# CLASS CREATOR

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO SCHOOL CLASS LISTS

By Class Creator
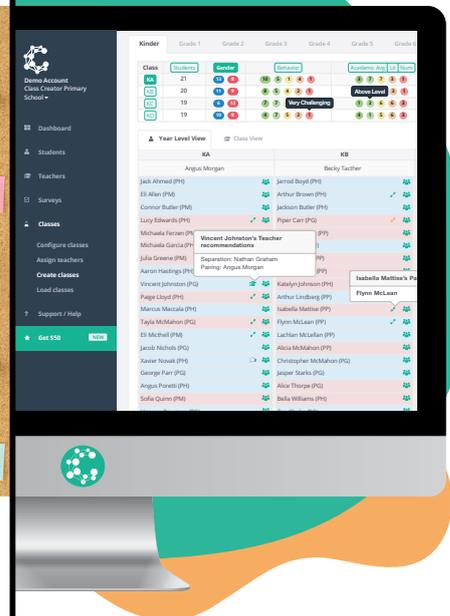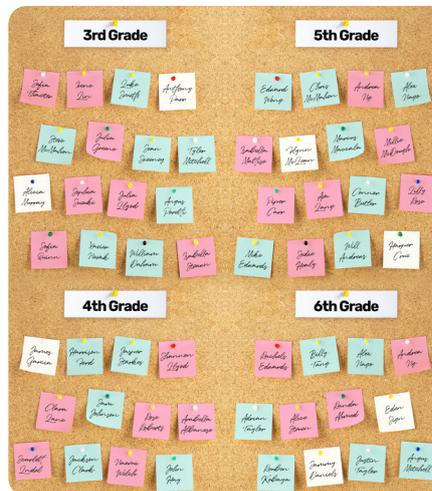
INTRODUCTION

Dear Awesome Educator,

The goal of this guide is to help schools create the best classes for their school and do so in the most efficient manner possible.

We have been creating classes for over 20 years as educators, and since 2014 we have helped schools makeover four million student placements. During this time we have noticed three things that impact how efficient and effective a school is when creating great classes.

Priorities- Clearly defined priorities.
Process- A well-planned and documented process.
System- An appropriate system to handle this complex process.

1. PRIORITIES

2. PROCESS

3. SYSTEM

The aim of this guide is not to pitch you on the benefits of using Class Creator (well, maybe it is a little bit), but to help share some of the things we have learned over the years about class list creation.

Kind regards,

Joel Westley
General Manager
Class Creator
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IMPORTANT: This is not a legal document, and schools will need to adjust it to suit their needs.

CONTENTS

# CHAPTER 1

WHAT ARE GREAT CLASSES?
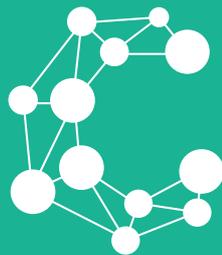
WHAT ARE GREAT CLASSES?

I believe the best answer to most questions, including this one is "It depends".

I have worked with educators that want their classes to be PERFECTLY balanced in every area so that every class is the "same."

I have also worked with educators that believe the composition of classes are completely irrelevant and have minimal impact.

What does the data say?
Unfortunately, there isn't a whole heap of studies on the impact of student placement/class list creation. We have searched high and low for studies on student placement and class composition, but there is a lack of conclusive data out there.

We have even looked into how we could fund a study into student placement, but with so many variables in class compositions (and education in general), it would be extremely difficult to conduct a large enough study to produce significant insights.

However, there are a few studies that can offer us some insights into the impacts of class composition:

Impact of School Climate

"Overall, this study provided empirical support demonstrating that school climate and social identification are core variables that have the power to augment student achievement."
Source: The Impact of School Climate and School Identification on Academic Achievement

Impact of Student Friendships

"With respect to having a friend, 6th-grade students without friends showed lower levels of prosocial behavior, academic achievement, and emotional distress than did students with reciprocated friendships. Not having a friend in 6th grade also was related to emotional distress 2 years later."
Source: Friendships in Middle School: Influences on Motivation and School Adjustment

"Close friendships are important for children's academic achievement and social-emotional adaptation. Extant literature indicates students with learning disabilities are at increased risk for isolation, although little research has been done to examine the development of reciprocated friendships across late elementary school."
Source: Best Friendships of Students With and Without Learning Disabilities Across Late Elementary School

"Friendships can also have an impact on a child's academic performance and may even discourage negative and deviant behaviors. For example, a recent study of 338 kindergarteners in six different public schools revealed that 10% had an oppositional defiant disorder. This condition typically develops during the preschool years and is linked to an increased risk for anxiety, depression, antisocial behavior, substance abuse, and criminal offenses in adolescence and adulthood. In examining the results of this study, researchers found that more than 70% of the children who exhibited signs of oppositional defiant disorder had been exposed to harsh parenting methods. They also found that children who had friends in school exhibited fewer of these signs."
Source: The Importance of Friendships for Grade School Students

Impact of Student-Teacher Relationships

"Student-teacher relationships deeply influence students' academic and psychosocial functioning. Although different models vary in their explanation of these effects, none denies their existence. As demonstrated, evidence suggests that student-teacher relationships remain important throughout students' academic careers, with research spanning from preschool to high school."
Source: The role of teacher relationships in the lives of students
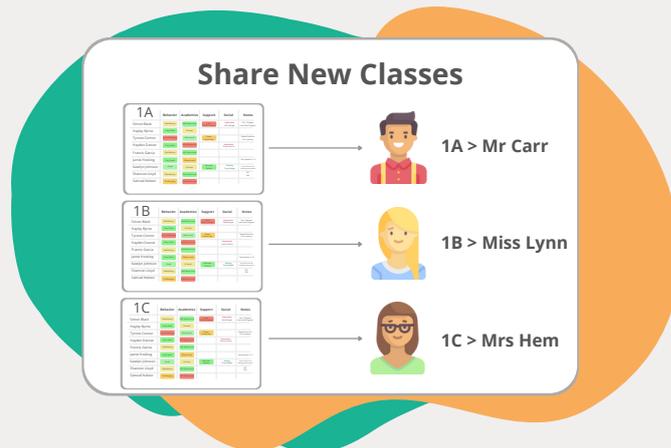
Class Creator allows you to share your new classes directly with your teachers.

What do we (students/parents/educators) know?
If you have been a teacher, you know that every class is different. You may even have a favorite/least favorite class that easily pops into your mind.

If you're a parent, you will likely have experienced the joy of having your child in a "great class" with an "amazing teacher", and less positive emotions of having your child in a "rough class" with a teacher that is "not a good fit."

If you're a school leader, I'm guessing you have had the thought "Teacher A would be amazing for Student B next year" or "I better remember not to put Student X with Student Y next year!" or even "I can't put Student X in Teacher A's class next year because of Parent W!"

If you went to school as a student, you would likely remember being in a class with your friends. You may also remember NOT being in a class with your friend.

So, if you have had anything to do with elementary/primary schools, you know that class compositions and student placements have an impact.

Common Class Formation Factors

After working with thousands of educators from around the world, we know that the key considerations that work for one school, may not work (and in fact, might even be completely wrong) for another school.

However, we feel confident in suggesting however is to "pick your priorities". We have more on picking your priorities in the next chapter, but in a nutshell, having too many factors when creating classes is a surefire way to create classes that lack focus and fail in multiple areas.

Below are some of the many variables schools use when creating classes:

- Class Size (Number of students)
- Gender
- Friendships
- Behavior
- Academic Levels
- English
- Mathematics
- Special Needs Requirements
- Special Needs Resources
- ILP/IEP
- EAL, ESL, EAD, ELL, etc.
- Parent Requests
- 504s, PBIS planner, etc.
- PSD
- Student-Student Separations
- Student-Student Pairings
- Family History
- Multiple Siblings (eg. Twins)
- Maturity & Age
- Learning Style
- Student-Teacher Separations
- Student-Teacher Pairings
- Family Custody Considerations
- Programs (Music, Sport, etc.))
- Support Programs (RR, G&T, etc.)
- Teacher-Student Separations
- Teacher-Student Pairings
- Religious Considerations
- Emotional Support Requirements
- Introverted/Extroverted
- Organization/Work Skills
- Leadership Skills
- ADHD
- Location/Bus Routes
- AM/PM Classes
- Schooling History
- Makes friends easily
- Medical
- Class Ratio Requirements
- Government Funding
- Classroom Access
- AND MANY MORE!

With so many variables, it is easy to see why class creation can become time-consuming at best and completely overwhelming at worst! That's why our next section is all about picking your priorities.

CHAPTER 2

YOUR PRIORITY PYRAMID

CLASS CREATOR

YOUR PRIORITY PYRAMID

There are almost an infinite number of factors and variables that you could consider when making your class list. The problem is if you try to consider them all, it's easy to get overwhelmed and drown in data.

This is why we encourage our schools to prioritize by creating a Class List Creation Priority Pyramid.

"The most important thing is to keep the most important thing, the most important thing."
-Jimmy Kwick

By completing this exercise, you will help keep the most important thing, the most important thing.

The Class List Creation Priority Pyramid has four layers:

CLASS LIST PRIORITY PYRAMID

Layer 1
Constraints
3-5 Factors

Layer 2
Must Haves
3 Factors

Layer 3
Nice to Haves
3-8 Factors

Layer 4
Everything Else
Unlimited Factors

Layer 1- Constraints/Non-Negotiables (3-5 Factors)

These are the things that are largely out of your control and related to resources/funding. Things such as:
- Number of Buildings/Classrooms
- Number of Students
- Number of Teachers
- Class Size

They are at the top of the pyramid because you have to be mindful of them, even though you can't change them.

Layer 1
Constraints
3-5 Factors

Layer 2
Must Haves
3 Factors

Layer 3
Nice to Haves
3-8 Factors

Layer 4
Everything Else
Unlimited Factors

Layer 2- Must-Haves (3 Factors)

"If you have more than three priorities, you don't have any."
Jim Collins

What would be your THREE priorities when making your class lists? Try and be as specific as possible when coming up with your priorities.

Here are some of the most common considerations:
- We need our classes to have between 20-23 students.
- We need our classes to be balanced/streamed by gender/academics/behavior/etc.
- We need minor ethnicity/race students not to be isolated.
- We need to separate our most challenging students.

When creating your class lists your, expectation should be that all of these priorities are met.

IMPORTANT- These are not the only factors that you will consider when making your classes, but they provide you with a structure or "North Star" to help you keep your priorities in order when all the other variables come into the equation.

Layer 3- Nice to Haves (3-8 Factors)

Any factors that you want to include in Layer 2, but didn't quite make the cut, go into this layer.

Often this layer ends up with factors such as:
- Students are placed with at least one friend
- Student-Teacher Requests from Parents
- Student History to be considered
- Student-Student Pairings/Separations
- Student-Teacher Pairings/Separations
- MTS and EAL support
- Teacher Assistant Allocation
- Medical Requirements
- Student Dynamics (Leadership, Introverts, etc.)

You will likely be able to meet most, if not all, of these factors if you have a great placement system (EG. Class Creator). If your system isn't up to the task (pen & paper or spreadsheets) you will likely have to give up on a lot of these factors because the process will become too overwhelming.

Layer 1
Constraints
3-5 Factors

Layer 2
Must Haves
3 Factors

Layer 3
Nice to Haves
3-8 Factors

Layer 4
Everything Else
Unlimited Factors

Layer 4- Everything Else (Unlimited Factors)

Layer 4 is for everything else, which can be a lot of factors, depending on your school.

By placing these factors in Layer 4, you keep them in mind, but you are also accepting that they are not THE PRIORITY.

You are not "giving up" on them, but you are accepting that there are "bigger fish to fry."

Now that you have your priorities in order, you can move on to the next step.

Layer 1
Constraints
3-5 Factors

Layer 2
Must Haves
3 Factors

Layer 3
Nice to Haves
3-8 Factors

Layer 4
Everything Else
Unlimited Factors

Your Priority Pyramid

Constraints (3-5 Factors)

Must Haves (3 Factors)

Nice to Haves (3-8 Factors)

Everything Else (Unlimited Factors)

CHAPTER

3
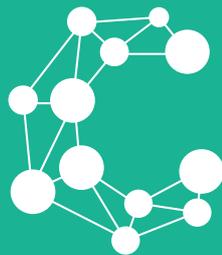
YOUR PROCESS

YOUR PROCESS

Successful schools are usually very well organized. The same goes for creating class lists. If your school has a clear process in place, it makes it much more likely that things will run smoothly and that stakeholders will be happier. We believe that there are four areas where schools can develop their process in regards to class list creation:

School Policy [DOWNLOAD Editable Example]
This provides you with an opportunity to formalize the objectives and processes of your school. It gives you something to refer to when things get "complicated." You may decide to include your "Class List Creation Priority Pyramid" in your policy, which is why we encourage schools to do it first.

Timeline [DOWNLOAD Editable Example]
Things run much more smoothly when they have a step-by-step plan. Everyone knows their roles, responsibilities, and deadlines, therefore ensuring transparency and accountability.

Assessment Rubric [DOWNLOAD Editable Example]
Most schools consider a variety of assessments when creating their classes. Often these assessments can be rather subjective. Providing a rubric of these assessments allows for continuity and moderation amongst the school/grade level, which in turn leads to more informed decisions when creating classes.

Communication [DOWNLOAD Editable Example]
Policies, timelines, and rubrics are lovely, but they aren't much use if no one knows about them.

Class Creator has a built-in rubric to ensure all your teachers are on the same page.

CHAPTER

4

YOUR SYSTEM

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YOUR SYSTEM

Okay, this might get a little "sales pitchy" about Class Creator, but I was hoping you could think of me more as a proud parent than a salesperson.

The main things to consider when reviewing your Class List System are:
- Is it flexible enough to meet the needs of Your Priority Pyramid?
- Is it going to help you make the best classes possible for your school?
- Is it going to encourage consistency across your school?
- Is it efficient? Does it value the time of all the educators in your school (including yourself)?
- Is it easy to use? Does it require staff meetings to train staff?
- Is it capable of collecting huge amounts of data?
- Is it capable of displaying that huge amount of data in a way that informs decision-making?
- Is it capable of empowering educators?
- Is it secure? Both the student data and the class lists themselves.
- Is it going to function in the future? EG. Saving student history.

Historically, the most common ways to make class lists have been:
- Student Cards/Sticky Notes/Pen & Paper
- Spreadsheets
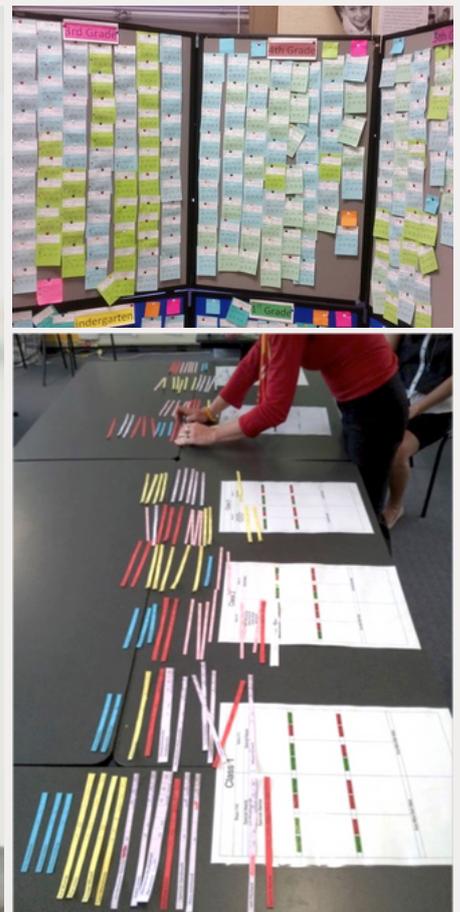
There are benefits to each of these systems, but when comparing them to Class Creator, I think they are significantly inferior.

Even if you don't use Class Creator, the main thing is that your system is well organized, easy to use, efficient, reliable, and is going to support your needs into the future.

At the end of the day, Class Creator is an investment in a commonly undervalued resource in schools...time.
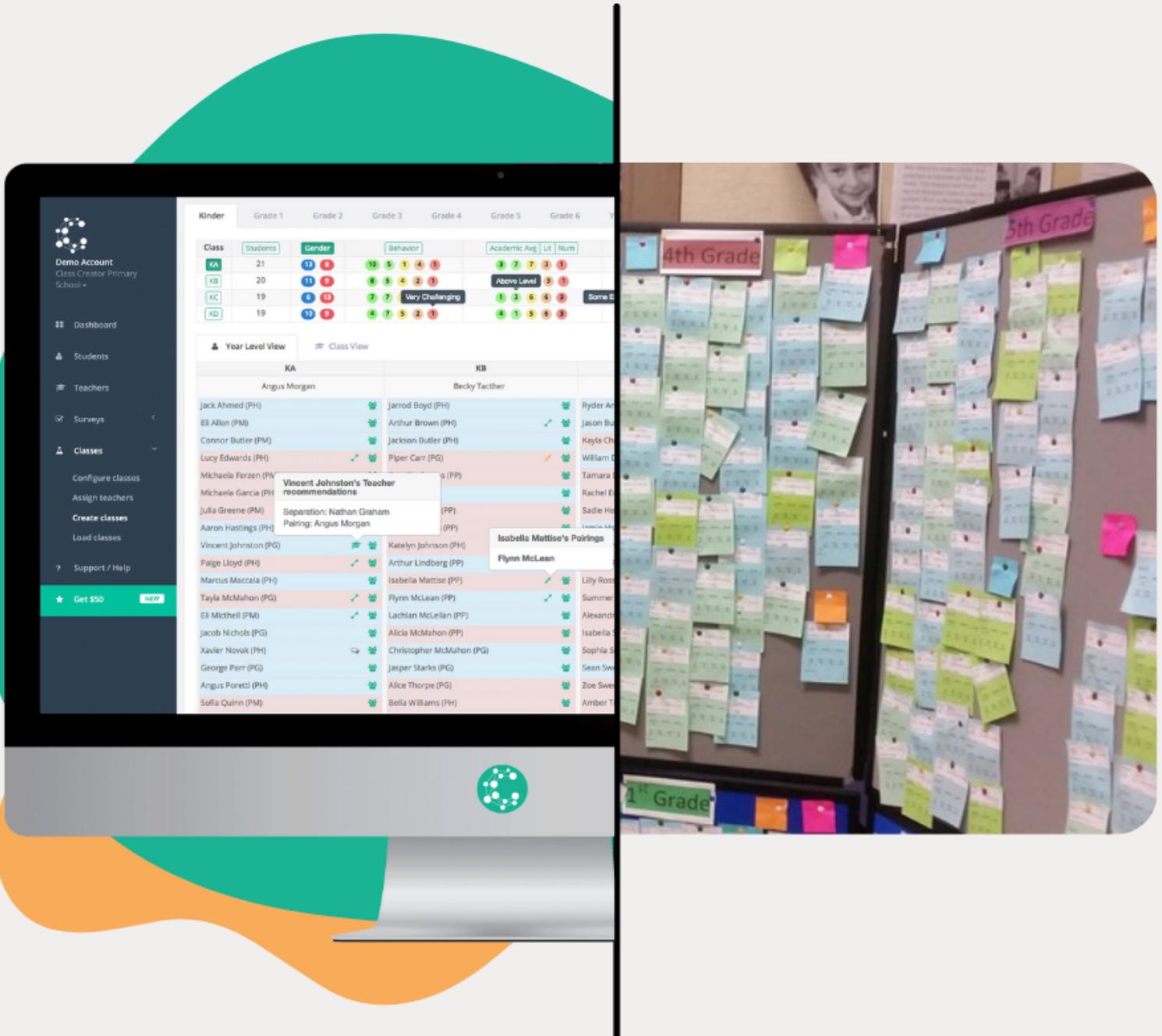
Class Creator is designed to streamline your existing system. This means you're not "starting from scratch" you're simply turning your current process digital; hence it requires little to no staff training.

How does Class Creator work?

1. Sign Up

≈ 3 minutes

Fill in your school details in our sign-up form.
We will set up your account and email your
login details within 12 hours. You can get
started right away.

2. Import

≈ 20 minutes

Use our simple Excel spreadsheet to import
your students and teachers.
It doesn't matter what SIS/SMS you're using,
Class Creator plays nicely with everyone.

3. Configure & Send Surveys

≈ 15 minutes

Customize your survey to collect the data
that matters to your school. Click "Send
Invitations" and Class Creator then emails
your teachers their own survey invite to
complete for their class.

4. Teacher Surveys

≈ 15-30 minutes

As teachers complete their surveys you can
see the data coming in via your admin
dashboard. Teachers love the ease of Class
Creator and the editable rubrics mean your
data is moderated across the school.

5. Create Class Lists

≈ INSTANTLY

Click a button and your new classes will be created instantly balanced across behavior, academics, gender, support requirements, social dynamics, and much more.

6. Edit Classes

≈ 30 minutes to 3 hours

Drag-and-Drop students between classes whilst receiving feedback in real-time on class demographics and student placement alerts. Class Creator empowers educators, it doesn't replace them.
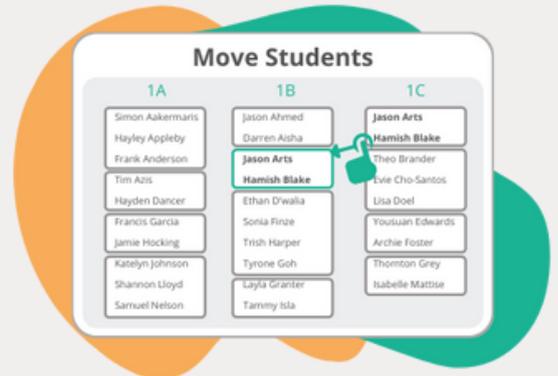
7. Share Your Classes

≈ 5 minutes

Share your classes with staff for feedback and/or send them their finalized class list with all the information on their new students. Class Creator automatically saves your student data for future years. No more forgotten separations!
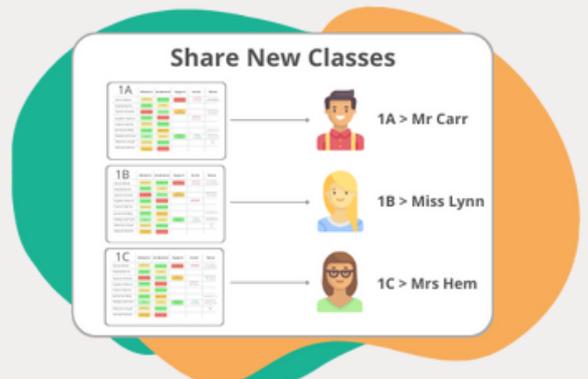
How can you find out more about Class Creator?

Interested in finding out if Class Creator is the right fit for your school/district? Please use the links Below:

Website
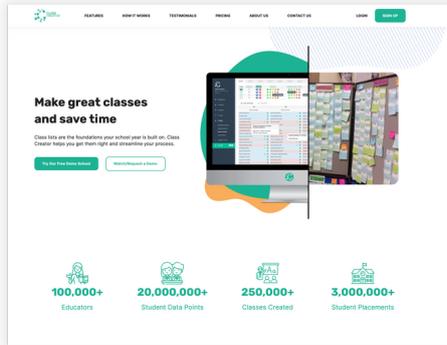
Contact Us
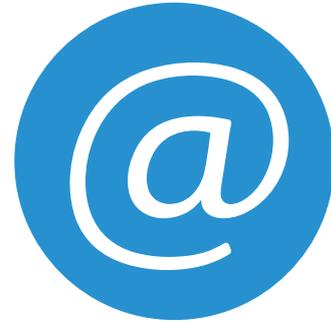
Demo School
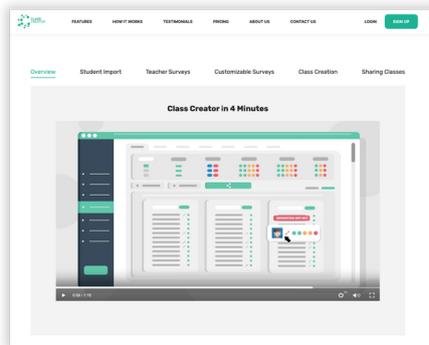

eBrochure
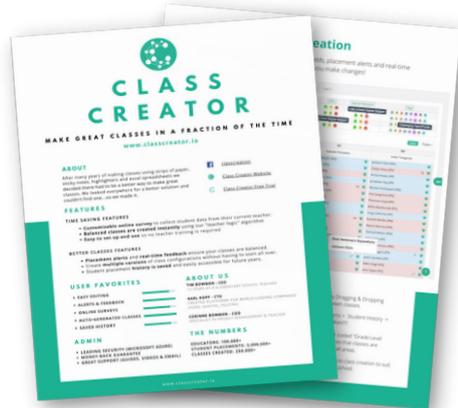
Demo Videos
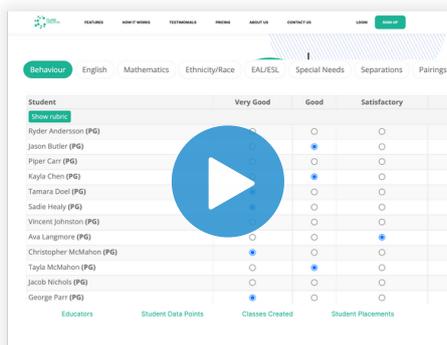
Blog
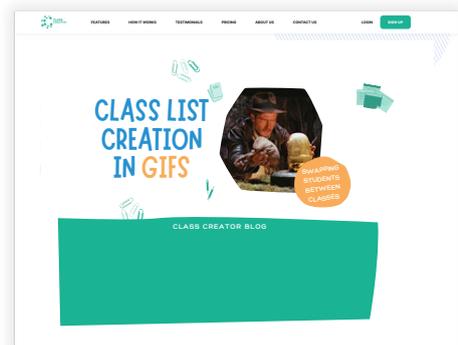
The Class Creator Journey

In 2014, Tim was teaching grade 4 and as the end of the year closed in, it meant report writing, parent-teacher interviews, school productions, performance reviews, and creating new classes! With so many things to do, Tim tried to find a way to make new classes online.

After searching high and low, he couldn't find anything...that's when the idea of Class Creator was born. That evening, Tim and his wife Corinne (also a teacher) sat down at their kitchen table and designed Class Creator.

Seven years on, and Class Creator has evolved a lot since those initial drawings!

As a team, we are extremely proud to have invented a solution that didn't exist, to have saved schools thousands of hours of planning time, and to have empowered educators to make the classes their students deserve. Thank you to all our schools that have supported us along the journey thus far...we love you!

4,000,000+
Student Placements
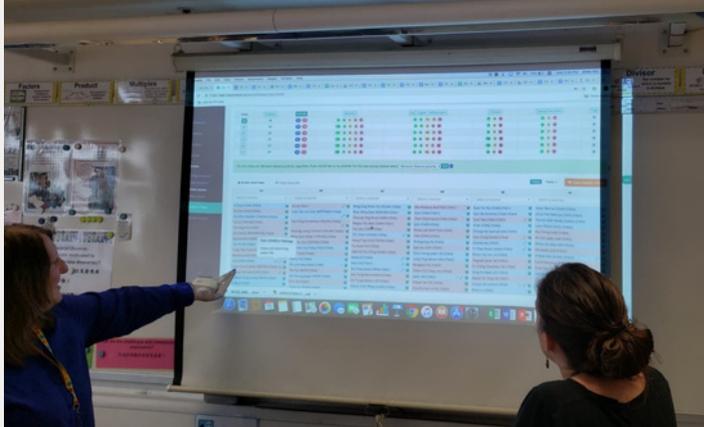
2021: 3.9 million student placements

2020: 3.1 million

2019: 2.3 million

2018: 1.5 million

2017: 864k

2016: 459k

2015: 312k

Is Class Creator Worth It?

Short-term Savings

Easy data collection via online surveys.   (≈ 1 hour per teacher)

Balanced classes are created with a click.   (≈ 1 hour per grade level)

Easy editing with real-time feedback.   (≈ 2 hours per grade level)

No more data entry of student cards/spreadsheets.   (≈ 1 hour per grade level)

Simple to use, no teacher training required.   (≈ 30 minutes per teacher)

Medium-term Savings

No placement mistakes while editing.   (≈ 1 hour per mistake avoided)

Easy to update and edit new/departing students.   (≈ 30 minutes per student)

Long-term Savings

Better classes = Fewer issues throughout the year.   (≈ weeks/months)

History is saved and automatically alerts you of mistakes.   (≈ 3+ hours per year)

Time Savings = 52.8 hours per school

Data from Class Creator User Survey
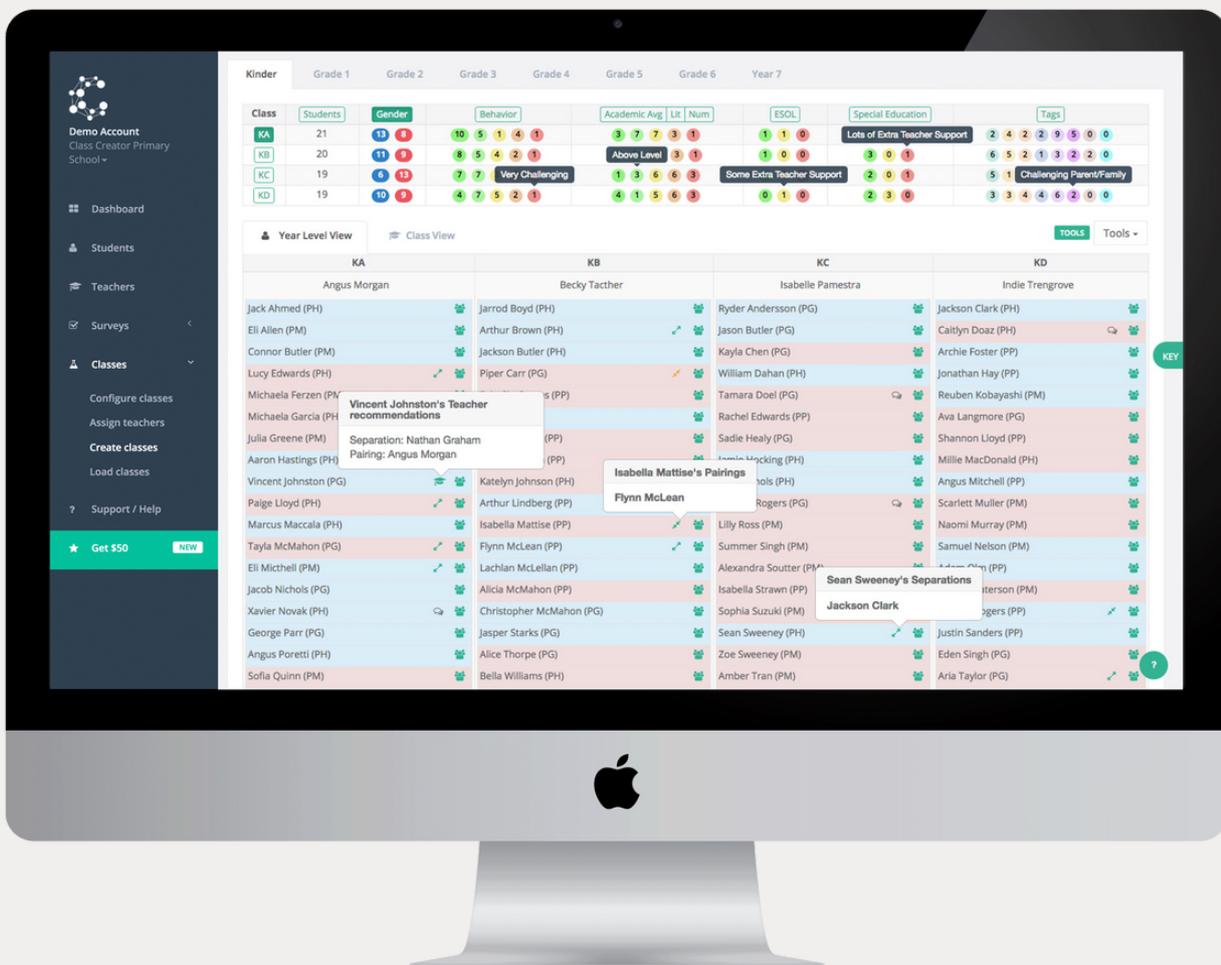
CLASS LIST CREATION QUOTES

"
"The most important thing is to keep the most important thing, the most important thing."

-
Jimmy Kwik

"
"If you have more than three priorities, you don't have any."

-
Jim Collins

CHAPTER

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
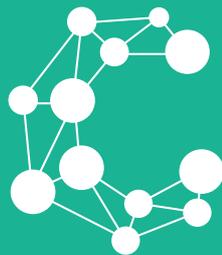
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Acknowledgments

This guide was originally created by Tim Bowman, co-founder of Class Creator in 2021.

After helping schools make thousands of classes we know a lot about making classes, but much of this e-book is largely drawn from the wisdom and experience of others.

We appreciate the hours, days, and weeks these policies have taken to create.

Thank you to the following schools and their staff for sharing their placements policies online:

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