



Synergy Studio

RCA Synergy Studio (5–8) — Curriculum Description

We Are RCA — More Than a School. Preparation for Life.

**Cross-grade coaching and collaboration • Traditional strengths + future-ready skills •
Guiding learners at their own pace, together**

Our Classroom

RCA Synergy Studio is a **small, diverse class community**—typically **1–3 learners per grade** in **5th–6th**, learning in the same room with a small cohort of **7th–8th graders**. The classroom reflects the **eclectic, multicultural spirit of RCA**, with multiple backgrounds and nationalities represented. Every learner is known by name, need, and potential.

Our Learning Model (Hybrid & Personalized)

We intentionally combine time-tested instruction (block schedule and workbooks) with future-ready tools to honor how different learners learn best.

- **Traditional classroom teaching** for core skills and shared discussion (*traditional strengths*)
- **Independent, self-paced work** (A.C.E. workbooks and online modules) (*future-ready skills*)
- **Small groups** for targeted practice, collaboration, and seminar-style learning
- **1:1 pull-outs** for individualized teaching or tutoring (reteach, acceleration, or enrichment)
- **Peer tutoring & mentoring** (*cross-grade coaching and collaboration*): older learners study content outside class, then teach mini-lessons to younger peers—building leadership, responsibility, and deep mastery for both
- **Online learning** extends course options, enables mastery pacing, and develops digital literacy
- **Learning Checks** at the end of lessons provide quick feedback to guide next steps

Why Mixed-Grade?

- **Modeling & maturation:** Younger learners benefit from daily proximity to older role models.
- **Mastery through teaching:** Older learners cement understanding by explaining concepts to peers.
- **Community:** A cross-grade studio builds empathy, leadership, collaboration, and confidence.

Foundational Pillar: Writing by Hand

We prioritize **written work** because handwriting remains essential—even in a digital world.

- **Cognitive development & brain activation:** Writing by hand engages memory and language regions, creating more mental “hooks” for learning and retention.
- **Memory & retention:** The see–hear–feel cycle of handwriting strengthens recall and understanding.
- **Idea generation:** Learners often produce **more ideas** and **richer language** when writing by hand.
- **Fine-motor skills:** Pen-and-paper practice builds dexterity and coordination vital beyond academics.
- **Literacy connection:** Writing and reading reinforce each other; handwriting boosts letter recognition, reading fluency, and comprehension.
- **Well-being:** Journaling supports reflection, emotional regulation, and a healthy **digital balance**.
- **Thinking for the future:** Handwriting strengthens analysis, organization, and logical reasoning—skills that transfer to advanced study and life.

Learners keep journals, planners, and content notebooks; **we do a lot of written work** by design.

Core Academic Program

English Language Arts (ELA)

- **Curriculum: A.C.E. English** (since 1979) moves step-by-step through grammar, usage, and composition with continual review and mastery checks.
- **Word Study: A.C.E. Word Building** replaces conventional spelling and builds vocabulary via stems, prefixes/suffixes, and Greek/Latin roots.
- **Practice & Play: Scrabble, Bananagrams, Boggle, Pictionary** to reinforce spelling, vocabulary, and descriptive language.
- **Writing:** Daily journaling, reading responses, and short reports.
- **Structure:** Mini-lesson → guided practice → independent work & small-group conferencing → **Learning Check**.

Mathematics

- **Curriculum: A.C.E. Math** progresses logically from the known to the unknown with regular testing and evaluation to support **true mastery**.
- **Application & Games: Monopoly, Yahtzee, UNO** develop money skills, calculation, probability, and strategic thinking.
- **Support:** Small-group reteach/extend; manipulatives and visual models; **Learning Checks** to confirm readiness.

Science

- **Platform: Acellus** (online) for video-based core instruction.
- **Hands-On:** Group and individual labs/projects to apply concepts.
- **Optional Enrichment: Mystery Science** (fee) and **Outschool** live small-group or 1:1 tutoring (fee).
- **Skill Focus:** Inquiry, data collection, evidence-based explanations, and practical problem-solving.

Social Studies

- **Platform: Acellus** (online) with collaborative projects, discussions, and guided research.

- **Reflective Writing: Personal History Journaling** (upper grades) connects content to lived experience and civic perspective.

Spanish (World Language)

- **Why Spanish:** At this stage, learners are moving from concrete to more abstract thinking; a new language strengthens cognition and empathy. **By 2050, the U.S. is projected to be the largest Spanish-speaking nation**, and it already has the **second-largest** Spanish-speaking population globally—expanding cultural exchange and opportunity.
- **Structure:** **Acellus** core course, with **Outschool** (optional, fee) for live practice.
- **Skills:** Listening, speaking, reading, and writing in real-world contexts; culture, menus, signs, maps; short practical writing and recordings.

Bible / Character Formation

- **Morning Manna (Bible Curriculum)**
Morning Manna is a brief, student-led classroom devotion. On days when morning exercises start late or are canceled, it takes their place in the classroom. A student's name is drawn at random; that student selects an index card with a Scripture passage, reads it aloud, and offers an initial explanation or application. The teacher then guides a short discussion, adding clarity as needed and connecting the passage to everyday life.
- **Group lessons** with an **individual Bible journal** to deepen understanding and application.
- Emphasis on perseverance, humility, service, gratitude, leadership, and wise decision-making.

Physical Education (Gym)

- Develops physical literacy, coordination, fitness, and teamwork; boosts focus, memory, and confidence; supports mental and emotional health; and builds sportsmanship and social skills.

Art

- Builds problem-solving, creativity, and critical thinking while developing fine-motor control, cultural awareness, collaboration, and self-expression. Projects may include drawing, painting, collage, sculpture, and (as available) digital creation.

Music

- **Why it matters:** Music strengthens **memory, focus, mathematical reasoning**, creativity, self-expression, discipline, empathy, and teamwork; it supports motor development and can enhance language and literacy.
- **What we do:** **Semester music projects, jam sessions, and music history/music theory concerts** that connect to classroom themes and community events.

Technology & Platforms (Traditional + Future-Ready)

- **Acellus Gold Platform (Acellus Academy):** Accredited online K–12 system with **HD video lessons**, interactive practice, and **Vectored Instruction®** to identify and close learning gaps in real time; **self-paced** progress; comprehensive catalog including **core, electives, AP, and CTE**.
- **A.C.E. Workbooks:** Paper-based mastery for English, Math, and Word Building.
- **Outschool (optional, fee):** Live small-group classes and 1:1 tutoring to spark curiosity and build real-world skills.
- **Digital & Technical Skills:** Platform use, video-conferencing etiquette, password management, checking email, safe research, file organization, and time management—**independence and self-motivation** by design.

Field Experiences — Momentum Mondays

We Are RCA puts learning in motion. **Mondays** are dedicated to **Momentum Mondays**—field experiences that connect classroom learning to the real world: museum labs, makerspaces, libraries, nature centers, farms, college visits, service learning, and community partners. Pre-learning and reflective follow-ups ensure every trip builds knowledge, skills, and purpose.

Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS): This is the **official, comprehensive modern term** (formerly *home economics*). FCS experiences include **nutrition and culinary labs, personal**

finance and budgeting, child development simulations, and practical living skills—life-readiness learning aligned with RCA’s mission.

Supports, Monitoring, & Communication

- **Individualized pacing** so learners start at their level and advance with mastery
- **Frequent checks for understanding:** quizzes, notebook reviews, and **Learning Checks**
- **Scheduled 1:1 and small-group interventions** each week
- **Progress updates** to parents/guardians; conferences by request
- **Partnership mindset:** clear expectations, timely feedback, and open communication

Peer Leadership

We cultivate leadership through rotating roles—**Learning Facilitator, Station Lead, Lab Lead, Tech Lead**—so every learner practices collaboration, voice, responsibility, and service.

Grading & Mastery

- **Mastery mindset:** Learners can revise key assignments to demonstrate growth.
- **Balanced evidence:** Classwork, projects, quizzes/tests, participation, and **Learning Checks**.

Schedule clarifications

- **Lesson block** = the main 45-minute class period.
- **Social Studies** = online core + one weekly small-group discussion.
- **Science** = online core + once-weekly inquiry lab in small groups.
- **Peer teaching** can run **concurrently** with other work (teacher designates quiet/collab times).
- **Power Pause** = the 5-minute stretch/reset between blocks

How the Blocks Work

- **Blocks 1–4 = 45-minute lessons** with a **Power Pause (transition/brain reset)** before each.
- **English block includes: Daily Journal Writing** (first 15 minutes) + **Cursive workbooks and Word Building workbooks** as part of instruction.
 - **Daily Journal Writing** may also be completed **during other blocks** if a learner finishes early.
- **Page Pause / Reading Retreat:** two daily quiet reading times
- **Last Block:** specials/experiences by day (Mon Field Expedition **or** FCS; Tue/Thu Gym; Wed Music; Fri Art).
- **Study-Space (Focus Zone):** Silent, focused work when learners finish early or during designated quiet blocks.
- **Peer-to-Peer Teaching:** May overlap any block at teacher discretion (zoned for quiet/collab).

Conclusion for Families

In our class (**RCA Synergy Studio**) every learner is seen, supported, and stretched. Our dedicated **RCA staff teach, mentor, supervise, and guide learners daily—on campus and beyond—so each student is prepared to thrive.**

We champion traditional strengths—especially the power of handwriting and paper-based mastery—while embracing future-ready online tools and authentic field expeditions.

Through cross-grade coaching and collaboration, **learners grow as readers, writers, problem-solvers, creators, teammates, and servant-leaders—academically, socially, and spiritually. We Are RCA!**