancy. However, Excel documents were inaccessible via Google Documents within MS

144, so data entry was passed on to a group of eight students entering data four days a week into

multiple Excel files in the school library. Issues with keeping coordinated data on multiple files,

motivating the students entering the data, and maintaining pace with the large number of

demerits eventually made this method impossible even as the Excel documents were made

increasingly user friendly. Also, printing out Demerit totals for classes was difficult, so detention

numbers were inaccurate.

For these reasons, demerit data entry came to halt by late November. In January, a system

being used by two teachers was turn-keyed into a school-wide system in which Class Presidents

tracked demerits on charts in the classroom every day. This allowed students to see their own

Demerit totals because they were displayed in the classroom. It also allowed for more accurate

Demerit totals that could be used to determine who earned a detention. Once again, students

performing data entry eventually became less motivated and homeroom teachers took over

tracking of Demerits in most cases. As a result, the purpose of tracking also evolved from

tracking the frequency of specific behaviors to tracking the total number of demerits accrued by

each student each week to determine who should attend detention. The Demerit tracking sheets

can be found in Appendix C.

Data collection for Gotchas was performed using the chart found in Appendix D by Class

Vice Presidents who met every month to report their results. Tracking of Gotchas was successful

until around February when students lost motivation.

Results

Teacher perceptions of school climate improved as measured in the NYCLES from June 2007 to February 2008 overall and in all domains. As shown in Table 1, all scores, which previously were below the citywide average in 2007, met or exceeded the citywide average following the intervention. The greatest increase came in the domain of safety and respect, which was the area most targeted in the intervention.

Table 1: NYCLES Teacher Survey Results Summary in February, 2008 (N = 43)

	June 07 Score	February 08 Score	Citywide Average 07
Teacher Overall Score	5.6	6.3	6.2
Teacher Domain Scores			
a. Safety and Respect (S)	5.6	6.6	6.4
b. Academic Expectations (A)	6.1	7.0	6.7
c. Engagement (E)	5.0	5.8	5.8
d. Communication (C)	5.5	5.9	5.9

The reasons for improvement in teachers' perceptions are illustrated by the survey items listed in Table 2, which showed the greatest improvement. The items showed increases of at least 1.0 point. There are two items that were not included in Table 2 because they did not improve by at least 1.0 point that are relevant enough to highlight here. The first is, "teachers in this school respect teachers who take the lead in school improvement efforts," which increased in scale score from 6.9 to 7.5. The second is, "How much do you feel supported by other teachers at your school," remained high at 7.9.

Table 2: Areas of Greatest Improvement in the Teachers' NYCLES

Safety and Respect	June 07	Feb. 08
Gang activity is a problem at my school.	5.3	7.9
Crime and violence are a problem in my school.	4.8	6.6
I am safe at my school.	5.5	7.1
Order and discipline are maintained at my school	3.3	4.8
Students in my school are often threatened or bullied.	3.7	5.2
There are conflicts at my school based: on race, culture, religion, sexual orientation, gender, or disability.	5.5	6.9

Academic Expectations

The principal places the learning needs of children ahead of other interests.	5.0	6.6
Teachers in this school set high standards for student work in their classes.	6.5	8.0
Teachers in this school use student achievement data to improve instructional decisions.	6.4	7.9
My school has high expectations for all students.	6.0	7.3
This school makes it a priority to help students develop challenging learning goals.	5.5	6.7
The principal has confidence in the expertise of the teachers.	5.0	6.1
There is alignment across the curriculum, instruction, and assessment within and across the grade levels at this school.	5.2	6.2

Engagement

The principal invites teachers to play a meaningful role in setting goals and making important decisions for this school.	4.7	6.3
To what extent do you feel supported by your principal?	5.5	6.7
The professional development I received this year provided me with teaching strategies to better meet the needs of my students.	4.5	5.6

Communication

The principal is an effective manger who makes the school run smoothly.	4.2	5.6
My school communicates effectively with parents when students misbehave.	5.3	6.6
School leaders encourage open and honest communication on important school issues	4.2	5.5
How often during this school year have you sent home information on how parents can help students learn at home?	4.1	5.3
I trust the principal at his or her word.	3.9	5.1

There were no decreases of more than one point from June 07 to February 08 for teacher

NYCLES scores, but there were a few low scores. The lowest teacher scores had to do with

parent involvement, which falls outside of the interventions of the School Climate Program.

Order and discipline remained low even though it increased by more than 1.0 point. The item,

"most students at my school treat teachers with respect," increased from 4.0 to 4.8. Therefore,

teacher perceptions of school climate did not decrease substantially in any area.

Student perceptions of school climate measured through the NYCLES did not reflect similar improvement to what was expressed by teachers. The students' average overall score only increased by 0.1 points, leaving it still below the citywide average of June 2007. The four domains showed changes ranging from -0.1 to 0.2. These scores can be viewed in Table 3. Three hundred forty-nine students completed Survey A, while 352 students completed Survey B. The population size shown in Table 3 is the average for each survey rounded to the nearest whole number.

Table 3: NYCLES Student Survey Results Summary (N = 351)

	June 07 Score	February 08 Score	Citywide Average 07
Student Overall Score	6.0	6.1	6.3
Student Domain Scores			
a. Safety and Respect (S)	5.3	5.5	6.0
b. Academic Expectations (A)	6.8	7.0	6.9
c. Engagement (E)	6.3	6.1	6.5
d. Communication (C)	5.6	5.8	5.7

Teachers' responses to questions pertaining specifically to the School Climate Program that were placed at the end of the NYCLES in February are illustrated in Figure 1 and Table 5. Figure 1 shows that Demerits and Gotchas were used regularly. However, they were not tracked well in the classroom by student officers. The "not applicable" or (NA) response for the second two items was marked by teachers without a homeroom.

Figure 1: School Climate Program Teacher Usage Items by Percentage (N = 43)

I use Demerits for negative behaviors in my classroom.

I hand out Gotchas for positive behaviors.

My Class President keeps track of Demerits.

My Vice President collects and tracks Gotchas.

Legend:
- Never
- Once a month
- Once a week
- Daily
- Nearly every teaching period
- N/A

Table 5: Teacher Perceptions of the School Climate Program Interventions from MS 144 Survey (N = 43)

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Demerits have been a useful behavior management tool in my classroom.	8%	26%	51%	15%
A weekly lunch detention program will help to improve student behavior.	5%	15%	41%	38%
Gotchas, Gotcha Reward Parties, and Gotcha Raffles have helped to improve student behavior in my classroom.	5%	11%	57%	27%
Academy Days are a good way to build Academy spirit.	0%	0%	54%	46%
Demerits and detentions have helped to improve the overall school environment.	3%	24%	50%	24%
Gotchas, related rewards, and Academy Days have helped to improve the overall school environment.	3%	5%	59%	33%
School environment improvement initiatives are a valuable use of teacher time.	3%	5%	50%	42%

Figure 2: School Climate Program Usage Items by Percentage, Student Responses (N = 663)
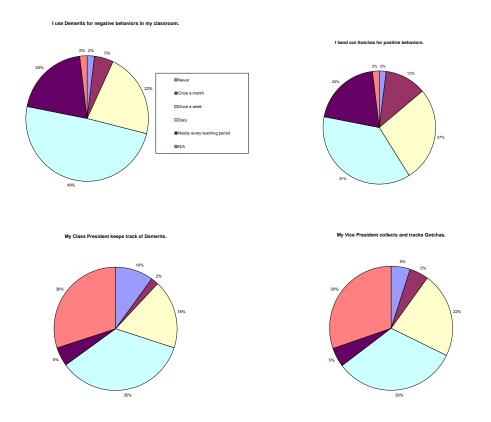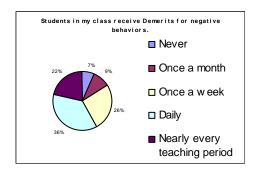

Table 6: Student Perceptions of the School Climate Program Interventions from MS 144 Survey (N = 663)

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
A weekly lunch detention program will help to improve student behavior.	36.8	30.0	21.6	11.6
Gotchas, Gotcha Reward Parties, and Gotcha Raffles are good motivators for positive behavior.	9.4	15.1	38.5	37.0
Academy Days are a good way to build Academy spirit.	10.6	7.9	39.7	41.8
Demerits and detentions have helped to improve student behavior.	38.0	30.7	20.3	10.9

Discussion

The end result of the School Climate Program (SCP) is that teacher perspectives regarding school climate improved while student perspectives remained the same. For the teachers, a relationship between this improvement and the interventions of the SCP is likely. The largest increase in scores on the New York City Learning Environment Survey (NYCLES) came in the Safety and Respect domain (Table 1), which contained questions on order, discipline, respect, and comfort in the school, which are most closely related to the rewards and consequence interventions included in the program. Teachers feel safer, feel that they are treated with more respect by students, and feel that there has been an increase in order and discipline (Table 2). Furthermore, the results of the MS 144 Climate Survey Questions show that teachers used the Gotchas (84%) and Demerits (91%) at least weekly (most more frequently) and the majority reported that all interventions have improved and will continue to improve the overall school environment (Table 5).

Student results were not as positive. Whereas students did report that their teachers were using the program (Figure 2), they only looked favorably on the positive interventions: Gotchas, raffles, reward parties, and Academy days. They do not feel that demerits and detentions have helped improve student behavior or will do so in the future (Table 6). This could be because students do not want a consequence system. It could also be because the detention program took five months to implement, so students received demerits without the underlying consequence of detention, which could have negatively affected their perceptions of school-wide consequences. The score for the item, "discipline in my school is fair," decreased from 5.0 in 2007 to 4.8 in 2008. The reward programs, which students do support, ran more smoothly from the beginning of the school-year.

Though student scores in the Safety and Respect domain (as well as the other domains) on the NYCLES did not increase like teacher scores, there were some substantial increases worth noting. The four items regarding students' respect for their peers increased from an average of 3.4 in 2007 to 4.8 in 2008, which is an indication of a more positive school climate. Students also feel less bullied (2.2 point change). Negatively, students do worry more about crime and violence (1.7 point change). Most scores remain about the same, so it is difficult to find a clear relationship between the SCP and students' perception of school climate using NYCLES scores.

The improvement in teacher perceptions of school climate but not in student perceptions may be best explained by the impact of the process of implementation rather than the overall effects of the SCP interventions. The teachers worked collaboratively to overcome many obstacles in the implementation process, particularly for the consequences intervention. As a result, they became highly invested in the process of implementation, and came to value the initiative as a means to improving school climate. Students were involved early in the implementation process, but their involvement waned as implementation became more difficult, so they did not become invested in the initiative to the same degree as the teachers. As a result, they did not have as much reason to feel that any significant changes had occurred in the school over the course of the year, or that any great efforts had been enacted to cause such changes.

An unexpected outcome of the SCP has been the formation of a Collaborative Learning Community at MS 144. A Collaborative Learning Community is an environment in which teachers, administrators, and students work together (form a culture of collaboration) to promote student learning (Barth, 2002). The community began developing early in the year as evidenced by the results of the NYC Quality Review in mid-October, in which MS 144 improved its rating to "well developed" (the second highest rating) The reviewer, an independent observer furnished

by the NYC Department of Education, reported that, "Michelangelo is a collaborative learning

community where instructional leaders and teachers engage in honest reflection and critical

analysis (Bradley, 2007) The School Climate Committee had a pronounced role in building this

community and helping MS 144 earn a higher rating. The reviewer had this to say about the

SCP:

> The establishment of a positive climate committee, at the instigation of members of staff, has made a swift and significant impact on students' behavior, attendance, punctuality and motivation to succeed.

> The Positive Climate committee worked over the last few months, with input from students, to devise a system of "gotchas", demerits and detentions. Students and staff are involved in administering the system, which has been a resounding success (Bradley, 2007).

The development of the Collaborative Learning Community has changed the overall focus

of the SCP. Research says that a focus on a specific goal is key to creating such an environment

(DuFour, 2004). At the beginning, the primary goal for the SCP was behavior management, with

a specific focus on stronger consequences. The success of the rewards program changed that goal

to promoting good citizenship. This change in focus, along with the favorable Quality Review,

increased the support of the Principal for the SCP. She often pushes rewards as a way to motivate

middle schoolers. With the principal on board, collaboration has continued to grow. The

principal wrote this of the SCP, "The work of the SCC needs to be commended by all. Your

initiative will be sustained and further developed in the years to come. It is fabulous. I cannot

express my appreciation enough. The concept of all of us wanting the same climate is

happening." Other keys to sustaining and further developing a Collaborative Learning

Community include assessing results, increasing communication with administration, students,

and colleagues, having a strong coordinator, and pushing through obstacles (Barth, 2002).

"All school cultures are incredibly resistant to change, which makes school improvement

from within or from without usually so futile. Unless teachers and administrators act to change the culture of a school, all innovations…will have to fit in and around existing elements of the culture (Barth, 2002, page 6). The teachers and administration at MS144, led by the School Climate Committee faced these challenges and pushed through to create change. Based on the results discussed here, the following policy suggestions are made for the School Climate Program and for other schools that seek to build a rewards and consequences program that helps to improve perspectives on school climate.

Implications for MS 144 School Policy

The teachers, administration, and staff at MS 144 in the Bronx will best promote good citizenship in their students by continuing to cultivate a collaborative community in which students are rewarded for acts of good citizenship, receive clear consequences for failing to follow school policies, and are included in planning these rewards and consequences for their classes, their Academies, and their school. We believe that the continuing the School Climate Program will accomplish these goals as well as further develop the Collaborative Learning Community. In order to continue the program effectively, a few additional steps should be taken, many of which are specific to MS 144.

The first step is to increase student involvement beyond the roles of class officers and reward students for their efforts. Have students on the School Climate Committee from every Academy and grade. Allow students to come up with their rewards. For example, encourage teachers to have their classes come up with their own class rewards for Gotchas. Have students come up with classroom-specific criteria for earning a Gotcha in each class. In addition, have a student broadcast any announcements concerning the SCP over the loudspeaker during morning

announcement time. Reward our 8th grade students who received the most Gotchas with a "Citizenship Award" at graduation. Lastly, focus on the positive by concentrating on improving behavior outside of the classroom in a positive way. Teachers and staff, particularly those monitoring the hallways and cafeteria should focus more on Gotchas than on giving Demerits.

In order to monitor student involvement so that students remain involved, it will also be important to provide clear guidelines for tracking and submitting Demerit and Gotcha results. Communicate clearly the responsibilities of class officers at the time of election in September. Have consequences for those who do not fulfill their duties such as probation and replacement. Reward students who participate in maintaining the program.

In order to ensure that the consequences system remains fair, it is important to keep consequences clear and enforceable. Students must review what they are being punished for and reflect on those actions at the time of punishment so that they are not left feeling their punishment is unfair. Demerits must be tracked daily with the reason for the Demerit displayed in the classroom so that students are aware of their consequences. Homeroom teachers must be informed when students are repeatedly receiving Demerits for the same offenses so that they can contact a family member. Detention must, therefore, be a certain consequence overseen by qualified teachers should handle detention as judged by the Assistant Principals.

As stated, continuing to build a Collaborative Learning Community will remain a goal of the School Climate Program. The School Climate Committee should be more inclusive of all staff. Therefore, it is proposed that it is composed of the following: Coordinator, at least two strong teachers from each Academy, Guidance Counselor, Dean, School Ade, Security Guard, Students, and a parent representative. The Coordinator position is especially important in connecting key actors and leading efforts to overcome obstacles (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2008).

The Coordinator position should have at least two periods per week for the School Climate Committee leader to devote to directing the program. The Coordinator and/or Committee should meet with the Principal and Assistant Principals once a month to maintain communication. Continuing to hold discussion-based professional developments and assessing teacher and student perspectives on school climate through surveying will help to track the strength of the community.

Lastly, emphasize best practices with teachers. Demerits are not intended to be in-the-class discipline measures. That is why hitting, throwing, and disruptive behavior are not included on the Demerit Sheet. They are intended to remove non-negotiable behaviors (The Frederick Douglass Academy, n.d.). The old saying goes, "the best classroom management is invisible." Gotchas, on the other hand, should be used by all teachers in the ways that best fit their classroom needs.

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APPENDIX

Mid-Year Teacher Survey Results

February 2008

1. How long have you been a teacher at this school?

Less than one year	14%
1 - 3 years	17%
4 - 10 years	38%
11 - 15 years	14%
More than 15 years	17%

2. How long have you been a teacher?

Less than one year	10%
1 -3 years	7%
4 - 10 years	33%
11 - 15 years	17%
More than 15 years	33%

3. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	June 07 Score	February 08 Score	Domain
School leaders communicate a clear vision for this school.	2%	10%	64%	24%	**6.7**	**7.0**	C
School leaders let staff know what is expected of them.	2%	19%	55%	24%	**6.9**	**6.7**	C
School leaders encourage open and honest communication on important school issues.	14%	24%	45%	17%	**4.2**	**5.5**	C
School leaders encourage collaboration among teachers.	5%	12%	60%	24%	**6.3**	**6.8**	E
There is alignment across the curriculum, instruction, and assessment within and across the grade levels at this school.	7%	14%	64%	14%	**5.2**	**6.2**	A
The principal places the learning needs of children ahead of other interests.	10%	14%	48%	29%	**5.0**	**6.6**	A
The principal is an effective manger who makes the school run smoothly.	10%	31%	43%	17%	**4.2**	**5.6**	C
I trust the principal at his or her word.	17%	33%	31%	19%	**3.9**	**5.1**	C

4. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	June 07 Score	February 08 Score	Domain
My school has high expectations for all students.	0%	19%	40%	40%	**6.0**	**7.3**	A
Teachers in this school set high standards for student work in their classes.	2%	5%	62%	31%	**6.5**	**8.0**	A
My school has clear measures of progress for student achievement throughout the year.	0%	12%	60%	29%	**6.4**	**7.3**	A

I have the materials I need to teach my class(es), such as: books, audio/visual equipment, maps, or calculators.	12%	17%	49%	22%	**5.6**	**6.0**	A
My instructional materials are in good condition.	5%	24%	50%	21%	**5.5**	**6.2**	A
Teachers in this school use student achievement data to improve instructional decisions.	0%	5%	55%	40%	**6.4**	**7.9**	A
This school makes it a priority to help students develop challenging learning goals.	2%	14%	64%	19%	**5.5**	**6.7**	A
This school makes it a priority to help students find the best ways to achieve their learning goals.	2%	24%	48%	26%	**5.7**	**6.6**	A

5. Which of the following courses or activities are available to the students at your school – and when are they available during t	Offered as a regular school activity/ course	Offered before or after school or during free periods	Not offered at all	June **07** Score	February **08** Score	Domain
Art	93%	2%	5%	**9.7**	**9.8**	
Music	90%	5%	5%	**5.9**	**5.8**	
Dance	5%	71%	24%			
Theater	63%	17%	20%			
Foreign Language	90%	5%	5%			A
Computer Skills/Technology	98%	0%	2%			
Health	66%	11%	24%			
Physical Education	98%	0%	2%			
Sports Teams/Clubs	20%	78%	2%			
Enrichment Activities	44%	51%	5%			

6. How much do you agree or disagree with the following state	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	June **07** Score	February **08** Score	Domain
My school offers a wide enough variety of activities or courses to keep students engaged at my school.	12%	26%	45%	17%	**4.9**	**5.6**	E

7. To what extent do you feel supported by:	To no extent	To a small extent	To some extent	To a great extent	June **07** Score	February **08** Score	Domain
your principal?	5%	19%	45%	31%	**5.5**	**6.7**	E
other teachers at your school?	2%	5%	48%	45%	**7.7**	**7.9**	E

8. How much do you agree or disagree with the following state	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	June **07** Score	February **08** Score	Domain
The principal has confidence in the expertise of the teachers.	10%	19%	50%	21%	**5.0**	**6.1**	A
The principal invites teachers to play a meaningful role in setting goals and making important decisions for this school.	10%	14%	52%	24%	**4.7**	**6.3**	E
Teachers in this school respect teachers who take the lead in school improvement efforts.	0%	12%	50%	38%	**6.9**	**7.5**	S
Teachers in this school trust each other.	5%	27%	49%	20%	**6.1**	**6.2**	S
Teachers in this school recognize and respect colleagues who are the most effective teachers.	2%	10%	61%	27%	**7.0**	**7.1**	S
The principal visits classrooms to observe the quality of teaching at this school.	2%	12%	56%	29%	**6.6**	**7.0**	A
School leaders give me regular and helpful feedback about my teaching.	5%	24%	55%	17%	**5.5**	**6.2**	C
The principal places a high priority on the quality of teaching at this school.	5%	14%	43%	38%	**6.7**	**7.1**	A

9. How much do you agree or disagree with the following state	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	June **07** Score	February **08** Score	Domain
Most teachers in my school work together to improve their instructional practice.	2%	19%	50%	29%	**6.1**	**6.9**	A
This year, I received helpful training on the use of student	7%	24%	51%	17%	**5.5**	**5.9**	E

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	June 07 Score	February 08 Score	Domain
achievement data to improve teaching and learning.							
The professional development I received this year provided me with content support in my subject area.	17%	24%	49%	10%	**4.6**	**5.1**	E
The professional development I received this year provided me with teaching strategies to better meet the needs of my students.	12%	22%	51%	15%	**4.5**	**5.6**	E

10.	Based on your experiences during the current school year much do you agree or disagree with the following stateme	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	June 07 Score	February 08 Score	Domain
	Obtaining information from parents about student learning needs is a priority at my school.	7%	39%	46%	7%	**4.4**	**5.1**	E
	Teachers and administrators in my school use information from parents to improve instructional practices and meet student learning needs.	11%	29%	53%	8%	**4.6**	**5.3**	E
	My school communicates effectively with parents when students misbehave.	5%	20%	49%	27%	**5.3**	**6.6**	C
	It is difficult to overcome language or cultural barriers between teachers and parents at my school.	15%	59%	22%	5%	NS	NS	NS

11.	This year, what percentage of your students had at least one parent attend your parent-teacher conferences?		June 07 Score	February 08 Score	Domain
			3.6	**2.9**	C
		33%			
26 - 50 %		45%			
51 - 75 %		21%			
76 - 100 %		0%			

12.	How often during this school year have you:	Rarely or Never	About 3 or 4 Times each year	About once a month	Once a week	More than once a week	June 07 Score	February 08 Score	Domain
	received information about a student's learning that was offered by a parent?	42%	32%	18%	2%	5%	**2.4**	**3.2**	E
	had a conversation or corresponded with a parent of a student about the student's behavior?	5%	15%	29%	34%	17%	**7.8**	**7.3**	C
	attempted to have a conversation with a parent but failed because you were not able to contact the parent or the parent did not respond or attend?	15%	22%	39%	10%	15%	**NS**	**NS**	NS
	communicated with students about their progress in class?	0%	7%	15%	37%	41%	**9.6**	**9.0**	C
	communicated with parents about their children's progress in class?	5%	15%	50%	22%	8%	**6.8**	**6.8**	C
	sent home information on how parents can help students learn at home?	10%	38%	38%	10%	5%	**4.1**	**5.3**	C
	sent parents written information on what you are teaching and what students are expected to learn?	23%	49%	10%	15%	3%	**3.8**	**4.1**	C
	sent home information on services to help students or parent such as tutoring, after-school programs, or classes adults can take to help their children in school?	10%	45%	35%	5%	5%	**4.3**	**4.8**	C

13.	How much do you agree or disagree with the following stat	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	June 07 Score	February 08 Score	Domain
	Order and discipline are maintained at my school	10%	41%	44%	5%	**3.3**	**4.8**	S
	I can get the help I need at my school to address student behavior and discipline problems	10%	27%	56%	7%	**4.7**	**5.3**	S
	I am safe at my school.	2%	7%	61%	29%	**5.5**	**7.1**	S
	Crime and violence are a problem in my school.	24%	54%	17%	5%	**4.8**	**6.6**	S
	Students in my school are often threatened or bullied.	5%	56%	28%	10%	**3.7**	**5.2**	S
	Adults at my school are often disrespectful to students.	42%	45%	8%	5%	**6.7**	**7.5**	S
	Most students at my school treat teachers with respect.	18%	25%	52%	5%	**4.0**	**4.8**	S
	Most parents treat teachers at this school with respect.	3%	10%	74%	13%	**6.2**	**6.6**	S
	Students use of alcohol and illegal drugs in school is a problem at my school.	49%	46%	5%	0%	**7.2**	**7.5**	S
	There are conflicts at my school based: on race, culture, religion, sexual orientation, gender, or disability.	30%	50%	18%	2%	**5.5**	**6.9**	S
	There is a person or a program in my school to help students resolve conflicts.	2%	15%	68%	15%	**5.9**	**6.6**	S
	Gang activity is a problem at my school.	41%	54%	5%	0%	**5.3**	**7.9**	S
	The presence and actions of School Safely Agents help to promote a safe and respectful learning environment.	8%	28%	58%	8%	**4.8**	**5.6**	S
	My school is kept clean.	5%	5%	60%	30%	**7.6**	**7.2**	S

Mid-Year Teacher Survey Results

School Climate Program Questions

February 2008

14.	Please answer the following questions regarding the behavior interventions currently in place at MS 144.	Never	Once a month	Once a week	Daily	Nearly every teaching period	N/A
I use Demerits for negative behaviors in my classroom		2%	5%	22%	49%	20%	2%
I hand out Gotchas for positive behaviors		2%	12%	27%	37%	20%	2%
My Class President keeps track of Demerits		10%	2%	18%	35%	5%	30%
My Vice President collects and tracks Gotchas		5%	5%	22%	32%	5%	30%

15.	How much do you agree or disagree with the following state	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Demerits have been a useful behavior management tool in my classroom.		8%	26%	51%	15%
A weekly lunch detention program will help to improve student behavior.		5%	15%	41%	38%
Gotchas, Gotcha Reward Parties, and Gotcha Raffles have helped to improve student behavior in my classroom.		5%	11%	57%	27%
Academy Days are a good way to build Academy spirit.		0%	0%	54%	46%
Demerits and detentions have helped to improve the overall school environment.		3%	24%	50%	24%
Gotchas, related rewards, and Academy Days have helped to improve the overall school environment.		3%	5%	59%	33%
School environment improvement initiatives are a valuable use of teacher time.		3%	5%	50%	42%

MS 144 Mid-Year Student Survey A

February 2008

	6th	7th	8th
1. What grade are you in?	27.6	28.6	43.8

How much do you agree or disagree with the statements about being successful at your s	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	**Score**	**Domain**
2. The adults at my school help me understand what I need to do to succeed in school.	2.0	7.0	59.0	32.0	7.4	A
3. My teachers encourage me to succeed.	1.0	8.0	52.0	40.0	7.8	A
4. I need to work hard to get good grades at my school.	2.0	2.0	24.0	70.0	8.7	A
5. Students who get good grades in my school are respected by other students.	22.0	32.0	40.0	6.0	4.4	A
6. Someone in my school helps me develop challenging goals for learning more in school.	6.0	31.0	47.0	16.0	5.7	A
7. Someone at my school helps me understand what courses I need to be promoted to the next grade or graduate.	4.1	18.4	42.9	34.7	7.0	A
8. My teachers expect me to continue my education after high school.	3.0	7.0	37.0	52.0	7.9	A
9. This question is for high school students only. Skip this question: My school provides helpful counseling on how to get a good job after high school.	16	24	32	28	NA	A

On a scale of 1 to 4, how comfortable are you talking to teachers and other adults at your school about:	Uncomfortable 1	2	3	Comfortable 4	Score	Domain
10. a problem you are having in a class?	15.5	20.6	35.1	28.9	6.0	E
11. something that is bothering you?	19.0	26.0	33.0	23.0	5.4	E
12. something outside of school that is important to you?	29.0	28.0	22.0	20.0	4.4	E

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about being successful at your school?	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Score	Domain
13. Teachers in my school treat **students** with respect.	7.6	10.9	53.3	25.0	6.8	S
14. Most students in my school treat **teachers** with respect.	15.8	48.4	33.7	2.1	3.9	S
15. Adults in my school treat **each other** with respect.	5.0	11.0	48.0	35..0	7.4	S
16. My teachers enjoy the subjects they teach.	6.1	15.3	51.0	28.6	7.1	E
17. My teachers inspire me to learn.	4.1	16.3	43.9	35.7	7.3	E
18. My teachers give me extra help when I need it.	3.0	18.0	43.0	35.0	7.3	E
19. My teachers connect what I am learning to life outside of the classroom.	10.0	24.0	43.0	22.0	6.0	E

How often, during this school year, have your teachers asked you to:	Never	1 or 2 times	3 or 4 times	5 or more times	Score	Domain
20. Complete an essay or research project using multiple sources of information?	5.0	23.0	42.0	29.0	8.3	A
21. Complete an essay or project where you had to use evidence to defend your own opinion or ideas?	14.0	41.0	32.0	12.0	6.5	A

I In how many classes, during the past two weeks, have you:	None of My Classes	One of My Classes	Some of My Classes	Most of My Classes	All of My Classes	Score	Domain
22. worked by yourself (independently) during class?	4.1	6.2	41.2	35.1	13.4	7.8	E
23. worked in groups of 2 to 6 students?	11.5	26.0	49.0	7.3	6.3	5.5	C
24. had whole-class discussions?	8.2	16.3	31.6	19.4	24.5	7.0	C
25. participated in hands-on activities such as science experiments or building things?	24.5	36.7	25.5	8.2	5.1	4.2	C

During this school year, have you taken or had a chance to take a class in the following subjects?	I took one or more classes in this subject	I was offered but did not take a class in this subject	I was NOT offered a class in this subject	Score	Domain
26. Art	7.0	4.0	89.0	5.0	E
27. Music	7.1	5.1	87.8		
28. Dance	8.0	11.0	80.0		
29. Theater	16.5	9.3	74.2		
30. Foreign language	41.7	5.2	53.1		
31. Computer skills/technology	43.9	7.1	49.0		
32. Health	7.2	7.2	85.6		

Please answer the following questions regarding the behavior interventions currently in place at MS 144.	Never	Once a month	Once a week	Daily	Nearly every teaching period
33. Students in my class receive Demerits for negative behaviors	6.7	9.3	25.9	36.3	21.8
34. Students in my class receive Gotchas for positive behaviors	8.4	11.6	36.8	32.6	10.5
35. My Class President keeps track of Demerits	22.3	16.6	21.2	31.1	8.8
36. My Vice President collects and tracks Gotchas	12.0	20.9	27.7	31.4	7.9

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
37. A weekly lunch detention program will help to improve student behavior.	36.8	30.0	21.6	11.6
38. Gotchas, Gotcha Reward Parties, and Gotcha Raffles are good motivators for positive behavior.	9.4	15.1	38.5	37.0
39. Academy Days are a good way to build Academy spirit.	10.6	7.9	39.7	41.8
40. Demerits and detentions have helped to improve student behavior.	38.0	30.7	20.3	10.9

MS 144 Mid-Year Student Survey B

Winter 2008

Directions: Select an answer for each item. Bubble in the answer using a number 2 pencil on your Scantron sheet.

	6th	7th	8th
1. What grade are you in?	27.6	28.6	43.8

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your school?	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Score	Domain
2. I feel welcome in my school.	1.9	12.6	66.0	19.4	6.7	E
3. Most of the adults I see at school every day know my name or who I am.	9.0	26.0	36.5	27.9	6.1	C
4. The adults at my school look out for me.	5.8	20.4	56.3	17.5	6.3	E

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about students in your school?	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Score	Domain
5. Most students in my school help and care about each other	19.6	35.3	39.2	5.9	4.4	S
6. Most students in my school just look out for themselves.	15.7	44.1	8.8	31.4	5.2	S
7. Most students in my school treat each other with respect.	9.6	27.9	50.0	12.5	5.6	S
8. Most students in my school like to put others down.	11.8	20.6	39.2	28.4	3.9	S

How often are the following things true about you or about your school?	Never	Some of the Time	Most of the Time	All of the Time	Score	Domain
9. I worry about crime and violence in the school.	11.8	29.0	41.9	17.2	4.5	S
10. I stay home because I don't feel safe at school.	43.3	25.0	26.0	5.8	6.9	S
11. Students threaten or bully other students at school.	6.8	48.5	26.2	18.4	4.8	S
12. Students get into physical fights at my school.	38.8	23.3		39.8	6.6	S

			33.0			
13. Adults at my school yell at students.	3.0	43.0	22.0	33.0	3.9	S
14. There is conflict in my school based on: race, culture, religion, sexual orientation, gender, or disabilities.	38.2	37.3	12.7	11.8	6.7	S
15. Students use alcohol or illegal drugs while at school.	91.0	6.0	1.0	3.0	9.5	S
16. There is gang activity at my school.	41.0	28.0	20.0	11.0	6.7	S

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your school?	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Score	Domain
17. There is a person or program in my school to help students resolve conflicts.	10.0	17.0	49.0	25.0	6.4	S
18. Discipline in my school is fair.	17.0	29.0	44.0	9.0	4.8	S
19. I am safe in my classes.	4.0	12.0	53.0	32.0	7.2	S
20. I am safe in the hallways, bathrooms, and locker rooms at my school.	10.0	24.0	41.0	25.0	6.0	S
21. I am safe on school property outside my school building.	11.0	28.0	47.0	14.0	5.4	S
22. The presence and actions of School Safety Agents help to promote a safe and respectfully learning environment.	13.0	26.0	44.0	16.0	5.4	S
23. My school is kept clean.	33.0	30.0	30.0	6.0	3.6	S

During this school year, which of the following activities did you participate in either before or after school or during free periods?	I participated in this activity	I did not participate in this activity although it was offered	I was NOT offered this activity	Score	Domain
24. Art	9.8	13.7	76.5	6.5	E
25. Music	9.0	12.0	79.0		
26. Dance	9.2	22.4	68.4		
27. Theater	11.5	9.4	79.2		
28. Foreign language	38.9	8.4	52.6		
29. Computer skills/technology	47.4	10.5	42.1		
30. School sports teams or clubs	36.0	26.0	27.0		
31. Tutoring/enrichment activities	28.0	24.0	47.0		

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Score	Domain

32. My school offers a wide enough variety of classes and activities to keep me interested in school.	24.0	33.0	34.0	8.0	4.2	E

Demerit Tracking Chart

Month _____ Class _____

Student Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20

Gotcha!!! Rewards Record
Month _____

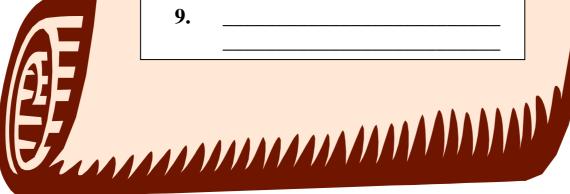| Student Name																Total

Gotcha!!!
Good Citizenship

1. Helping another student.
2. Being prepared for class.
3. Participating actively in class/school activities.
4. Going directly to class.
5. Going above and beyond what is expected.
6. Setting a positive example for other students.
7. Doing homework nightly.
8. Maintaining a clean classroom and school.

9. _____

   _____

Students Earn Demerits IF They…

Are Not in **Uniform**
Are **Late** to School
Wear **Hats** or **Beads**
Have **Phones** or **Electronics**
Have **Food** or **Bottles**
Are **Unprepared** for Class
Use **Poor Language**
Are **Late** to Class
Are **Cutting** or Have **No Pass** in the Hall
Misuse Equipment
Are Chewing **Gum**
Are **Sleeping** in Class