

Part I – Eligibility Certification

The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The public school has met their state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) using the most recent accountability results available for the year prior to nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, a public school must meet the state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) for the year in which they are nominated (2015-2016) and be certified by the state representative. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2010 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, or 2015.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2015-2016) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 21 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 9 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 14 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 44 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
 - Suburban with characteristics typical of an urban area
 - Suburban
 - Small city or town in a rural area
 - Rural
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2015 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	36	49	85
1	42	41	83
2	47	36	83
3	38	45	83
4	38	40	78
5	0	0	0
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	201	211	412

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 2 % Asian
 - 65 % Black or African American
 - 29 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 2 % White
 - 2 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2014 – 2015 school year: 3%

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	0
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	12
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	12
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	415
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.029
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	3

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 7 %
30 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Ewe, French, Fulani, Hausa, Mandingo, Wolof, Spanish

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 81 %
Total number students who qualify: 334

8. Students receiving special education services: 11 %
44 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- 1 Autism
- 0 Deafness
- 0 Deaf-Blindness
- 0 Emotional Disturbance
- 0 Hearing Impairment
- 0 Mental Retardation
- 0 Multiple Disabilities
- 0 Orthopedic Impairment
- 6 Other Health Impaired
- 7 Specific Learning Disability
- 30 Speech or Language Impairment
- 0 Traumatic Brain Injury
- 0 Visual Impairment Including Blindness
- 0 Developmentally Delayed

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 3
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	4
Classroom teachers	31
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	10
Paraprofessionals	0
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	8

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 13:1

12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

Required Information	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011
Daily student attendance	96%	95%	96%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2015.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school's mission or vision statement.

Our mission is to provide students with a world-class and well-rounded education, preparing them for success in middle school, high school, college and throughout life.

16. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

Success Academy Harlem 4 is a free, public charter school, and enrollment is chosen through a random lottery (when applications exceed the space available). We expect that the 2016 lottery will apply preferences for siblings of current and accepted students, families who reside in the same district as the school, children of Success Academy employees, and English Language Learners.

PART III – SUMMARY

Success Academy Harlem 4 (SA Harlem 4) opened in 2008 and is located in New York City (NYC) Community School District 3. SA Harlem 4 serves 412 scholars (students) in grades K-4. Eighty-one percent of our scholars at SA Harlem 4 are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch; 98% are minorities; 11% percent have special needs; and 7% are English language learners.

SA Harlem 4 is part of Success Academy Charter Schools (SA), a charter management organization that operates 34 high-performing public schools located in the Bronx, Manhattan, Brooklyn and Queens, serving nearly 11,000 students. Founded in 2006, SA is redefining what is possible in public education by creating exceptional, world-class public schools that serve thousands of children from all backgrounds, preparing them with the subject mastery and skills to succeed in college and life.

The demographics of our scholars—all admitted by random public lottery—reflect the neighborhood where SA Harlem 4 is located, yet the disadvantages our children face do not hold them back. Scholars at SA Harlem 4 have reversed the achievement gap and collectively ranked in the top 1% in math and the top 9% in literacy in the entire state on the 2015 New York State (NYS) tests. They outscored NYC students by 61 percentage points in math and 26 percentage points in English Language Arts (ELA). In both subjects, African American and Hispanic scholars at SA Harlem 4 significantly outperformed white and Asian scholars across the city and state. Scholars at SA Harlem 4 outscored their peers at STEM Institute of Manhattan (SA Harlem 4's co-located school) by 91 percentage points in math and 52 percentage points in ELA. In fact, our fourth graders ranked twelfth in math in the State (out of NYS's 2,353 tested schools). Further, 100% of our fourth grade scholars passed the 2015 NYS science exam, with 98% of test takers earning an advanced level 4—the highest possible score.

At SA Harlem 4, we deeply believe each child has limitless potential to think and achieve at high levels. To facilitate thinking and learning at such high levels, we follow in the footsteps of the great educational philosopher John Dewey, who believed that learning is done best when children are actively involved in the process. As such, SA Harlem 4, scholars receive approximately 80 minutes of direct instruction per day—leaving the majority of the day for guided inquiry and discussion to develop ideas and creative expression. Our school leaders and teachers work tirelessly to make each of these minutes count. This progressive approach prepares our scholars for the rigor and independence needed to succeed in college and in life.

We also believe that school must be interesting and engaging. We know that in order for scholars to fall in love with learning, to actively listen and participate in their own education, they must not be bored. Public speaking and strong writing, appreciation of the arts, chess, and deep knowledge of world history are present in every grade. Each of our classrooms has its own library, containing as many as 2,500 titles, balanced in terms of fiction and nonfiction, and scholars have a minimum of 30 minutes of free reading time each school day. By the end of kindergarten, each scholar has read over 100 books based on his/her reading level. We also know our kids need to be ready for careers in math, science, and technology, so we designed our curriculum to include science five days a week beginning in kindergarten. In their first year, our scholars perform more than 100 experiments.

There is a school-wide emphasis on setting goals and working hard to achieve them. Throughout our school, inspiring quotes fill classroom walls, hallways, and bulletin boards. All teachers, principals, staff, and scholars abide by the Success Academy credo of ACTION: Agency, Curiosity, Try & Try, Integrity, Others, No Shortcuts. College graduation is an expectation for all scholars. In fact, our classrooms are named using the year the scholars will graduate from college. Every classroom has a “college corner” adorned with banners and pictures of famous alumni from the teacher's alma mater, complete with photographs of the teacher graduating from college. Our teachers don't say “if”—they start their sentences with “When you go to college...”

Our innovative school model provides the highest quality schooling and ensures accountability in all grades. Instead of treating each grade as a separate entity, SA Harlem 4 functions as one cohesive system, helping our scholars transition smoothly during critical stages of their academic development. As scholars advance from grade to grade, our teachers and principal communicate and collaborate on each child's academic and social-emotional welfare. This personalized attention also makes it possible for scholars to advance or go back a grade during the school year in one or more subjects so that all are challenged while working at their own pace without being overwhelmed or bored.

It is also important to note that our scholars have significantly more instruction time due to a longer day and a longer school year (mid-August through mid-June). Four days a week, the school day lasts from 7:45am until 4:00pm in kindergarten and until 4:30pm for the older grades. Every Wednesday, scholars are dismissed at 12:30pm, and this time is devoted to professional development for teachers and school leaders.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Literacy

SA Harlem 4's THINK Literacy curriculum was developed by in-house experts and is designed to prepare scholars for any reading or writing challenge they will encounter throughout their education. The program is built upon the concept that scholars should love reading and discussing their ideas and is designed to meet each scholar's individual learning needs. Scholars are grouped across classes and grades by reading ability level. Regrouping gives each teacher opportunities to work intensively with scholars, one reading level at a time.

There are five components to THINK Literacy. Shared Text helps scholars interpret brief texts in a highly engaging way by determining the meaning of the text and learning to find evidence to support their ideas. During Guided Reading, small groups of scholars work with their teacher to read and understand a book that is one Fountas & Pinnell level above where they are reading independently. During Read Alouds, the teacher reads to the class and verbalizes what she is thinking to help scholars understand how an excellent reader thinks through a text. During Reading Workshop, the teacher introduces one aspect of excellent reading by explaining and modeling it, then scholars have independent reading time to practice what they just learned. Word Study covers phonics, vocabulary, spelling, and grammar instruction in order to ground scholars in the fundamentals and conventions of written and oral language.

Mathematics

The core mission of our math program is to prepare scholars to be confident users of mathematics, powerful quantitative thinkers, and productive problem solvers. Teachers use Cognitive Guided Instruction (CGI) to build scholars' problem-solving skills, conceptual understanding, and computational fluency. Recognizing that scholars also need to have a strong understanding of counting, numeracy, and basic computation skills to be successful mathematicians, we pair our conceptual curricular approach with an additional emphasis on fluency in concrete math facts (called No Hesitation Math) for a balanced mathematical instructional model. During Number Stories, a CGI adapted strategy, scholars solve problems independently while teachers scan their work, checking for understanding and looking for innovative and sophisticated strategies to share with the class to encourage both logical and creative solutions. Importantly, our approach allows for differentiation of students according to their pace of learning. Our teachers facilitate mathematical learning; however, it is the scholars' work that guides the lessons.

Science

SA Harlem 4 is committed to implementing a strong science program and is leading this charge through aligning our curriculum with the Next Generation Science Standards. We are one of the only schools in the country to offer science five days a week, beginning in kindergarten. Our laboratory-based science curriculum, developed by in-house experts, provides thoughtfully designed and sequenced content. It encourages all scholars to become knowledgeable and literate in the history of science, scientific understanding, and the scientific skills that are so important as they observe, question, and explore the natural world. We incorporate the three main disciplines of science—life, physical and earth—into every grade. That means that on any given day, a scholar could be dissecting an animal, collecting data on plant growth, conducting scratch tests to identify minerals, or even learning about aerodynamics.

Social Studies/History

A Harlem 4 integrates social studies and history into a unique and comprehensive Project Based Learning ("PBL") curriculum. A PBL unit is a multidisciplinary, deeply intensive study of a specific topic, such as bridges, local neighborhoods, the Arctic, Native Americans, and the NYC subway system. Through hands-on exploration with their class, scholars learn to gather information, gain communication skills, use their imaginations, and apply their knowledge learned from a variety of sources. Exploring a topic in such depth brings history to life and allows scholars to develop their own deep insights. For instance, during the Brooklyn Bridge PBL, second grade scholars conduct experiments to learn the engineering principles behind bridge construction, read about Emily Roebling, the project's chief engineer, and visit the bridge to record their own observations and interview pedestrians.

Supporting Scholars

In-the-moment coaching of scholars happens in every single classroom, every single day, across all subjects. If a scholar is struggling, the teacher may pair her up with a scholar who is soaring, or rearrange the class for small group work. The teacher may assign extra homework or recommend additional books for scholars who need additional support or for those who need a challenge.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

SA Harlem 4 emphasizes rigorous instruction in literacy, math, social studies/history, and science, and we are also committed to ensuring that these core academic subjects do not diminish other important activities. Our curriculum also includes chess, arts, music, dance, typing, fitness, and geography. We are committed to these course offerings because of the skills they cultivate and because they add to the “joy factor” evident throughout our school and drive our high daily attendance (96% on average.)

Visual and Performing Arts

We believe the arts are an integral part of educating the whole child. All scholars have art class at least once a week where they experiment with different mediums including printmaking, oil pastels, and sculpture. Scholars study and are inspired by art from many different cultures; and they learn fundamentals such as color theory, geometry, and perspective. During weekly music class, scholars learn how to analyze, interpret, and evaluate music. They also learn to become musicians through singing, playing instruments, and performing rhythms.

Fitness

Establishing lifelong habits that promote health, wellness, fitness, and leadership is also an integral part of our curriculum for all grades. We believe children need activity breaks and recess. Learning sessions are often interspersed with a quick dance or jumping, and much cheering and acknowledgement of fellow scholars. Scholars have outdoor recess almost every day, and it is never taken away as a disciplinary action. Scholars also participate in fitness class once a week for 45 minutes. Sample fitness class activities for kindergartners, third graders and fourth graders include yoga, dance, cardio exercises, team building games and skill building exercises. All fourth grade scholars learn ballroom dance.

For the first time during the 2014-2015 school year, we piloted focusing our fitness program exclusively on soccer in first and second grade. The feedback was very positive, and we have continued the program for the 2015-2016 school year. Scholars have benefitted from a deep dive into one sport, and their coordination skills and general physical fitness have dramatically improved through learning soccer. Soccer has a very strong focus on teamwork, and it has helped many scholars improve their ability to collaborate with peers. Soccer is a very accessible sport regardless of income, and many parents now take their children to play soccer in the local parks on the weekends.

Field Studies

The field studies (field trips) program is a vital part of the SA Harlem 4 school design as it connects classroom curriculum to real-world experiences, infuses additional joy into the school day, and exposes our scholars to cultural experiences and institutions that they may not otherwise access. Every scholar visits a minimum of one to three major NYC cultural institutions each year. So far this school year, SA Harlem 4 scholars have already participated in 39 field studies, including visits to the New York Historical Society, the Children’s Museum of Art, and the American Museum of Natural History.

Chess

Learning and playing chess sharpens scholars’ analytical and competitive instincts. Chess allows scholars to think strategically while having fun. Beginning in kindergarten, all scholars receive weekly chess instruction for 50 minutes. Additionally, 18 scholars in grades 1-4 are members of the chess club, which meets two hours each week after school. In March 2016, one of our first grade scholars finished first in the K-1 Championship division of the New York State Scholastic Chess Championships!

Technology

We know that the purposeful use of technology in classrooms is essential to creating a learning environment that will foster the growth of 21st-century learners. That is why, as a hallmark of our approach to learning and teaching, smart technology is found in every classroom. Beginning in kindergarten, scholars learn the fundamentals of engineering by using robots and simple machines. They learn how to program Bee-Bots to move across the room and hold classroom Bee-Bot competitions! Fourth grade scholars take a typing class to help prepare them for an increased use of technology in middle school.

Blocks

In blocks class, kindergartners and first graders create structures independently and with peers. Through the act of discovery, they learn to build increasingly complex structures. As they build, they talk with their classmates, making decisions about what to build and how to build it, and, eventually, construct storylines about their structures. Blocks play supports the work our young scholars do across the day in reading, writing and PBLs.

3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

At SA Harlem 4, we offer a wide variety of supports to ensure academic success. Beyond the built-in differentiation of our curriculum, we also provide scholars who are struggling with supports that include: tutoring before, during, and after school; practice groups; additional homework; and special education services for those who need it.

For scholars who are soaring or struggling in one or more content areas, teachers and the principal have the flexibility to move scholars to a content lesson within a different grade level. For instance, if a scholar is reading at several grade levels beyond her peers, she can join the next grade's Shared Text or Guided Reading lesson. The same applies for scholars who would benefit from review of concepts learned in the previous grade. Importantly, the principal does not hesitate to move scholars between grades during the school year. This practice ensures that leaders and teachers can remain maximally responsive to scholars' needs—every child is able to advance without being overwhelmed or bored. Teachers and the principal are very deliberate about scholar placement, ensuring each class has a range of academic ability.

SA Harlem 4 employs a rigorous Response to Intervention ("RtI") process, whereby scholars who demonstrate a need for additional academic, social, or emotional support receive appropriate, targeted interventions to support them in achieving positive academic gains. Through RtI, scholars that are struggling receive targeted interventions that are tracked and monitored over time. At weekly RtI meetings, faculty and leaders meet to analyze individual scholar data and develop targeted interventions to most effectively address scholar needs.

Throughout the RtI process, the RtI team develops student intervention plans to help ensure that scholars are on track to meet SA's ambitious academic goals. If a scholar continues to struggle academically, SA will work with his or her family and recommend that the scholar be evaluated to determine if he or she has a disability, and to accurately assess and provide additional support services based on his or her individual needs. It is at that time that SA refers scholars to the Committee on Special Education (CSE) to determine if special education services and an Individualized Education Program are needed.

4. Assessment for Instruction and Learning and Sharing Assessment Results:

Scholars at SA Harlem 4 have continued to excel academically on NYS's math and ELA exams since the 2010/2011 school year (marking the first year we had scholars in testing grades). Every year since—with the exception of 2012/2013, which was the first year NYS introduced the Common Core State Standards—our scholars have made significant academic gains. Even though there was a drop in scores in 2012/2013, our scholars still ranked in the top 1% in math and 9% in ELA in the state.

SA Harlem 4 has a deep commitment to serving children with disabilities. Eleven percent of our scholars have special needs, and we devote considerable resources to serving them including hiring special education teachers and therapists, and offering Integrated Co-Teaching in second, third, and fourth grade. The only

subgroup with a 10 percentage point or greater achievement gap on the 2015 NYS exams compared to all students were special education students (SPED) in ELA and Math. We are proud to report that SPED scholars at SA Harlem 4 outperformed all NYC and NYS students (including general education students) on the 2015 math and ELA exams. One hundred percent of our SPED scholars passed the 2015 NYS Science exam.

SA Harlem 4 uses a variety of internal and external assessments to measure students' academic progress. All of our assessments are aligned with Common Core Math and Literacy standards and NYS Science standards, and these help us maintain the most responsive, highest-quality instruction possible. We also administer the Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessments four times annually (three times a year in kindergarten) to track scholars' reading levels, ensuring they continue to grow as readers throughout the year and providing additional reading support to scholars that need it. SA's in-house data management system, Magnus, tracks all aspects of scholar data from daily attendance to internal assessments to a scholar's historical proficiency levels on New York State tests.

It is through the careful study and analysis of scholar work, including assessments, that SA Harlem 4 teachers and the principal adjust instructional practice. Our curriculum is built in such a way that course adjustments can meet the needs of students. Benefitting from Success Academy's ten years of experience and centralized approach to professional development, SA Harlem 4 teachers are trained to preempt the pitfalls and shortcomings we have seen over the years and truly transform the quality of student learning. Our professional development strengthens our principal and teachers' capacity to know how to effectively react and alter instruction based on student need.

Communication with parents about their child's progress—and more broadly, about the curriculum and school events—is continuous. After every assessment, we send parents a report with detailed information on their child's academic progress including a recap of past assessments and in which areas the scholar has improved and/or needs improvement. The report also provides a comparative analysis for the child's class and for other scholars in the same grade across the network. SA Harlem 4 sends home weekly ACTION newsletters, updating families on recent and upcoming school activities as well.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

At SA Harlem 4, respect for others and proper behavior are explicitly taught, modeled, expected, and rewarded. Values and good character are a part of our daily instruction, starting in kindergarten. The schools' core values spell the word "ACTION," and scholars are encouraged to show and are rewarded for demonstrating these values:

Agency: Every member of our community takes ownership! We take responsibility for making sure that our schools and scholars are fulfilling the highest possible standards across the board.

Curiosity: Our schools are fueled by wonder. Our scholars are encouraged to ask about the world and use their newfound knowledge to ask more questions. Teachers explore new tactics to refine their craft and together with staff continuously ask, "What if?"

Try and Try: We don't expect success to come easily. Our entire community understands that tackling tough challenges takes elbow grease, grit, and perseverance.

Integrity: Our community is based on honesty and professionalism. We are open and transparent.

Others: We never forget to look out for and be aware of each other. From helping someone else on a project to simply smiling in the hallway, we build a community of mutual respect and support.

No Shortcuts: Learning takes time and effort.

Effort is deeply valued, and our teachers celebrate and reward scholars who work hard to achieve their goals. There is a crown to wear for the day, a badge to proudly display on their uniform, and a special "shout-out" during morning meeting and bi-weekly Community Circle. To build community across grades, we have a reading buddies program where scholars from older grades (usually fourth grade) spend time reading with younger scholars (usually second graders). Together they practice fluency and expression in reading. Through informal mentoring, our older scholars are able to practice leadership skills and build confidence.

At SA Harlem 4, ensuring that our teachers feel valued and supported is an integral part of our mission. The principal works hard to ensure all teachers have an opportunity to shine—teachers that excel in certain aspects of classroom management or in a particular content area are invited to lead a professional development session or teach a lab site class. The Success Academy staffing model and emphasis on professional development provides teachers with clear opportunities for career growth. Many of SA's principals began as teachers and progressed to greater leadership roles: Grade Team Leads, Lab Site Teachers, and Assistant Principals. At each level, SA provides in-depth training, feedback, and coaching.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

SA Harlem 4 believes that scholars achieve their greatest potential when parents are active partners in their child's education. Through frequent dialogue and consistent communication, our talented educators create strong relationships with parents to help them support their child in school and at home.

At the beginning of every school year, SA Harlem 4 holds a school-wide meeting with parents, emphasizing the importance of parent involvement and actively providing input to the school. Parents are encouraged to join the Parent Council and Parent Council Executive Committee. These groups ensure open lines of communication through scheduled check-ins with the school operations team, and frequent meetings to solicit feedback and keep parents informed. The principal warmly greets parents and scholars at the entrance, shaking hands with every scholar when they arrive every morning. Teachers also give parents updates on how their scholar is doing at dismissal.

Parents play an integral role in helping their kids fall in love with reading by making it a nightly routine to read as a family each night. SA schools also partner with parents to help children master math facts, practice spelling and vocabulary, and arrive at school on time, in uniform, and ready for a full day of learning. SA schools have an open-door policy encouraging parents to visit their children's classroom at any time. Parents are also given the cell phone number and email address of their children's teachers and principal, and our educators return all phone calls and emails within 24 hours.

Parents are invited to the many scholar events we host at our schools (approximately 24 events each year)—from performing arts showcases to basketball games to Drop Everything and Read nights. They are also invited to attend Community Circle, a bi-weekly school-wide event where scholars, staff, and family members come together as a group to celebrate scholar achievements and receive updates and school news.

Our school also has numerous supports and resources in place for parents who need them. For instance, if a parent is struggling to get his or her scholar to school on time, we offer automated wake-up calls and help plan morning transportation routes. We know that we could not be successful without strong parent involvement, and we work hard to ensure that our school community is inclusive, supportive, and close-knit.

The Success Academy network works closely with schools and educational agencies across NYC—including zoned public schools, the Archdiocese, and other charter schools—to raise awareness about parent choice. SA also partners with Families for Excellent Schools, New York City Charter School Center, and the Northeast Charter Schools Network on broader charter school initiatives.

3. Professional Development:

SA Harlem 4 is set apart by its investment in developing strong, capable teachers that are intellectually prepared to deliver purposeful, well-planned lessons, built around questions and scholar interaction. To enable scholars to achieve at high levels, SA Harlem 4 actively participates in the SA network's centralized and standardized professional development training. Every teacher and administrator at SA Harlem 4 receives the equivalent of up to 13 weeks of professional development every year. A multifaceted curriculum fully prepares teachers in both content and practice—not just classroom management, but all the many delivery and interaction skills that produce excellent learning.

For true development to occur, participants need an opportunity to practice what they learn. Once they have a vision of what excellence looks like, trainees need hands-on experience, in the same way an athlete or musician practices to get closer and closer to excellence. Getting up and doing what you just learned takes several forms—role-playing, teachbacks (a group of teachers taking turns teaching the same lesson to their peers, while receiving coaching and feedback in the moment), and lab sites (teachers practicing in a classroom with scholars while being coached by the principal).

Our standards for content mastery are also exceptionally high. If teachers do not have subject mastery, we cannot expect kids to excel. Even for kindergarten, we believe the concepts matter. We expect educators at every grade level to thoroughly understand the big idea in the lesson and throughout the unit; preparation for us is largely about study and the role of both the teacher and principal are key to this preparation. Training teachers on great writing instruction, for example, first involves having the teachers deconstruct high-level writing, going line by line and looking at what the author does well (for example: sets the tone, develops characters through dialogue, builds tension, uses detail). Teachers then practice using the techniques they've just learned. The work they produce serves as their model writing, which they deconstruct with their students the same way they did in their own training.

4. School Leadership:

To be effective and to achieve the best possible student outcomes, professional development at SA Harlem 4 starts with our school principal. He is responsible for the development of his faculty—practicing astute people management in the context of schooling, and implementing systems and routines to facilitate high levels of learning for every scholar. His role is to motivate and get the best performance from teachers,

while ensuring that they feel valued and supported. To that end, he leads weekly professional development for his staff on Wednesday afternoons (scholars are dismissed at 12:30pm) and is an on-the-ground coach in the classroom on a daily basis.

In addition to being the chief academic officer of the school, he must be a masterful teacher and exemplar of ACTION values; he is the key to ensuring that teachers learn how to manage school culture and parent engagement. The principal at SA Harlem 4 works hard to set a positive tone and create a unified classroom community, which is essential for high levels of learning to occur. Recognizing that he cannot manage the school on his own, it is his investment in his team that truly sets him apart. We divide many of the traditional roles of the principal among other staff members so the principal can focus on instructional decisions and systems. We have a team of other administrators including a Leadership Resident (Assistant Principal), Dean, and Business Operations Manager to help manage other aspects of the traditional principal role.

The Leadership Resident assists the principal in delivering professional development sessions for teachers and is a constant presence in the classroom, coaching teachers and providing real-time feedback on their pedagogy and classroom management skills. The Dean supports specifically on school and scholar culture, coordinating additional supports for families when needed. The Business Operations Manager is responsible for logistics of all school-wide events and managing the school's budget. Centralized teams at the Success Academy network office include Human Resources, Talent Recruitment, Data, Technology, and many more. All of these centralized services empower the principal and his team to focus on raising the bar of academic rigor every day.

Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Instructional management—the concerted focus on curriculum and learning that enables our teachers and leaders to make thoughtful and impactful decisions about instructional approaches for scholars at the individual, classroom, and school levels—is the engine that drives SA Harlem 4 to achieve exceptional teaching and learning. We set goals and clear benchmarks for our educators and scholars, and we manage against those goals, changing course depending on performance. For example, if a scholar or teacher is exceeding, we move the goal post; if a scholar or teacher is not meeting a benchmark, we give additional support and establish smaller, more immediate goals to ensure that the teacher and the class get on track. Because scholars—and teachers—must master so many different concepts, the process of managing instruction requires a high level of organization and executional capacity.

What makes principal and teacher development at SA Harlem 4 unique is the immediacy with which we implement key learnings—whether from formal weekly professional development or from impromptu, in-the-moment coaching—and see results. What educators learn one day is immediately put into practice in our classrooms the next day so that our students reap maximum benefits from the adult learning. As is true throughout our entire schooling model, professional development for teachers and principals is about the adults, but it is for the kids.

Using data and student work to improve teaching and leading is a critical part of our training philosophy. At the heart of teacher (and leader) preparation is closely studying scholar work to better understand our scholars' academic needs, and to determine what changes the teacher (and leader) can make to improve academic outcomes for all scholars. For instance, educators learn how to design and implement effective instructional management plans that can be flexible and tailored to a scholar's specific needs. Keeping a focus on analyzing scholar work at the center of our instructional practice ensures that we can be nimble in drawing out each child's unique strengths and developing his or her growth areas.

The ability to use data and student work to diagnose and address student academic needs or teacher practice is part art and part science and exists across all subjects. Through our professional development training, educators become highly skilled at creating real-time corrective action plans—arguably one of the most important skills in improving practice, and the most difficult to master. We focus on these skills holistically throughout our weekly professional development sessions to continuously improve student outcomes.