

Arc Changers Webinar Series

# School Culture Matters!



NATIONAL CHARTER SCHOOLS  
**INSTITUTE**



**EPICENTER**

# Welcome!



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# THE 3 Legged Stool

WORKING TOGETHER  
TO SUPPORT KIDS  
& FAMILIES!



# "Arc Changers"

*noun*

People who challenge conventional thinking and transcend current limitations to create a brighter future for students.

# How Do We Change the Arc of Education?

- Challenge the givens (existing norms, paradigms, systems).
- Introduce new ideas, approaches, practices.
- Transcend present limitations.
- Alter the direction, outcomes, trajectory of developments.
- Create enduring impact that fundamentally reshapes the world.



# School Culture Matters!



# SUNY Charter Schools Institute

**Our Mission:** To cultivate an environment where strong public schools can take root and thrive.

**Our History:** The Charter Schools Act of 1998 granted the SUNY Board of Trustees the authority to grant charters and conduct oversight on their operations. In 1999, the Institute was created to assist the trustees in carrying out these responsibilities. For more than twenty years, the Institute has served as a catalyst for charter school improvement and strengthened public education across New York State.



# Our Values

## Growth & Innovation

The Institute strives to build upon its knowledge, experience, and wealth of varied perspectives to support development and adoption of new and innovative charter school practices, approaches, and models



## Trust & Team

The Institute demonstrates honesty, respect, and transparency in all its relationships to instill trust in its decision-making, ethics, leadership, and practices.



## Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

The Institute embraces the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion and supports school efforts to increase representation of historically marginalized communities among board members, school leadership, teachers, and staff.



## High Standards

The Institute respects the independence and autonomy of its schools in exchange for high standards of accountability for student academic achievement and holistic development, organizational performance and equitable outcomes for all students.



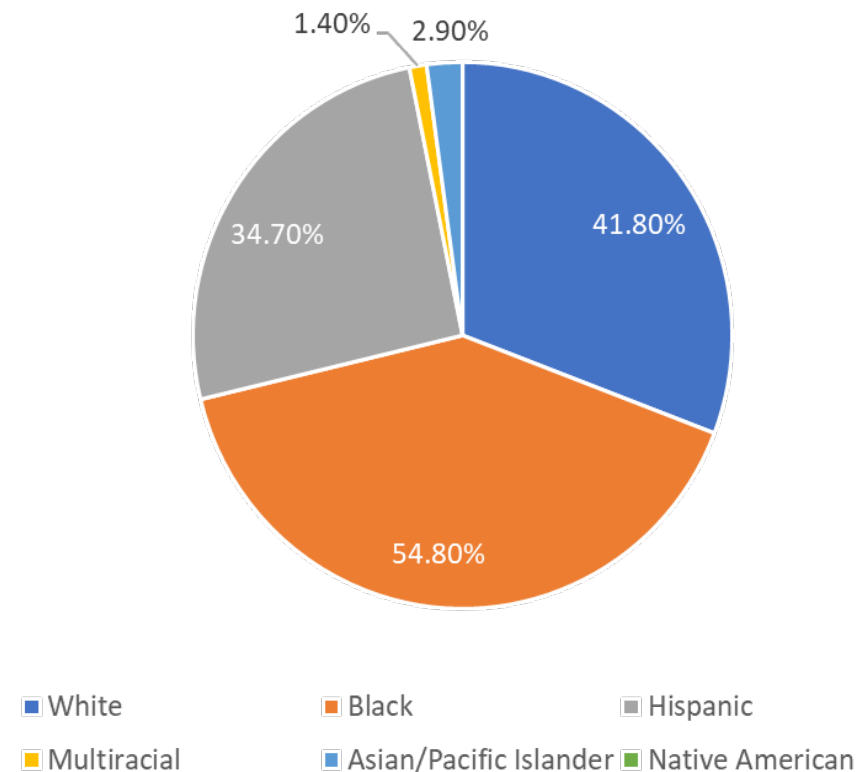




# The Students SUNY Charters Serve

- 79% economically disadvantaged
- 7% English language learners
- 16% students with disabilities

Enrollment by Race & Ethnicity





# Who we are

**Forte Prep** is a tuition-free middle and high school open to students in grades 5 through 9 in Queens, New York. We are driven by a philosophy of **achieving** excellence in all facets of life and learning. We believe in the power of education to transform the lives of students from diverse, often disadvantaged, backgrounds. Through **rigorous academics, creative & technological enrichment and leadership development**, we prepare our students to excel at college preparatory high schools and beyond.

Forte Prep graduates can enroll in top-quality public, independent and charter high schools across the city and beyond, as well as our **new, high-performing high school that opened in 2023**.

We work with our students and parents to find the best academic environment for their future, confident that they will succeed at every stage and embody Forte Prep's **values** wherever they go.

## Our mission:

***Through a relentless pursuit of academic, community, and personal excellence, Forte Preparatory Academy Charter Schools equip all students to become the next generation of leaders in Queens and beyond.***

**forte** ('fōr-, t̄ā)

Strength of community

Strength of character

Individual and collective expertise



# We believe that. . .



All students, regardless of race, ethnicity, home language, or socioeconomic status deserve the opportunity to build and transform their lives through access to a world-class education.



Literacy and math are at the heart of a world-class education, open doors to college and lives of opportunity, and therefore underpin everything that we do.



High-quality teachers are critical to creating and sustaining a culture of excellence and building academic success for every student, in every class, every day.



Character education, with a powerful focus on individual and collective responsibility and the combined power of self-determination and community, supports student success and increases authentic leadership.



A structured and joyful school environment inspires all members of our community to work hard, take intellectual risks, and develop lifelong academic habits and interests.



Small group tutoring and enrichment in arts and technology support student academic success, and allow us to provide individualized attention and expand our students' world view.



# History of Forte Prep



0  
students

**2015-16**

- 0 students;
- 1 founder on BES Fellowship
- Community engagement
- **SUNY approval of Charter! Planning year commenced July 2016**



89

**2017**

- Grade 5: 89 students; 15 staff
- **Found incubator facility in basement of day care in East Elmhurst!**
- Hired staff
- Recruited students
- Opened doors on August 23, 2017



180

**2018**

- Grades 5,6: 175 students; 30 staff
- Overnight Trip to Greenkill outdoor education center
- **Fmr. Ambassador Susan Rice visits FPA!**



270

**2019-20**

- Grades 5-7: 269 students; 44 staff
- **Kung Fu Nuns from Nepal visit FPA!**
- Pandemic cuts the year short
- **Reopen with hybrid instruction; 70% student participation compared to 30% in the district**



360

**2020-22**

- Full size middle school w/ grades 5-8: 359 students; 55 staff
- Moved to long-term space in Elmhurst
- **First graduating class in 2021**
- Common visits FPA!
- **Received full, five-year renewal from SUNY!**



460+

**PRESENT**

- **Launch of Forte Prep High School in Glendale, NY**
- Establishment of Central Office and Senior Leadership Team
- up from here...

A brief history of our school  
(and our logo)

# So, what are the next steps??

## For Charter School Boards and School Leaders

- Examine your school culture and its strength throughout your entire school community
- Explore how your approach to school culture aligns with academic excellence
- Examine when you have seen the arc change for students. What have been the indicators of seeing the trajectory shift for students? (Example: Forte students who start at the school in grade 5: 1 in 4 students were at grade level in grade 4. Forte students in grade 8: 3 out of 4 students are at grade level)

## For Authorizers

- Examine how you are cultivating an environment for promising schools and strong leaders to ensure all students have access to high quality seats
- Explore your role in changing the Arc of Education for students and the community

# Leverage our experience & expertise!

- > Consulting, Coaching & Capacity Building
- > Authorizer, Board, & School Relations
- > Board Training & Policies
- > Personalized Performance Goals
- > Strategy & Systems Development
- > School Startup & Growth / Facilities Consulting



**Jim Goenner**



**Mark Weinberg**



**Mary Bradley**



**Naomi Rubin Deveaux**



**Wendy Larvick**



**Lisa Bergman**



**Alyson Murphy**



# Epicenter Team

We're here for you!

[Epicenternow.org](http://Epicenternow.org)





NATIONAL CHARTER SCHOOLS  
**INSTITUTE**

**BOARD**  
NETWORK



# A Community Designed to Elevate Your Boards

[www.CharterInstitute.org/Board-Network](http://www.CharterInstitute.org/Board-Network)







# Thank You!



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[Nationalcharterschools.org](https://Nationalcharterschools.org)

[Epicenternow.org](https://Epicenternow.org)



NATIONAL CHARTER SCHOOLS  
INSTITUTE

# FOR KIDS. FOR YOU. FOR EDUCATION.

INSPIRING | EQUIPPING | SUPPORTING  
THE CHARTER MOVEMENT

