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**DEFYING INEQUALITY OF NYC SCHOOLS, SUCCESS ACADEMY HARLEM 3
NAMED ONE OF NATION'S TOP SCHOOLS**

*With Student a Population That Is 96% Children of Color, East Harlem Public Charter
School Is Designated National Blue Ribbon School for Academic Excellence*

September 29, 2015 — U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan announced today that Success Academy Harlem 3 has been selected as a National Blue Ribbon School, an award given to only 285 public schools across the country. Blue Ribbon Schools are honored either for their overall academic excellence or for their success in closing the achievement gap. SA Harlem 3 received the award for outstanding student performance, not only closing the achievement gap, but outperforming sought-after schools in the city's most affluent neighborhoods: P.S. 6 on the Upper East Side, P.S. 199 and P.S. 9 on the Upper West Side, PS 40 in Gramercy Park, and P.S. 321 in Park Slope, as well as suburban Scarsdale schools.

In the past 25 years, the U.S. Department of Education has recognized only two National Blue Ribbon Schools in Harlem, and both are Success Academies. SA Harlem 1 was named a National Blue Ribbon School in 2012.

“Principal Tara Stant, and Richard Seigler, who served before her, have created a magical school where children fall in love with learning,” said Eva Moskowitz, founder and CEO of Success Academy. “This award is a tribute to the Success Academy Harlem 3 teachers and families who are united in the belief that all children can succeed when the adults are doing their jobs. If all New York City children had a fair and equitable school option like SA Harlem 3, there would be no achievement gap.”

The award comes a day before a massive rally by parents, teachers, and elected officials who will demand that New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio end the education inequality that deprives children of color of access to high-quality schools. At the city's district schools, only one in five black and Hispanic students can read at grade level. There are 478,000 children — 90% of them black and Hispanic — trapped in the city's lowest performing schools. For low-income families living in neighborhoods such as Harlem, where education inequality is most evident, public charter schools like SA Harlem 3 are pathway to prosperity.

Located in East Harlem, one of New York City's most disadvantaged neighborhoods, SA Harlem 3 is a free public charter school with 473 scholars enrolled in kindergarten through fourth grade. Admitted by random lottery, students are 96% black or Hispanic, and 82%

receive free or reduced-price lunch. On the most recent state exams, SA Harlem 3 scored among the top schools in the city and state.

In math, 95% of students met standards, with 78% achieving a level 4 – the highest possible score – and 76% demonstrating proficiency in English Language Arts. By contrast, the city’s district schools in Harlem, among the poorest performing schools in the city, have failed to serve children for decades. For example, at the three closest district elementary schools to SA Harlem 3, only 11% of students passed math and 8% passed ELA.

In addition to the school’s excellent results in English and math, every one of SA Harlem 3’s fourth-graders earned the top rating on the 2015 state science exam – including students with disabilities. Special-needs children make up 11% of the student body at SA Harlem 3 and do exceptionally well, outperforming their general-education peers in the city and state, with 54% passing the English exam and 67% meeting standards in math.

“This award is a credit to our exceptionally hardworking and dedicated teachers — and a wonderful affirmation of our belief that all children will succeed when given access to a great school,” said Principal Tara Stant. A graduate of Binghamton University, Ms. Stant joined Success Academy in 2009 and became a founding teacher at SA Bronx 1 in 2010, before moving to SA Harlem 3 as an assistant principal three years later. Last year, she succeeded Richard Seigler, who was principal from 2011 to 2014, a period of time included in the U.S. Department of Education’s review of the school’s student achievement record.

"I am incredibly proud of the scholars, teachers, families, and leadership team for this wonderful accomplishment," said Mr. Seigler, who is now managing director of elementary schools for the Success Academy network. "Every school leader dreams of running an excellent school that yields excellent results while fostering a positive and collaborative environment. This honor reinforces the notion that we can achieve excellence and bring about a sense of joy, all while being incredibly demanding. Well done, Harlem 3!"

Opened in 2008, SA Harlem 3 is one of the 24 Success Academy elementary schools that serve children in Manhattan, Queens, the Bronx, and Brooklyn. Success Academy schools share a progressive, child-centered approach that fosters a love of learning at an early age by providing young scholars with high-quality children’s literature and a well-rounded curriculum that includes reading, writing, math, and project-based learning, as well as science five days a week starting in kindergarten. Scholars also learn chess, visual arts, music, sports, and dance — SA Harlem 3’s step dance team is a standout.

In the three years since the network’s flagship school, SA Harlem 1, was designated a Blue Ribbon School, more than 1,500 educators, government officials, and policymakers from across the country and around the world have traveled to New York to attend Success Academy workshops and conferences or to tour a school. It was in response to educators’ requests that Eva Moskowitz wrote [Mission Possible: How the Secrets of Success Academies Can Work in Any School](#) with Arin Lavinia, in 2012. More recently, Success Academy launched a [virtual tour](#) that takes viewers inside classrooms while detailing the curriculum, philosophy, and key aspects of its results-driven elementary school design.

ABOUT NATIONAL BLUE RIBBON SCHOOLS

The U.S. Department of Education's annual National Blue Ribbon Schools Award recognizes outstanding public and non-public schools, acknowledging and validating the hard work of students, educators, families, and communities in striving for—and attaining—exemplary achievement. Nominated by their state departments of education, National Blue Ribbon Schools serve as models for other schools throughout the nation, and school personnel are often sought out as mentors. Winning schools are honored at an annual awards ceremony held in Washington, D.C. Each school receives an engraved plaque and program flag with the official seal, which signifies its status and the year of its award.

In identifying outstanding schools annually, the program celebrates some of the most skilled and effective educators in the country. Their leaders not only articulate a vision of excellence and hold everyone to high standards, they stay close to the real action of teaching and learning. Faculty are supported by mentoring and professional development and have time to coordinate their work. Data from many sources drive adaptations to support every student. Families and educators work together in trust. Using standards of excellence evidenced by student achievement measures and research-based indicators of school quality, the department honors high-performing schools and schools that are making great strides in closing any achievement gaps among student groups.

ABOUT TARA STANT

Following graduation from Binghamton University in 2001, Ms. Stant decided to pursue a career in education. She completed a master's in elementary education at Binghamton University in 2003, then taught kindergarten and first grade for four years at a charter school in Harlem. In 2009, she joined Success Academy as a first grade teacher at SA Harlem 4 and transitioned to SA Bronx 1 as a founding teacher the following year. Ms. Stant became a lab site teacher at SA Bronx 1, modeling instruction and coaching teachers to improve their practice, and joined SA Harlem 3 as an assistant principal in 2013, managing the third grade team and planning professional development for teachers.

ABOUT RICHARD SEIGLER

Before joining Success Academy in 2008 as a founding teacher at SA Harlem 4, Mr. Seigler worked in banking and was a professional dancer. He taught kindergarten and dance for two years, then became a dean, improving school culture and parent relationships. From 2011 to 2014, Mr. Seigler served as principal of SA Harlem 3. He is currently managing director of elementary schools. Mr. Seigler holds a bachelor's degree in sociology and social work from SUNY College at Old Westbury and an MBA from the University of Phoenix.

ABOUT SUCCESS ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOLS

Founded in 2006, Success Academy Charter Schools are free public pre-K through 12 schools open to all children in the state through a random lottery. With 34 schools across Brooklyn, the Bronx, Manhattan, and Queens, Success Academy enrolls 11,000 students, primarily low-income children of color in disadvantaged neighborhoods: 77% of students receive free or reduced-price lunch, 95% are children of color, 12% are children with disabilities, and 8.5% are English language learners. Ranked in the top 1% in math and

the top 3% in English on 2015 state proficiency tests, Success Academy schools received more than 22,000 applications for fewer than 2,300 open seats this year.

For more information about Success Academy, go to Successacademies.org and virtualtour.successacademies.org.

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