

The Middle School Curriculum

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Mission

Success Academy is redefining what's possible in public education. **Our dual mission is to:**

- Build exceptional, world-class public schools that prove children from all backgrounds can succeed in college and life, and
- Advocate to change public policies that prevent so many children from having access to opportunity.

School Design

At Success Academy, we constantly ask ourselves: **“Would our scholars choose to come to school even if they didn’t have to?”** The answer — a resounding yes! — results from setting the bar high while providing meaningful opportunities for scholars to explore, engage, and laugh in our classrooms.

From elementary school through high school, we commit ourselves to the long-term development of our scholars, supporting their ultimate success in college and in life. We teach the core knowledge, critical thinking, independence, and self-advocacy skills that scholars need to excel. We invest in developing their passion for learning so that they have an unquenchable thirst for knowledge and understanding.

ACTION Values and Building Moral Character

We believe that character development is an important part of schooling, and the middle school grades are particularly vital years when scholars are growing into themselves as moral citizens and independent learners. We continue to guide the development of strong character in all our scholars by upholding our ACTION Values, and placing increasing emphasis on academic integrity and agency, a sense of responsibility both on and off school grounds, and understanding the heightened consequences of breaching codes of conduct.

Parent Engagement

At Success Academy, we work hard to ensure scholars achieve the highest levels of academic mastery — but we can't do it alone. From ensuring that homework is done to emphasizing academic integrity to modeling effective time management, parents play an essential role in supporting scholars' academic progress. Your ongoing effort and oversight — and communication with teachers and leadership — are essential to helping your child excel.



Middle School Curriculum

Our rigorous middle school curriculum encourages our scholars to think critically, to develop and debate ideas, and to always support their ideas with evidence. Our classes are hands-on and collaborative; we strive for mastery and believe that inquiry-based learning best enables expertise. Our math, history, and science sequences culminate in the New York State Regents exams in Algebra I, U.S. History, and Living Environment, allowing scholars to enroll directly in more advanced courses once they enter high school.

Our middle schools also offer enriching cocurriculars to serve as critical outlets for creativity, self-awareness, independence, and experiential learning. Scholars can join teams in chess, debate, dance, and sports, and they can discover new interests through electives and clubs.

Humanities

Each day, scholars have a Humanities block consisting of two 70-minute sessions of back-to-back English Language Arts and history lessons.

English Language Arts (ELA)

Scholars who love to read — and who read exceptionally well — develop into lifelong independent learners. It's crucial that we teach scholars how to read deeply, write passionately, and communicate clearly and confidently so that they can thrive as adults in a fast-paced, dynamic world. Our literacy instruction drives thoughtful engagement with meaningful texts of various genres.

Our middle school literacy curriculum emphasizes:

- Reading and analyzing novels, short fiction, nonfiction, and poetry;
- Engaging in rich discussions about the big ideas in texts;
- Expressing ideas clearly, precisely, and authentically through creative, informative, and argumentative writing.

During each ELA unit, scholars spend two to three weeks studying literature, followed by two to three weeks studying writing.

Literature

In literature, scholars delve into compelling works of fiction, poetry, and literary nonfiction, from both the Western canon and contemporary culture. Helping scholars analyze and interpret the meaning of texts is our utmost priority — we prize critical thinking above all else and ask scholars to consider how an author expresses a central idea with character development and literary technique. Through discussion and debate, and in written responses at the end of each class, scholars learn to discern the author's purpose, draw connections between big ideas in the text, and develop an appreciation for literary style.



Each literature unit focuses on a selected book, read by the entire class. We launch these units with shorter Connected Texts that are relevant to the book's core themes; these pieces introduce background knowledge and key concepts that will guide scholars in identifying and analyzing the book's central themes. When our fifth graders dive into *The Watsons Go to Birmingham — 1963*, by Christopher Paul Curtis, for example, they'll have already read short works about desegregation and race relations during that period, so they can more readily consider how history, culture, and symbolism relate to and are revealed through the text.

We conclude each literature unit with Mastery Text seminars, in which scholars analyze short texts (a poem, a fiction excerpt, or a nonfiction piece) unrelated to the prior unit's central text. The purpose of Mastery Text seminars is for scholars to apply their analytical skills to unfamiliar texts and demonstrate their ability to use evidence to identify and explain central ideas and themes. By asking scholars to draw on these skills when they read unfamiliar texts, teachers are also able to assess their own success in developing scholars as critical thinkers.

BOOK LIST

GRADE

5***The Watsons Go to Birmingham – 1963***

by Christopher Paul Curtis

Hidden Figures: Young Readers' Edition

by Margot Lee Shetterly

Where the Mountain Meets the Moon by Grace Lin***Home of the Brave*** by Katherine Applegate***Holes*** by Louis Sachar***Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*** by Lewis CarrollCollection of short stories

6***The Giver*** by Lois Lowry***The Diary of a Young Girl*** by Anne Frank***Chains*** by Laurie Halse Anderson***Heart of a Samurai*** by Margi Preus***Brown Girl Dreaming*** by Jacqueline WoodsonCollection of short stories

7***The Outsiders*** by S.E. Hinton***Night*** by Elie Weisel***The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*** by Sherman Alexie***A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*** by Betty Smith***A Midsummer Night's Dream***
by William Shakespeare***Fahrenheit 451*** by Ray BradburyCollection of short stories

8***To Kill a Mockingbird*** by Harper Lee***In the Time of the Butterflies*** by Julia Alvarez***The Autobiography of Malcolm X***
as told to Alex Haley***Animal Farm*** by George Orwell***Lord of the Flies*** by William Golding***Romeo and Juliet*** by William ShakespeareCollection of short stories

Independent Reading

We'd be hard-pressed to select one component of our curriculum that stands as the most essential, but we always come back to reading. Lifelong readers are lifelong learners, and for that reason, our middle schools are designed to cultivate and grow scholars' love of reading. Middle schoolers spend a block of time each day reading books of their choice to inculcate reading habits that will carry them into high school and pave the way for college success. Scholars can choose print books from carefully curated classroom libraries or e-books from Overdrive (our subscription provides thousands of options). All scholars are also given a subscription to Audible.com, so they have on-demand access to thousands of engaging audiobooks. Listening to books read by masterful actors not only immerses scholars in the transfixing power of storytelling but also increases their vocabulary and comprehension by exposing them to books that are more sophisticated and rigorous than what they might read on their own.

Summer Soar

We support scholars' continued academic growth when school is out with a summer reading assignment that includes books of the scholar's choice from a carefully curated list and a required grade-appropriate book that is chosen to both challenge and captivate. Scholars receive copies of the required book so that they're able to lose themselves in reading, soaring through the summer months rather than sliding backward from inactivity.

SUMMER SOAR BOOKS

GRADE (RISING)

5***The One and Only Ivan***
by Katherine Applegate**6*****Roller Girl***
by Victoria Jamieson**7*****The Great Greene Heist***
by Varian Johnson**8*****The Crossover***
by Kwame Alexander

One Network, One Book

Summer reading also includes one book that the entire Success Academy network — scholars, staff, and teachers — reads and discusses together in the fall.

Past selections have included:

- ***The Season of Styx Malone*** by Kekla Magoon (2019-2020)
- ***One Last Word*** by Nikki Grimes (2018-2019)
- ***Ghost*** by Jason Reynolds (2017-2018)
- ***Wonder*** by R.J. Palacio (2016-2017)



Writing

As growing writers, our scholars learn how to express rich ideas clearly and powerfully while also upholding high standards of organization and grammar. Throughout the year, scholars strive for vibrant self-expression by writing pieces in a variety of genres. The writing program emphasizes the importance of practice and revision. Scholars give one another feedback, and classes frequently end with a group discussion about a classmate's writing. Each week, teachers provide targeted feedback, giving scholars multiple opportunities to revise and improve their grammar, style, vocabulary, and rhetoric. At the end of each unit, scholars have one-on-one meetings with teachers during which they reflect on their progress and set goals.

To become great writers, scholars need to compose sophisticated sentences, and sentence-level instruction is embedded in the Literature and Writing units. We devote the first 10 minutes of each ELA lesson to Art of the Sentence activities, which hone scholars' capacity to express ideas using clear, complex, and grammatically correct sentences. For instance, scholars learn how to use subordinating conjunctions and appositives to construct more compelling sentences. Art of the Sentence activities are rooted in Literature and History content, simultaneously pressing scholars to think critically about material learned in Literature and History while mastering strong sentence composition.

We also celebrate writing as a joyous activity through Writing Showcases. At the end of each trimester, the entire middle school community participates in an afternoon of celebration when scholars share their finished pieces with teachers, peers, and families. These events are an opportunity for scholars to showcase what they've learned, celebrate growth, and continue to develop their passion for writing.

History

Our scholars experience history as the fascinating story of humankind, one that's extraordinarily relevant to their modern lives. We don't approach history as a comprehensive checklist of facts and figures. Rather, we lead scholars in investigations of the most pivotal ideas, events, and cultural interactions that transformed history and continue to resonate and shape our world.

In each history lesson, teachers present a question about the past and challenge scholars to draw upon a wide array of primary and secondary sources to answer this question, debating and evaluating the historical evidence presented by their peers. Scholars engage in this type of historical inquiry daily through classroom discussion, analytical writing assignments, and project-based learning, such as drafting political cartoons, painting cave art, and simulating major historic debates.

As they progress through the middle school history sequence, scholars build a strong foundation of historical knowledge, draw connections between the past and present, and develop a deep understanding of historical change and continuity. By the end of eighth grade, scholars are prepared to excel on the U.S. History and Government Regents exam and thrive in high school and beyond.



GRADE

5

World History to 1550

Scholars begin by delving into the ancient world, starting with the rise of the Egyptians and the world's first river valley civilizations. Throughout this survey course, scholars study the Classical Age in the Mediterranean and East Asia; the fall of Rome, rise of Islam, and feudal Europe; the medieval period across Afro-Eurasia; and the origins and impact of the European Renaissance.

6

U.S. History I

Scholars pick up where their fifth grade World History course left off, investigating Europeans' exploration of the Americas. They study the American native peoples, the consequences of the Europeans' arrival, the early history of Africans in the Americas, the American Revolution and Constitution, and the development of the new United States. Scholars wrap up the year with the reform era of the 1830s and 1840s, finishing off at one of the biggest cliffhangers of American history: sectionalism and the antebellum United States.

7

U.S. History II

Continuing with U.S. History, scholars focus on understanding the monumental social, political, and economic changes in the century, from the Mexican-American War through the Great Depression. The Civil War and Reconstruction, Western expansion, and the rise of an industrial United States on the brink of becoming a world superpower round out the year.

8

Contemporary U.S. History Post-1945

In their final year of middle school, scholars take post-1945 U.S. History. Unlike other history programs, which all too often rush to cover this period in a single unit or neglect it from the study of history entirely, we dedicate an entire year of instruction to understanding this contemporary period so that scholars understand the key individuals, events, and debates that still shape our nation and our world. Throughout this course, scholars analyze the rise and fall of Nazi Germany; the origins, escalation, and end of the Cold War; the civil rights movement; and key moments in recent American and world history. In doing so, scholars grapple with the continuing implications of these events on society and the public discourse today. At the end of this course, scholars take the U.S. History and Government Regents exam.

STEM

Science, Technology,
Engineering, and Math

From a science, math, and technology perspective, our scholars will likely encounter futures that we can't even imagine; scholars will need the skills to adjust to rapid-fire developments in these fields. Our STEM program empowers all of our scholars to think flexibly and analytically and to systematically follow lines of insightful inquiry when faced with unfamiliar and challenging problems. The middle school science and math sequences culminate in the Regents exams in Living Environment and Algebra I.

Each day, scholars have a STEM block, consisting of two 70-minute sessions of back-to-back science and math.

Math

Our mathematics program develops scholars as confident mathematicians, powerful quantitative thinkers, and productive problem-solvers. Scholars gain a deep understanding of mathematical concepts through contextualized applications, ultimately building an understanding based on reasoning, not just calculation.

Each day, scholars participate in a mini-lesson to strengthen their capacity as flexible problem-solvers. After the mini-lesson, the real fun begins: Teachers present their classes with engaging problems to solve in small groups. Scholars hone their mathematical reasoning abilities as they learn to assess unfamiliar problems, think about what they know and can assume about a problem, and identify the essential information they need to arrive at a solution. They devise a plan of attack and learn to evaluate whether an answer seems reasonable based on their original estimations. They share their answers and strategies with the class and evaluate, critique, and refine these various approaches to problem-solving. In this way, scholars come to understand and use math as a vehicle for thinking critically and strategically about the world around them.



5

Extending the Number System

In fifth grade, scholars establish a thorough understanding of how numbers work in decimal and fraction operations. We leverage visual models to help scholars understand and generalize number patterns and relationships. Scholars build on their foundation in geometry from elementary school, diving deeper into the shape classification of quadrilaterals and triangles and learning volume, which builds on their previous study of perimeter and area. They expand their understanding of unit conversions and data analysis — which they continue to do through high school, as data analysis is an essential life skill that enables scholars to “read” numbers and assess the story they tell.

6

Introduction to Proportional Reasoning

In sixth grade, scholars begin working with negative numbers, realizing that the number line extends beyond zero. After considering the implications of the number system, we’re able to truly launch into expressions and equations, thus laying the groundwork for Algebra I. Most critically, scholars take on rates, ratios, and percents, which elevates their number sense to new levels of understanding. Scholars continue building their foundation in geometry, and their emerging mastery of data analysis from fifth grade is advanced in a statistics and probability unit.

7

Constant Rates and Proportionality

Seventh grade is an essential year in scholars’ development as advanced mathematical thinkers; by the end of the year, scholars know almost all the math that they’ll need for the SAT. Scholars learn to flexibly apply strategies to solve complex equations with decimals and fractions, and they work regularly with percentages. They begin to understand real-world proportional reasoning. For example, scholars investigate if 30 is the new 20 based on our longer life expectancy. As they continue in-depth explorations of such subjects as ratios and proportions, relationships in the number system, expressions and equations, geometry, statistics, and probability, scholars transform into truly sophisticated mathematicians.

8

Algebra I

Eighth-grade scholars take on the challenges of Algebra I, a course that extends and deepens their understanding of algebraic relationships. Scholars learn to create and reason with equations and inequalities and to interpret and build linear, quadratic, and exponential functions through real-world applications. For example, they apply their understanding of systems of equations to grapple with the impact that the current minimum wage has on the supply and demand of workers in the United States.

At the end of the year, scholars demonstrate their mathematical understanding on the Algebra I Regents exam. Having completed Algebra I, scholars will be ready to take on Algebra II in high school and Calculus during their senior year.

Science

At Success Academy, we want all scholars to be truly excited about scientific discovery. Our science teachers are obsessed with sparking curiosity because when scholars experience the joy of discovery, they become better scientists and more observant, engaged citizens.

In middle school, we prioritize the development of scholar independence and leadership in scientific inquiry. Each day, science consists of:

- A mini-lesson, during which the teacher engages scholars in an interesting concept or task.
- An investigation or activity, during which scholars design and execute experiments, conduct research, and solve problems to explore and explain scientific phenomena, under the guidance of the teacher.
- Discourse, when scholars discuss and debate their findings and work together to create common takeaways based on that day's investigation.

Thanks to daily inquiry-based science in Success Academy elementary schools, our entering fifth graders are already capable of thinking like scientists. They have a strong foundation of knowledge and are adept at asking questions, observing, recording, and applying their knowledge to make predictions. In middle school, we push our scholars to dive deeper, dedicating each year to a particular scientific discipline. Our middle school scientists are also exposed to a robust computer science curriculum, building on and extending the coding skills they developed in elementary school.

GRADE

5

Earth Science

Scholars begin their middle school science career by digging into Earth Science. As they unearth fossils in a simulated dig, they question their origins and look ahead to Earth's future. From the ground beneath their feet to the vast expanse of the solar system, scholars learn about the planet we call home and the universe that surrounds it. We also introduce scholars to the ways humans impact the Earth, exploring the political implications of climate change and the validity of scientific sources.

6

Life Science

In sixth grade, scholars take a deep dive into Life Science. The major themes in biology are approached through several avenues, from directly observing the structures within a cell to modeling natural selection. Through the study of cells and genetics, scholars learn to see themselves and the natural world from an entirely different perspective. Scholars study life systems at every level, from the organization of microscopic cells to the macroscopic organization of entire ecological systems. To conclude the year, they discover the underlying beauty of evolution and the unity and diversity of life on Earth.

7

Chemistry

Seventh-grade scholars delve into Chemistry by actively engaging in hands-on exploration, experimentation, and modeling to develop sophisticated mastery of core concepts. They study the implications of the atom as the most basic building block for all matter, investigate how atoms combine and interact, and explore how the properties of different materials shape our world. They also design their own solutions to real-world problems. For example, scholars collaborate to develop a filtration system to clean polluted water. At the completion of the course, scholars have a deep understanding of the composition of matter, physical and chemical changes, thermodynamics, and energy conservation, a critical foundation for AP Biology and Chemistry in high school.

8

The Living Environment

In eighth grade, scholars tackle units on homeostasis, genetics, ecology, and evolution — building on their sixth-grade foundation to acquire an in-depth, high-school level understanding of the life sciences. During this year, they also tackle the Living Environment Regents exam! Having demonstrated their mastery of high-level concepts in biology, scholars will head to high school prepared to take on the rigors of advanced scientific study.

Science Symposium

Science Symposium is Success Academy's fresh take on the traditional science fair. For one month each year, all middle school scholars complete independent projects, constructing and testing experiments that they develop themselves. This unit drives authentic excitement in the application of science knowledge to real-world phenomena, allowing everyone to stretch their wings by completing independent research. We also press scholars on the development of communication and presentation skills and on using technology effectively and creatively.

The Symposium culminates in a celebration of projects in front of parents and the school community.



Advisory

Our goal is to prepare scholars to enroll and graduate from a college or university within four years, and middle school is a critical time for establishing lifelong habits in time management, setting goals, and independent learning. Our Advisory block addresses and supports these aspects of academic and personal development, providing a dedicated time for scholars to discuss challenges and to develop close relationships with their Advisors (who are also teachers). Advisors also bridge the gap between a scholar's home and school life, serving as families' point of contact throughout the year and regularly contacting parents about their child's progress.



Academic Intervention and Sprint

Success Academy has a profoundly innovative schooling model that achieves outstanding results at scale, and our approach to supporting children with the highest educational needs, which we call Sprint, is just as radical. Many of the techniques associated with special education classrooms — such as small-group instruction, the use of manipulatives, frequent assessments, and individualized learning goals — are standard for *all* of our scholars at Success Academy. We believe that the best way to support most children requiring special education services is not to offer a separate education, but to help them close in on the academic benchmarks we set for *all* children. We purposefully expand on our general model to help these scholars make academic progress.

All of our schools offer Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) classes in grades K–12, and 12:1:1 classes in the grades that we believe to be most appropriate for those scholars requiring this academic service; these may change over time. For school year 2019–2020, these schools have 12:1:1 settings: SA Bronx MS (Gr 5 and Gr 6), SA Ditmas Park MS (Gr 5 and Gr 6), SA Harlem East MS (Gr 5), and SA Midtown West MS (Gr 6 and Gr 7).

Our middle school schedule also includes a Zero Period intervention time, during which select scholars receive targeted support to ensure that they meet relevant academic benchmarks. Each school has a dedicated Sprint Specialist and/or Associate who manage the entire Sprint process and work alongside parents, the Department of Education, school leaders, and teachers to ensure scholars are being assessed and receiving the services that will help them reach their highest potential.

Our approach enables scholars with special needs to thrive:

- On the 2019 state exams, 95% of our scholars with disabilities passed math, and 77% passed English (compared with 18% and 16% citywide).
- In 2018, the NYC Department of Education surveyed parents, and 87% of Success Academy parent respondents with children who have disabilities strongly agreed or agreed: “My child’s school works to achieve the goals on my child’s Individualized Education Program.”

English Language Learners

English language learners (ELLs) at Success Academy are not assigned to a separate program or track; rather, they are fully immersed in the English language from day one, right alongside their English-speaking peers. ELL scholars receive a range of special supports, including one-on-one tutoring and small-group instruction as needed. Like all scholars, they are encouraged to present their ideas to their class and actively participate in discussions.

This approach — full immersion with support — allows scholars to quickly develop their English language skills and reach high levels of academic achievement.

- On the 2019 state exams, 97% of our English language learners passed math, and 86% passed English (compared with 19% and 9% citywide).
- At SA, most ELLs become proficient in English within two years — compared with five or more at district schools.

Para obtener información en español y presentar una solicitud, visite es.SuccessAcademies.org



Scholar Mental Health

At Success, we believe that scholars' emotional health is as important as their academic success and the cocurricular development of their talents and passions. We invest time and resources to ensure that scholars have ample support when they are struggling in this area. All of our schools provide professional psychology services. Additionally, teachers and leaders are trained to recognize signs of psychological trouble; to address mild forms of sadness, anger, or other disturbances; and to help children develop healthy coping strategies. Whether helping our scholars manage anxiety, teaching healthy ways of coping with difficult emotions, offering resources to parents, or providing time-management support, our school psychologists, teachers, and leaders are truly invested in their scholars' lives.

Scholar Interests and Talents

Zero Period, Electives, Clubs, and Selective Programs

At Success Academy, we are deeply invested in educating the whole child: We want our scholars to become well-rounded young adults who have interests and capabilities far beyond academics. We have designed our middle schools to give scholars ample opportunity to explore and discover talents and passions and to pursue them at a high level. Each trimester, scholars choose an elective class, which they study five days a week for an hour each day, allowing for sustained immersion.

Additionally, they can choose to join competitive teams or visual or performing arts clubs, which meet each day during Zero Period (8:00 to 9:00 a.m.). Wednesday afternoons provide another optional opportunity to dive deep into an interest through after-school clubs. Most schools offer debate and visual arts; other options may include theater, dance, and music. Sports club offerings are consistent across all middle schools, changing each trimester and currently including track (spring), basketball (winter), and cross-country (fall).

As part of the middle school placement process, scholars might also be chosen for participation in our selective soccer, chess, or dance programs, which are network-wide and highly competitive.

Electives and School-Based Clubs

Visual Arts

In our studios, scholars gain the tools they need to navigate the visual world while becoming careful observers and problem-solvers. As artists, they grow into passionate “meaning makers” by using art to explore and engage with their own ideas, their peers, and the world around them. Through independent and collaborative experimentation in various mediums — including



clay, collage, construction, photography, painting, printmaking, and textiles — scholars gain technical skills and confidence in their ability to express themselves visually. Scholars also study the work of great artists and pivotal artistic movements, considering their effects on humanity and on the progression of artistic expression as well as developing scholars’ understanding that these people and events are part of a global artists’ community.

Music

Music offers opportunities for scholars to develop their musicianship in a variety of ways. Scholars are given the opportunity to focus on collaboration, creativity, and performance through both vocal and instrumental exposure. All of our musicians are given the opportunity to participate in a variety of performances throughout the year.



Sports and Fitness

In sports, our scholars hone agility and athletic skills, learn the rules of the game, and collaborate as a team. All middle schools offer fitness as an elective option and track (spring), basketball (winter), and cross-country (fall) teams during Zero Period.

Network Clubs

Our Network clubs are competitive and selective programs comprised of scholars who try out from middle schools across the network. Mostly year-round commitments, these clubs participate in multiple levels of competition, including local, regional, and national. These opportunities provide vital outlets for creativity, self-expression, and leadership.

Futsal Soccer

Network Futsal Club is a competitive team open to scholars across all middle schools. In this new club, scholars will dive deeper into the technique and strategy needed to be competitive in the sport. This club offers a programming option to scholars interested in pursuing Futsal at a competitive level.

Basketball

Network Basketball is open to boys and girls up to age 13. Scholars play on gender-specific teams that compete within the Amateur Athletics Union (AAU). These selective teams consist of the network's best players and have the opportunity to represent Success Academy in both regional and national tournaments.

Volleyball

Network Volleyball is open to boys and girls up to age 13. The scholars are divided into teams that compete as a part of the Amateur Athletics Union (AAU). These selective teams consist of the network's best players and have the opportunity to represent Success Academy in both regional and national tournaments.

Theater

In theater, scholars hone their craft as actors and theater artists. A wide variety of units are explored, such as puppetry, mask work, Shakespeare, improv, introduction to acting techniques, and theater performance. Scholars additionally develop ensemble building and creative-thinking skills, setting them up for success across the Success Academy curriculum.

Dance

Dance Club is a structured time for scholars to reach the next level in their skills through proper training in learning grooves, discipline, and stage etiquette.

Debate

Debate places agency in the hands of our scholars, allowing them to develop as active and engaged citizens both in school and in their own communities. Scholars drive their own learning in these classes, developing and leveraging active listening skills, insightful articulation, and in-depth research techniques. Debate builds flexible and logical thinking by challenging scholars to defend both sides of any topic.

Scholars take on such topics as education and immigration reform, voter fraud, global warming, and criminal justice, and they draw on a rich variety of sources and evidence to craft compelling arguments and demonstrate how these issues affect their own communities. Scholars have accumulated numerous awards and honors in debate on the intramural, local, and national levels, including the top speaker award at a national competition. The Success Academy Debate League is now in its fourth year and hosts tournaments every month.

Track

In track, our scholars receive coaching on what it takes to run competitively for short distances. This new club is complementary to our popular cross-country club and also provides athletic training for those interested in our basketball program. In high school, Success Academy has a strong track program, and we're excited to offer this program to our middle school scholars!

Dance

The feel and the structure of Dance Club is that of an actual dance studio, which produces high-level results. In previous years, scholars have performed at the Barclays Center, received instruction from professional dancers, and had the opportunity to perform in the Festival of the Arts.

Band

Network Band, also called "Rock Band," provides scholars in grades 3–7 an opportunity to engage in making music through the study of instruments, such as drums, guitar, bass, and keyboard. All of our musicians are given the opportunity to participate in a variety of performances throughout the year.

Chorus

The Network Chorus Club, named the SA Youth Chorus, gives scholars in grades 3–7 an opportunity to participate in high-level music making in a choral setting. All of our musicians are given the opportunity to participate in a variety of performances throughout the year, including traveling to daylong competitions outside of New York City.



Selective Programs

Chess

The Success Academy Chess Program provides a rigorous, engaging, and hands-on chess instruction that aims to inspire scholars to fall in love with thinking. Teachers, students, school leaders, and families will come together to form a chess culture informed by the constant pursuit of intellectual and creative excellence. Guided by teachers who are committed to continual growth as pedagogues and players, our scholars learn to think critically, control their impulses, make decisions, and compete in chess — and in life — with confidence. For scholars excelling in chess, the competitive program at our selective chess schools provides additional rigorous, engaging, and hands-on chess instruction for the school's top players. The highest-ranking scholars at each school compete in internal tournaments and travel to compete in external tournaments.

All scholars in the selective chess program compete in chess tournaments throughout New York City, with the highest-ranking scholars at each school traveling to compete in Chess Nationals. As part of the middle school placement process, rising grade 5 scholars are selected on the basis of their USCF rating scores. We offer this specialized chess program at SA Bronx MS, SA Bed-Stuy MS, SA Myrtle MS, SA Harlem East MS, SA Hudson Yards MS, and SA Midtown West MS.

Soccer

Modeled on top European soccer academies, our middle school Selective Soccer program offers club-style training and competition that is unprecedented in a New York City public school. Committed and talented young soccer players train year-round, during and after school, on weekends, and in an intensive summer program. Middle schoolers receive personalized evaluations and coaching, and they participate in external league play and tournaments. Scholars are invited to participate in the middle school Selective Soccer program based on demonstrated skill and commitment in the SA elementary soccer program. Selective Soccer is currently offered at SA Harlem North Central and SA Bed-Stuy middle schools.

Dance

The Selective Dance program at SA Harlem North West Middle School allows scholars to dive deep into the study and practice in a brand-new dance studio. Scholars are exposed to wider genres of dance and receive instruction from top talent, including workshops with professional dancers in the city. Those in the selective program represent Success Academy at various dance performances and competitions, including at Barclays Center.



Recess

We're old-fashioned in that we believe wholeheartedly in the importance of recess, even in middle school! We don't compromise on this free time; just like math and science, recess is a critical part of a scholar's day — and it is not optional. Every day, scholars have 30 minutes outdoors to exercise or socialize with peers.



Schedule

Our middle school scholars and teachers enjoy the benefits of a block schedule format, which leverages extended periods of time to explore content areas in great detail.

Here is a sample schedule: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

TIME	LENGTH (min)	CLASS
7:45–8:00	15	Arrival
8:00–9:00	60	Zero Period
9:00–9:03	3	Transition
9:03–9:33	30	Guided Reading / Independent Reading
9:33–11:53	140	HUM / STEM
11:53–11:58	5	Transition
11:58–12:58	60	Lunch / Recess
12:58–1:03	5	Transition
1:03–3:23	140	HUM / STEM
3:23–3:26	3	Transition
3:26–4:26	60	Elective
4:26–4:30	4	Dismissal

Please note: This is a sample schedule. Daily schedules will vary by grade and school; however, the curriculum is the same across all schools.

Zero Period: Zero Period is a daily block of time before school that's dedicated to study hall, academic intervention, or clubs or sports team practice. Families will be informed if their children are required to attend Zero Period for academic intervention in math or reading. Otherwise, scholars can choose to join a club or sports team that meets daily. Alternatively, scholars are welcome to arrive to school early and use Zero Period to complete homework, independent reading, or other projects.

Trimester: Our middle schools follow a trimester schedule. Trimester 1 ends in mid-November, Trimester 2 ends in early March, and Trimester 3 finishes at the end of the school year in June.



Welcome to Success!

Success Academy's comprehensive middle school curriculum — developed, scrutinized, and refined over 9 years — is designed to ignite scholars' curiosity and love of learning while cultivating an analytical and investigative mind-set. We aim for all scholars to take ownership of their learning and develop keen interests and passions, and we encourage you to visit your scholars' classrooms to observe the curriculum in action. We look forward to working with you to support scholars on this exciting intellectual journey.

