

Maritime Academy Charter School: A Rigorous Academic Program with a Maritime Studies Theme



Sea Cadets at Inspection

The Maritime Academy Charter School (MACS) is a successful public charter school currently operating at two locations in Philadelphia: 2275 Bridge Street in the Tacony Section and 2700 Huntingdon Street in the Port Richmond Section. Founded in 2002, MACS has since expanded from its original 500 students to its current 975 students in grades 1 through 12. MACS has a proven, successful track record over the past 18 years and was identified by US News and World Reports in 2012 and 2013 as one of the nation's best schools.

The Program:

Maritime Academy Charter School prides itself on its rigorous academic program with a maritime studies theme. The students are cadets and they are treated as such. Cadets learn through hands-on projects, interdisciplinary classroom lessons, and computer supported curricula in an atmosphere where

every member of the school, its community, and parents are focused on supporting learning. Students work with the latest technology to learn maritime content such as nautical science and maritime business while achieving to high standards in English, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and the Arts. The coursework is interdisciplinary, with classroom and individual learning. Students are also taught self-discipline, patriotism, and physical training, with an emphasis on academic excellence, high self-esteem, and personal achievement.

Four basic principles ensure a positive learning environment at the Maritime Academy Charter School.

- Shared responsibility and accountability
- Leadership and character development
- Encouragement and accommodate of diversity
- Integrated learning opportunities for cadets

MACS takes advantage of the many resources in the city of Philadelphia to expose cadets to opportunities offered by the Philadelphia waterways for careers, leisure and study. Field trips to the shipyard to watch a boat being built or to Penn Terminal to learn about its influence on the maritime industry are frequent.



Innovation Spotlight: Maritime Academy Charter School

In addition, Maritime Academy Charter School's specialized maritime education offers students opportunities to:

- Build their own wooden boat from scratch and help teach hands-on math skills.
- Work in teams to plot a vessel's course using the oldest method of navigation --- dead reckoning. Students learn basic skills for marine navigation, including reading a compass, estimating vessel position and movement using mathematical equations and geometry, and reading a chart's latitude and longitude.
- Work in teams to plot a vessel's course and evaluate and incorporate weather and oceanographic patterns into their course and pilot a course from the Delaware Bay aboard the tall ship Gazella.
- Learn to sail at the Corinthian and Cooper River Yacht Clubs. Unique boating safety courses give Maritime Academy cadets hands-on sailing experience on the water.
- Get a taste of maritime history at Independence Seaport Museum and explore historical concepts such as freedom through the lens of the African experience along the Delaware River.
- Figure out the letters of their names with signal flag symbols, create their own flags and recognize international marine signal flags.
- Learn about rope used for boating safety and use applied mathematics to learn various knots, try tying them, and choose which are appropriate to use for different applications.



The Sea Cadets of the Dante Mattioni Division had an excellent year! They began the year with an overnight drill weekend aboard the Battleship NJ.



The Results:

MACS provides a nurturing environment which develops a strong sense of community, self-confidence and the recognition and appreciation of cultural differences throughout the school. MACS strives to achieve academic progress and achievement with each child through an appreciation of our nation's maritime history and heritage. This mission is accomplished through access to the global transportation industry as it relates to the Ports of the Delaware River and Bay. Maritime Academy Charter School enjoys the widespread support of its students, parents and families, along with the broad and diverse Philadelphia seaport industries.

Thank you to Eugene Mattioni, CEO, and the staff of Maritime Academy Charter School for sharing their story. If you would like to submit a suggestion for a future Innovation Spotlight, please contact Brandie Karpew at b.karpew@pacharters.org.