

Success Academy Chess Program

Vision Statement

The Success Academy Chess Program provides rigorous, engaging, and hands-on Chess instruction that gets kids to fall in love with thinking. Teachers, scholars, school leaders, and families come together to form a chess culture that is in constant pursuit of intellectual and creative excellence. Guided by teachers who are committed to consistent growth, both pedagogically as well as over the chessboard, our scholars learn to think critically, to control their impulses, to make better decisions, and to compete, in chess and in life, with confidence.

Elements of a Successful Chess Program

A world-class chess program involves many components – rigorous and engaging classroom instruction, after-school clubs, and local and national tournaments – and it requires deep investment by many constituencies, including Network leaders, school leaders, parents, chess teachers, and scholars. Each constituency has a role to play in achieving a high-quality program.

Leader Investment:

As the leaders of their school communities, Senior Leaders are responsible for high-quality chess instruction at their schools. School leaders must develop their chess teachers as they do any other teacher on staff, focusing on classroom management, progressive pedagogy, and press.

School leadership must be familiar with the Chess curriculum and understand the significance of their Chess assessment data. The Senior Leader and/or direct manager of the Chess teacher should regularly assess teacher performance and provide feedback.

Leaders foster the chess culture in their buildings. Leaders drive consistent chess instruction at least once a week over the course of the entire school year. They understand that consistent opportunities to practice and receive instruction are keys to developing understanding and mastery, and set up their schedules accordingly. Leaders attend tournaments and celebrate the successes of the chess team through community circles, cheer tunnels for kids leaving for nationals, weekly staff announcements, and more.

Parent Investment:

Parents play a huge role in ensuring the SA Chess Program is a success and that scholars are learning, competing, and achieving at the highest levels.

When parents are engaged...

- Scholars complete all assigned tactics work.
- Scholars will arrive at competitions on time and in uniform
- Parents know the chess tournament schedule, how the ratings work, and their child's rating
- Parents volunteer to support in team rooms or as chaperones for travel tournaments.
- Parents understand that we are driving scholars to become critical thinkers and excellent decision makers.
- There is an open line of communication and a trusted relationship between the parent and the chess teacher.

Success Academy Education Incubator

at the **Robertson Center**

Teaching and Learning:

Kids should be excited to come to chess class, lining up for chess club, and filling the chess room at every available moment. To achieve this, our chess teachers will work to make chess class magical and rigorous, as well as provide other opportunities for kids to learn and excel at the game.

For in-class instruction, chess teachers will constantly strive to achieve high levels of active learning and be intellectually prepared for classes, having studied the curriculum materials and achieved a deep understanding of the content. Chess teachers will lead classes in a progressive way so that scholars are constantly learning by doing. Every Chess session must include a “targeted teaching time,” when scholars apply the teaching point or explore a Chess idea during a hands-on Chess activity. Teachers are aware of the student data and use it to make instructional decisions so that assessment data demonstrates scholar growth. Informal assessments are constantly being made, and Systems of Daily Mastery are evident in the classroom. Chess teachers will constantly press scholars, putting the onus of the heavy thinking work on scholars so they can develop in their chess ability and achieve mastery over the content.

Chess teachers will put parent engagement front and center and own communication with families around the Saturday schedule, travel tournaments, and work requirements of Chess club scholars. Parents will receive a monthly e-newsletter from coaches that will include information on upcoming tournament dates, along with statistics on how their child’s club is performing at tournaments and how its Chess Kid effort compares to other SA Chess clubs.

At Saturday tournaments, the teacher should run a well-organized and disciplined team room, providing targeted teaching time through Chess analysis while simultaneously managing the behavior of the room. Chess analysis can happen in small groups or with the entire room. Teachers should use the mistakes made in the game to delve into a scholar’s understanding of Chess and their competitive psyche in order to press the scholar closer to mastery.