



Key Design Elements

Key Design Element: More time on Task

We provide extended time-on-task opportunities for our students with uninterrupted sessions for ELA and math. Our longer day, and extended calendar all contribute to more time on task for our students. Additionally, we will partner with our parents to support opportunities for learning at home in the evenings, on weekends and vacations.

How we accomplish this at RA:

- ACE Block
- Arts Integration Accommodations for students
- RTI Plans
- WBT to increase student engagement
- Mindful Moments to increase focus
- Brain Breaks
- 8 academic nights per year for families

Key Design Element: A Disposition for Learning –Habits of the mind / Character Strengths

A Habit of Mind means having a disposition toward behaving intelligently when confronted with problems, the answers to which are not immediately known: dichotomies, dilemmas, enigmas and uncertainties. Character strengths and virtues are an important part of the work of positive psychology. **Positive Psychology** is the scientific study of the strengths that enable individuals and communities to thrive. The field is founded on the belief that people want to lead meaningful and fulfilling lives, to cultivate what is best within themselves, and to enhance their experiences of love, work, and play. Employing Habits of Mind and Positive Psychology's character strengths and virtues together requires drawing forth certain patterns of intellectual behavior that produce powerful results. At RA we infuse this important work through all parts of the day using the Positivity Project.

How we accomplish this at RA:

- Explicitly teach the attributes each day through the Positivity Project Lessons
- Workshops through the Center For Youth
- Boys Club
- Mindfulness

- ARTS Awards highlight children who possess the character strengths and dispositions
- The Super Improver Walls reward improvements in these areas
- Highlighted on the Daily Announcements
- Infused into the curriculum
- H.U.G.S.

Key Design Element: A Focus on Literacy and Language – Speech and Language Support for All Learners

A Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP) is a critical member of our Primary Team who assesses, diagnoses and remediates children with speech, language, and cognitive maturational delays *outside* of the special education process. Renaissance Academy recognizes that young children develop at different maturational rates. We provide alternative modalities of expression and communication to support important language and comprehension milestones without undo classification. Our SLP models articulation, fluency, and other aspects of speech with which teachers will support language and communication development. A SLP will work collaboratively with classroom teachers through the planning, implementation, and reflection on lesson delivery. This provides scaffolded and focused support to address areas of delay.

Renaissance Academy Charter School of the Arts' focus on language acquisition and development will help students learn to communicate effectively with others and learn to solve problems and independently make decisions. Proper skills are necessary to communicate effectively. Improved communication through infused speech and language instruction will result in a better educational, social, and emotional experience for a child.

How we accomplish this at RA:

- 1 and ½ FTE Speech Language Pathologists on staff.
- 1 SLP exclusively works with Kindergarten and 1st grade by co-teaching in ELA
- The SLP teaches the language objective and grows students abilities to use strategies to increase their expressive and receptive language skills
- Students who would not classify for special education SLP support receive small group or individual speech services to remediate their areas of need
- Classes use visual schedules
- Anchor charts are used as silent teachers
- Schoolwide use of Accountable Talk
- Vocabulary lessons are explicitly taught in shared reading
- WBT uses gestures, mirroring and call and response.

Key Design Elements: A Focus on Numeracy and the Eight Mathematical Practices

Renaissance Academy focuses on numeracy and the eight mathematical practices with its students. The shift to working with students on how to “do math” is a focus of the CCSS and has been linked to increased student achievement. A spiraled, vertically articulated curriculum is provided which will include the following topics: number sense, mathematical practices, operations and algebraic thinking, numbers and operations in base

ten, number and operations with fractions, measurement and data and geometry. Formative benchmark and interim assessments are used to determine student achievement level with regard to the mathematical benchmarks throughout the year.

How we accomplish this at RA:

- Computer based interventions: iReady math
- Achievement First Curriculum in grades K-6
- Problem based math approach- Cognitively Guided Instruction
- Real world projects
- iReady scores that indicate trends
- Math coach
- Navigator Coaching Program to fine tune tier 1 instruction of the Achievement First Curriculum

Key Design Elements: Character Education

Creating a productive citizenry has always been a goal of public education. Most recently the need for more comprehensive character education programs in schools has become a priority. Thus, we have selected Character Education as one of the Key Design Elements of Renaissance Academy Charter School of the Arts educational program. Such programs allow students to learn about and develop positive personal attitudes, skills, and attributes.

RA uses the positivity project as our character education program. The entire school students a different character strength and virtue each week. These are incorporated into various parts of our day.

How we accomplish this at RA:

- ARTS Awards
- These are highlighted during the morning announcements
- Counselors use social stories with students that focus on character education attributes
- Positivity Project discusses 24 strengths which include the Dispositions for Learning / Habits of Mind

Key Design Elements: Arts Integration

In addition to complying with the New York State Learning Standards in the Arts (Music, Visual Arts, Dance, Theatre), the arts will be interwoven into other academic curriculum. Studies cited demonstrate conclusive evidence that Renaissance Academy's program is likely to lead to increased student learning and achievement with the school's anticipated student population. Teaching about and through the fine arts fosters positive emotional development by encouraging children to identify and analyze their feelings and develop a deeper understanding of themselves.

How we accomplish this at RA:

- Each students receive three different art forms during Arts Integration

- Yearly training for staff around AI
- 5 full time AI teachers
- 2 AI nights for families to learn alongside their students
- Common planning time 2X each week for the classroom teachers and the AI teacher
- Enrichment opportunities
- Field trips that show the integration between academics and arts
- Performance and informances at school and in the community

Key Design Element: Extensive Support for our Students and Their Families

Renaissance Academy believes partnering with parents and families will increase student achievement. We have built extensive support for our students and their families into our program design. RA has a school psychologist, social worker, director of safety and Wellness, a full-time school nurse, a coordinator special services, and a family services coordinator on staff. These staff members work in concert to address the needs that our students and our families may have. We have created Partnerships with Community agencies and other organizations that can provide support outside of the school day as well.

How we accomplish this at RA:

- Nurse, social worker, psychologist and Family Services Coordinator
- Mindful Moments help children with self regulations
- The RTI process helps families and children who are experiencing educational or behavioral difficulties
- RAFFA Meetings often have a community service or agency in attendance
- CFY partnership provides respite to our families and other services
- CFT partnership provides a de-escalation and prevention specialist who works with our children in need
- There is extensive behavior support for our teachers
- FoodLink Backpack program: families are given food for the weekends
- Home visits
- Provide transportation to parent education activities and meetings as needed
- Newsletters provides helpful hints for the parents
- Parent conferences
- RA employs a coordinator of special services who liaises with the sending districts
- 1 ½ speech language pathologists
- Communication apps
- The School Improvement Team has parent representation
- Active school website, Facebook page, Instagram and Twitter where information is shared with families