YES Prep
Public Charter Schools

Building a Positive School Climate and Culture with Positive Classroom Solutions

📍 **HOUSTON, TX** | 👤 **~17,000 STUDENTS** | 📊 **USER SINCE 2016**

The Challenge

Prior to 2016, YES Prep Charter Schools' leaders were in a data bind: they needed to figure out a way to not only collect data but also to organize it in a way that was easy to access and navigate. Further, teachers were leaving within one or two years of joining, and YES Prep had no system in place for managing and tracking student behavior.

When it came to observing classrooms and providing teacher feedback, things were all over the board. Everything was manual. Teachers received feedback in a document but were never notified about it. They weren't collecting data, so there was no way to track trends. Accountability was low, coaches weren't aligned, and each of YES Prep's 20+ campuses had their own way of doing things.

On the student behavior side, YES Prep fared no better. Their system for tracking behavior was just as cumbersome. They used paper trackers for both positive and negative consequences, had no way to record data, and had no place for teachers to input consequences. They used a spreadsheet for documenting, but multiple users updating the sheet and having no built-in analysis made it a mediocre solution at best.

The Solution

YES Prep needed ways to collect and analyze student behavior as well as teacher coaching data, so they started researching platforms. They began by implementing SchoolMint Hero, a behavior management system with built-in data reporting.

"Before Hero, there was no real way to know if a teacher was more punitive than positive," explains Rachel Rucker, YES Prep's director of teacher evaluation. Hero made this information easily accessible. Similarly, Rucker and team could see if certain groups of students were being disproportionately penalized and then coach teachers into creating a positive classroom environment.

For that coaching, they implemented SchoolMint Grow — a teacher coaching platform that makes classroom observation and teacher feedback quick, seamless, and trackable. Previously known as Whetstone, Grow streamlined the coaching process, making it easy for teachers, coaches, and leaders to meet, set goals, provide feedback, track progress, and grow together.

> ❝ Well-coached teachers produce better student outcomes. Consistent coaching can grow a first-year teacher into a sixth-year teacher.❞
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> **Rachel Rucker**
> *Director of Teacher Evaluation*

Results

YES Prep has become highly efficient at using behavior and coaching data to guide their decision-making. School leaders now meet regularly to talk about data and trends. And since it's so easily accessible, even non-campus-based leaders can participate in discussions about interventions.

"We went from having a very punitive system to a culture built around positivity," says Rucker. "Before Hero, our behaviors were off the charts in disparity. Now they're not, because we realized that students who receive the most punishments are the students who need the most love."

YES Prep also uses Hero data to have conversations with families about student behavior as well as to inform teacher coaching with Grow. "At one point, we had one school in remediation," Rucker explains. "Now it's in the top five performing. Well-coached teachers produce better student outcomes. Consistent coaching can grow a first-year teacher into a sixth-year teacher."

With the combination of productive, positive classrooms for students and administrative support for teachers, YES Prep's teacher retention has also improved. According to Rucker, "We have a more equitable evaluation system. Before Hero and Grow, it was typical for a teacher to work one or two years and then leave. Now we have teachers sticking around, and they're happy. A joyful teacher is better for the classroom."

YES Prep also has 48 teachers designated under the Teacher Incentive Allotment (TIA), a Texas program that recognizes effective teaching and awards funding to help schools retain their top-performing educators. Rucker partly attributes this to Grow because they were able to provide strong observation and evaluation data with their applications. "If we were still in the Word document upload days, there was no way we could've done this," she says. "[SchoolMint Grow] helped make our applications very strong."

Today, YES Prep continues to implement both Hero and Grow. Student behavior has improved. Teacher retention has improved. Coaches in all 20+ campuses are in alignment. And across the board, YES Prep's classrooms are positive, productive learning environments.