

U.S. Department of Education
2016 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [X] Title I [X] Charter [] Magnet [] Choice

Name of Principal Ms. Elizabeth Vandlik

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Success Academy Bronx 1

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 339 Morris Avenue 2nd Floor

(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Bronx State NY Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 10451-6122

County Bronx

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Twitter Handle https://twitter.com/SuccessChart Facebook Page https://www.facebook.com/SuccessAcademies Google+ _____

YouTube/URL _____ Blog http://www.successacademies.org/education-blog/ Other Social Media Link _____

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Dr. Eva Moskowitz E-mail eva.moskowitz@successacademies.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name NYC CSD 7 Tel. (718) 742-6500

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board President/Chairperson Mr. Sam Cole

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

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):
- 19 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 7 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 20 High schools
 - 1 K-12 schools
- 47 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	54	37	91
1	47	46	93
2	64	50	114
3	48	42	90
4	42	37	79
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	255	212	467

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 1 % Asian
 - 52 % Black or African American
 - 41 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 1 % White
 - 5 % 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: 2%

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	1
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	7
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	8
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	457
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.018
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	2

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 9 %
39 Total number ELL

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 89 %
Total number students who qualify: 410

8. Students receiving special education services: 11 %
48 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.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <u>0</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>7</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>5</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>34</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Mental Retardation | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |
| <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities | <u>0</u> 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	5
Classroom teachers	33
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	8
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 14:1
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%	97%	97%	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 Bronx 1 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 Bronx 1 (SA Bronx 1) 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.

Opened in 2010, SA Bronx 1 is located in New York City (NYC) Community School District (CSD) 7. SA Bronx 1 serves 467 scholars (students) in grades K-4. Eighty-nine percent of our scholars at SA Bronx 1 are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch; 99% are minorities; 11% have special needs; and 9% are English language learners. Scholars at SA Bronx 1—all admitted by random public lottery—have reversed the achievement gap and collectively ranked in the top 1% in math and the top 2% in literacy in the entire state on the 2015 New York State (NYS) tests. They outscored NYC students by 60 percentage points in math and 41 percentage points in English Language Arts (ELA). In both subjects, African American and Hispanic scholars at SA Bronx 1 significantly outperformed white and Asian scholars across NYC and NYS.

Scholars at SA Bronx 1 outscored their peers at PS 18 John Peter Zenger (the closest elementary school to SA Bronx 1) by 74 percentage points in math and 60 percentage points in ELA. SA Bronx 1 scholars outperformed their district (CSD 7) by an astounding 82 percentage points in math and 59 percentage points in ELA. In fact, fourth grade scholars at SA Bronx 1 ranked eleventh in math in the state (out of NYS's 2,353 tested schools). Further, 100% of our fourth graders passed the 2015 NYS Science exam, with 100% of test-takers earning an advanced level 4—the highest possible score.

To achieve at such high levels, we follow a student-centered approach that holds that scholars learn best by doing, and that the purpose of education is to teach children how to think. In our classrooms, scholars' voices take center stage because we believe that they should do the majority of the talking and thinking work. Scholars receive only 80 minutes of direct instruction each day—the rest of the school day is devoted to small group instruction and hands-on learning—which makes learning deep and lasting. Our approach stems from our belief that the goal of education is to provide kids with the critical and creative thinking skills they will need to become lifelong learners and to thrive in our 21st century society.

In every classroom, learning and personal development occur at an extraordinary level. Our objective is to awaken and inspire our scholars' energy and creativity. For our scholars to fall in love with learning, to actively listen and participate in their own education, they cannot be bored. Teachers differentiate learning, doubling up resources and support for struggling students and finding new challenges for those who are soaring. "Joyful rigor" is our mantra and it drives SA Bronx 1's high attendance rate (96% average daily attendance) and extraordinary academic achievements. To foster a love of reading, 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 30-60 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.

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. And beginning in kindergarten, the benefits of a college education are communicated every day. In fact, our classrooms are named using the year the scholars will graduate from college. Every classroom contains 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. To celebrate extraordinary effort, scholars are able to wear a cap and gown or college jersey for the day.

What is unique about SA Bronx 1 is that it functions as one ecosystem. This ensures that scholars transition smoothly during critical stages of their academic development. As scholars advance from grade to grade, our teachers and leaders 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 level 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 the remainder of the day is devoted to professional development for our educators.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Literacy

SA Bronx 1’s approach to teaching literacy stems from our belief that if a child loves reading and reads exceptionally well, she can learn anything! The five components of THINK Literacy—our curriculum developed by in-house experts at SA—introduce scholars to great literature and emphasize critical thinking and the thoughtful discussion of ideas.

Shared Text helps scholars interpret brief texts 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. To meet their 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.

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 a strong understanding of counting and basic computation in order to be successful in math, we pair our CGI approach with more concrete math facts (called No Hesitation Math). 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. This approach allows for differentiation of students according to their pace of learning.

Science

SA has a science program like none other in the country. Beginning in kindergarten, SA Bronx 1 scholars experience hands-on, inquiry-based science five days a week with a dedicated science teacher. Our science curriculum—aligned with the Next Generation Science Standards—was developed by in-house experts and provides thoughtfully designed and sequenced content, encouraging 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. The three main disciplines of science—life, physical, and earth—are incorporated into every grade. On any given day, a scholar could be dissecting an animal, collecting data on plant growth, learning about aerodynamics, or conducting scratch tests to identify minerals. Each year, scholars complete approximately 150 experiments.

Social Studies/History

SA Bronx 1 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, 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 PBL on birds, scholars began the unit by reading fiction and nonfiction books about different types of birds; they then learned about bird anatomy; then they progressed to writing their own stories about birds. The culminating project was a “Bird Museum,” where scholars showcased their stories and displayed the hummingbird, emu, and owl nests they constructed; and parents were invited to “tour.”

Supporting Scholars

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 his or her peers, that scholar 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.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

In addition to rigorous instruction in core academic subjects, SA Bronx 1 believes strongly in the development of the whole child and offers children a plethora of non-academic opportunities. Scholars participate in dance, art, music, basketball, soccer, track and field, and chess, to name just a few. 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. Further, our hope is that early exposure to these subjects and activities will ignite a passion in scholars that will lead to more focused study later on, increasing scholars' competitive advantage in college admissions.

Visual and Performing Arts

All scholars have art class at least once a week where they investigate drawing, painting, printmaking, and more! We also introduce contemporary and traditional art history concepts, which provide a richer understanding and appreciation of art as well as inspiration for our scholars. During weekly music class, scholars learn how to analyze, interpret, and evaluate music. They also learn to participate in music as a musician through singing, playing instruments, and performing rhythms. In our concert band, fourth grade scholars learn to play the saxophone, clarinet, flute, trombone, trumpet, and percussion.

Fitness

In weekly physical education class, scholars are exposed to many different types of exercise and physical activity, ranging from traditional team sports to step to yoga. Scholars discover which types of exercise they enjoy most and gain practical knowledge about how to lead a healthy lifestyle filled with frequent, fun physical activity. We believe children need activity breaks and recess, and 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.

All fourth grade scholars learn ballroom dance. Team sports are offered in grades 3 and 4: soccer in the fall, basketball in the winter, and track and field in the spring. Scholars practice for four hours during the week and compete in intra-Network games on Saturdays.

Field Studies

The field studies (field trips) program is a vital part of the SA Bronx 1 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 Bronx 1 scholars have already participated in 47 field studies, including visits to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Hayden Planetarium, the Museum of Mathematics, and the Bronx Zoo. Many parents joined for a recent field study to the local public library, with most getting library cards for all members of their family!

Chess

Beginning in kindergarten, all scholars receive weekly chess instruction for 50 minutes. Learning and playing chess sharpens scholars' analytical and competitive instincts. Chess allows scholars to think strategically while having fun. Chess is very popular at SA Bronx 1 and 19 second, third, and fourth grade scholars are members of the chess club. During the 2014-2015 school year, the SA Bronx 1 Chess Team came in first place in the Elementary School Reserve Section at the New York State Chess Competition! At the National Elementary Chess Championships held in Nashville, SA Bronx 1 placed sixth in the entire K-6 division.

Technology

At SA Bronx 1, we recognize the importance of providing our scholars with a 21st century-ready STEM education and work hard to build excitement around math and science. Beginning in kindergarten, scholars learn the fundamentals of engineering while 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 the increased use of technology in middle school.

Gamesday

Every Wednesday, our scholars begin their day playing games: Blokus in kindergarten, Monopoly in first and second grade, and Settlers of Catan in third and fourth grades. Gamesday is a joyful time, but it is also educational. It is a time for scholars to build social skills and become critical thinkers. As the children play, they learn: patience, creativity, and teamwork.

3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

Beyond the built-in differentiation of our curriculum at SA Bronx 1, we also provide scholars who are struggling with supports to ensure academic success. This includes tutoring before, during and after school, practice groups, additional homework, and special education services for those who need it.

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 him 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 extra support or for those who need a challenge. 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 Bronx 1 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 Bronx 1 have continued to excel academically on NYS's math and ELA exams since the 2012/2013 school year (marking the first year we had scholars in testing grades). To measure students' academic progress throughout the school year, SA Bronx 1 uses a variety of internal and external assessments. 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 that they continue to grow as readers throughout the year and providing additional reading support to scholars who 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 Bronx 1 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 Bronx 1 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.

SA Bronx 1 has a deep commitment to serving children with disabilities. About 11% of our scholars have special needs, and SA devotes considerable resources to serving them including hiring special education teachers and therapists, and offering Integrated Co-Teaching in second and third grade. The subgroups with a 10 percentage point or greater achievement gap on the 2015 NYS exams compared to all students include: special education students (SPED) and English language learners (ELL) in ELA, and SPED students in math. We are proud to report that 100% of our ELL students achieved proficiency on the math exam. Further, SPED and ELL scholars at SA Bronx 1 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.

Our parent communication strategy is robust—our teachers and administrators spend significant time calling and meeting with parents to let them know when their child is doing well, and when their child needs additional support. 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 Bronx 1 sends home weekly ACTION newsletters, updating families on recent and upcoming school activities as well.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Throughout SA Bronx 1, 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. Our teachers celebrate and reward scholars who demonstrate these values in variety of ways. 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. Time-ins (scholars spending time with the principal doing an activity of their choosing, such as blocks or reading), “Principal For a Day” (scholars spend a day with the principal, carrying a special clipboard and attending meetings), relay races, and effort celebrations (e.g., a cooking activity such as making pancakes or waffles or extra fitness time) are other ways we engage and motivate scholars. We also have a “Zero Days Off Club,” and scholars receive a special wristband for every month they have perfect attendance. When the entire school community is putting in its best effort, we celebrate with a whole-school dance party in the auditorium and special class cheers.

SA Bronx 1 and SA Bronx 1 Middle School (grades 5-6) are located in the same school building; therefore, there is ample opportunity to build community across the two schools. For example, the schools have joint independent reading blocks—elementary/middle school siblings in particular have greatly enjoyed the chance to connect over a favorite book! Reading is an important core value, and bringing different grade levels and schools together builds enjoyment and engagement around reading. The SA Bronx 1 elementary and middle schools also perform together in a concert band. More than 20 SA Bronx 1 fourth graders play in the 40-member band—the only concert band in the SA network!

Excellent teaching starts with our core values. Great teachers embody ETHOS by displaying high levels of Excellence, Teamwork, Humor, Ownership, and a profound commitment to our Scholars—understanding that while everything we do is about the adults, it is for the scholars. At SA Bronx 1, ensuring our teachers feel valued and supported is an integral part of 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. There is also focus on community building during staff meetings—teachers share their favorite scholar moments each week, whether it’s about a scholar who put forth her best effort or just sharing something cute their class did.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

SA Bronx 1 knows it cannot be successful in educating scholars unless parents are active partners in delivering that education. Parental involvement begins in April right after the admissions lottery. Each accepted child and his/her family attends at least four different school events as part of an extensive summer enrollment process. Additionally, at the beginning of every school year, we conduct a school-wide meeting with parents about parent involvement and actively providing input to our school. SA Bronx 1 prioritizes communication and feedback from parents, from its 24-hour policy for returning e-mails and phone calls, to its open door policy for parents to visit their children’s classrooms and speak with administrators and/or teachers.

Our school hosts approximately 24 parent events each year, including Meet Success Academy, Family Picnic, Halloween Parade, Math Bee, Spelling Bee, Multicultural Day, Black History Day, Ballroom Dance Performance, Slam the Exam Pep Rally, Family Appreciation Week Events, Teacher Appreciation Week Events, Art Show, Field Day, Success Stories, and Graduation. We also have grade specific meetings for parents. For instance, all fourth grade parents were recently invited to talk about their scholars’ upcoming transition to middle school. We have several events that are particularly well-attended by our parents, such as a Thanksgiving Potluck—many even bring their extended family! We also hold a school-wide community circle on Wednesday mornings, which many parents attend, cheering along with their scholar’s class or participating in school-wide effort celebrations. Parents also regularly accompany their scholar’s class on field studies.

Parents are also 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. To further reinforce education at home, parents are asked to complete reading logs with their children by reading a book with them at least six nights a week. For families with limited literacy or for whom English is not their first language, we provide audiobooks and offer suggestions of books in the family's native language that they can check out from the local public library.

SA partners with other organizations, such as Catholic Charities and the Marshall Chess Club, to provide non-academic and summer programming to our scholars. The Success Academy network works closely with schools and educational agencies across NYC and 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:

At SA Bronx 1, we believe that a great education for children depends on adults performing at their very best. As such, we dedicate unprecedented time and attention—up to 13 weeks per year for every educator—to the professional development of our teachers. We train on content and curriculum, planning and classroom management, analyzing student work and data—and how to bring all of these elements together in a complex system that drives student learning and mastery.

We believe that teachers must have a deep conceptual understanding of the curriculum so that they can confidently guide their scholars in their learning. Teachers must understand the trajectory of content strands in their grade, and then how content evolves and grows through the years. Understanding what is taught in the grades preceding and following their grade allows teachers to truly grasp how their teaching fits into the evolution of learning among our scholars. Therefore we dedicate significant professional development time to studying content.

In training sessions, our teachers identify main ideas and practice Read Alouds using classroom books. They identify multiple strategies to solve number stories and brainstorm approaches that guide scholars to discover their own mathematical solutions. They develop pre-reading questions, anticipate responses from the least to most sophisticated approaches, do “turn-and-talks” with a colleague to solidify their thinking, practice sparking debate among colleagues, and learn how to strategically infuse complex vocabulary into lessons to build their scholars' capacity to effectively communicate.

From time to time, weekly professional development sessions are conducted by SA Bronx 1 teachers or grade-team leads rather than the principal. This is a great opportunity for teachers to showcase their own best practices to peers while building their leadership skills and presence. Teachbacks (a group of teachers taking turns teaching the same lesson to their peers) also enable teachers to gather immediate and useful feedback from their peers. SA Bronx 1 has a true open door policy which enables substantial cross-class and even cross-grade collaboration among teachers as well.

4. School Leadership:

To be effective and to achieve the best possible student outcomes, professional development at SA Bronx 1 starts with our school principal. She is responsible for the development of her faculty—practicing astute people management in the context of schooling, and implementing systems and routines to facilitate high levels of learning for every single scholar. Her role is to motivate and get the best performance from teachers, while ensuring that they feel valued and supported. To that end, she leads weekly professional development for her 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, she must be a masterful teacher and exemplar of ACTION values; she is the key to ensuring that teachers learn how to manage school culture and parent engagement. The principal at SA Bronx 1 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 she cannot manage the school on his own, it is her investment in her team that truly sets her 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 her 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 Bronx 1 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 Bronx 1 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.