



RISING STAR ACADEMY

SCHOOL PROFILE

2026 – 2027

4613 Cottage Place
Union City, New Jersey 07087
Main Office: (201) 758-5590 | Fax: (201) 865-6848
CEEB Code: 311521
www.rsanj.org | info@rsanj.org

ADMINISTRATION

Role	Name	Email	Extension
Principal	Dr. Hala Shehadeh	hshehadeh@rsanj.org	Ext. 301
Vice Principal	Fatimah Musabeh	fmusabeh@rsanj.org	Ext. 302
Admin Assistant	Sakha Mechtemel	smechtemel@rsanj.org	Ext. 300

SCHOOL

Rising Star Academy has been in operation since 2009. It is conveniently located in the New York Metropolitan Area of Union City, in Hudson County, approximately seven miles northwest of New York City. Rising Star Academy is a non-public, non-profit, educational institution recognized by the New Jersey Department of Education and is a registered member of the College Board. In line with its philosophy of constantly pursuing academic excellence, Rising Star Academy is accredited by the Middle States Association of Elementary and Secondary Schools (MSA) and the Council of Islamic Schools of North America (CISNA). The student body for the 2026–2027 school year is currently **250** students ranging from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade. The high school student body consists of 85 students, with an average high school classroom size of 13 students. The elementary and middle school levels also benefit from similarly small classroom sizes.

Rising Star Academy is a college preparatory school that strives to give students the knowledge and skills they will need to succeed in college and move on to the careers of their choice. Rising Star Academy aims to have a 100% college attendance rate post-graduation, with RSA seniors applying to colleges ranging from state colleges to top-tier universities.

The student population at Rising Star Academy is diverse and includes students from a variety of cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. The current student body consists of approximately: 12. 5% Asian American, 7. 5% African American, 80% White. The vast majority of the students are bilingual, and some are trilingual. Over nine different ethnicities make up the student body. Diversity is an asset to the Academy as it allows students to experience a wide spectrum of cultural traditions and heritage.

For the 2026–2027 academic year, the operating budget is approximately 1.35 million dollars for the entire school, of which slightly less than 2% comes from state and federal funding and approximately 10% from donations. . The school is governed by a Board of Directors which consists of professionals from various fields.

Rising Star Academy Mission Statement

Rising Star Academy strives to develop an enriched learning community by providing an inclusive and secure environment. We aim to promote student well-being in order to build and maintain a generation of leaders through faith, academic excellence, leadership, and Islamic values.

FACULTY

The high school students are instructed by sixteen full-time teachers, allowing for the benefits and advantages of a low student-to-teacher ratio. In addition to all faculty members holding their bachelor's degree and certifications, five instructors have their Master's degree, and two hold a PhD. All of the foreign language teachers are native speakers of the language they teach. The high school faculty has a median of fifteen years of teaching experience, and some have additional years of experience working in other industries and institutions.

GRADING SYSTEM

Grading and calculation of the Cumulative Grade Point Average are based on the following:

Letter Grade	Numeric Average	Standard	Honors	AP/DC
A+	97-100	4.00	4.50	5.00
A	94-96	3.75	4.25	4.75
A-	90-93	3.50	4.00	4.50
B+	87-89	3.25	3.75	4.25
B	84-86	3.00	3.50	4.00
B-	81-83	2.75	3.25	3.75
C+	79-80	2.50	3.00	3.50
C	75-78	2.25	2.75	3.25
C-	70-74	2.00	2.50	3.00
D	60-69	1.00	1.50	2.00
F	0-60	0.00	0.00	0.00

❖ *School policy and small enrollment preclude the reporting of class rank.*

Graduation Requirements

- English – 4 years
- Mathematics – 4 years
- Science with Lab – 4 years
- History – 3 years
- Foreign Language (Arabic) – 4 years
- Computer Studies – 2 years
- Islamic Studies – 2 years
- Islamic History and Law – 2 years
- Physical Education – 4 years
- Fine Arts – 1 year
- Electives – 4 years

CURRICULUM

The greater number of Rising Star Academy's courses are one year long and are worth 5 credits. Enrichment courses are designated specific credits based on the number of hours a class meets per week. Physical education is a yearlong course worth 3.75 credits. AP courses, Honors courses, and Dual Credit/College Credit courses are worth more credits and are designated with AP, H, and CC on the final transcript. All core curriculum courses are college preparatory. Honors and AP courses are based on the level of the textbook, a higher level of critical thinking, and a more challenging homework and exam pace. Dual Credit/College Credit courses are facilitated through Hudson County Community College (LEAP Program) and New Jersey Institute of Technology (Options for Advanced Academic Programs, OA3).

Rising Star Academy has a rigorous college preparatory program with a wide selection of Honors and AP classes, as well as many dual credit courses to choose from. The school operates on a modified block schedule with 40-minute class periods.

Honors Courses

Physics	Biology
Chemistry	Anatomy and Physiology
Environmental Science	Literature I
Literature II	British Literature
American Literature	World History
American History I and II	Algebra I and II
Geometry	Pre-Calculus
Calculus	

AP Courses

US History	Human Geography
Physics A	Literature and Composition
Literature and Language	Chemistry
Biology	Environmental Science
Calculus	Psychology
AP Seminar	AP Research

AP Capstone Diploma™

Rising Star Academy offers the College Board's AP Capstone Diploma program, an independent research- and inquiry-based curriculum built around two foundational courses:

- AP Seminar – develops research, collaboration, and evidence-based argumentation skills
- AP Research – an independent, year-long scholarly research project culminating in a 4,000–5,000 word academic paper and presentation

To earn the AP Capstone Diploma, students complete AP Seminar and AP Research, plus four additional AP courses of their choosing, and receive a score of 3 or higher on all six AP exams. Students who complete AP Seminar and AP Research with scores of 3 or higher, but do not meet the four-additional-course requirement, earn the AP Seminar and Research Certificate.

DUAL ENROLLMENT WITH HCCC

Rising Star Academy partners with Hudson County Community College (HCCC) to offer qualified sophomores, juniors and seniors the opportunity to earn college credit alongside their RSA diploma requirements. Through this partnership, students can work toward an Associate Degree from HCCC while still enrolled at RSA, giving them a head start on college and, in many cases, the ability to graduate high school with a significant portion of an Associate Degree already completed.

Associate Degree Tracks

Students may pursue dual enrollment coursework toward an Associate Degree in any of the following tracks:

Track	Overview
Liberal Arts	A broad-based track spanning humanities, social sciences, and communication — ideal preparation for four-year transfer into a wide range of bachelor's degree programs.
Mathematics and Science	A STEM-focused track building a foundation in mathematics and the natural sciences for students pursuing engineering, pre-med, or science-based majors.
Criminal Justice	An introduction to the criminal justice system, law enforcement, and corrections, preparing students for careers or further study in criminal justice and public safety.
Business	A foundation in business principles, accounting, and management, preparing students for four-year business programs or entry-level business careers.
Cybersecurity	A technology track introducing network security, information systems, and digital defense fundamentals for students interested in computing and cybersecurity careers.

Dual Credit Courses Offered

In addition to the Associate Degree tracks above, RSA offers the following individual dual credit/college credit courses through HCCC (LEAP Program) and NJIT (OA3):

Physics I	Pre-Calculus
Calculus	Chemistry I
Speech	Computers
Sociology	Psychology
English Composition I	English Composition II
Human Biology	College Algebra

GRADUATION REQUIREMENT

The Academy adheres to the implementation of the Common Core State Standards (corestandards.org) through the use of state-approved textbooks and a qualified professional staff. In addition, numerous Arabic and Islamic Studies courses must be completed prior to graduation. All state testing standards for graduation purposes must be met or surpassed to obtain an RSA diploma.

STUDENT FACTS

The average SAT score for the 2026–2027 senior class is [UPDATE: avg. SAT score] (Reading mean: [UPDATE], Mathematics mean: [UPDATE], Writing mean: [UPDATE]). [UPDATE: # students] received the AP Capstone Diploma, and [UPDATE: # students] received the AP Seminar and Research Certificate. For students who participated in the ACT exam, the mean composite score is [UPDATE: ACT mean]. Our AP scores percentage of students who received a 3 or above is [UPDATE: % 3-or-above]. [UPDATE: # students] received the AP Scholars Award.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Rising Star Academy requires all high school students to actively engage and serve their community during all four years of high school. Students must complete 200 hours of community service by the end of their senior year (100 hours to be volunteered in RSA mostly in senior year). All community service hours must be documented, signed by a local supervisor, and approved by the school's guidance counselor.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Science Olympiad	Student Government
Debate	Model United Nations
Rising Times Newspaper	Honor Society
Yearbook	Boys Basketball
Girls Basketball	Girls Volleyball

RSA GRADUATES – COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES ACCEPTANCES

- Brown University
- Barnard College
- Cornell University
- Rutgers University (Honors Program / Newark / New Brunswick)
- NJIT (7-Year Medical Program / Honors Program / Full Scholarship)
- Montclair State University (6-Year Pharmacy Program)
- Seton Hall University (Full Scholarship)
- Fairleigh Dickinson University
- Queens College (CUNY)
- Kean University
- City College of New York
- William Paterson University
- College of Staten Island
- St. Peter's University (Full Scholarship)
- New York University
- St. John's University
- New Jersey City University
- Felician University
- Fordham University (Full Scholarship)
- Georgian Court University
- Penn State University
- Brooklyn College (CUNY; Presidential Scholarship)
- St. Joseph's College (Full Scholarship)
- Hunter College (CUNY)
- Long Island University
- Stony Brook University
- Binghamton University (SUNY)