

# SMArticles

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Science and Mathematics Academy

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## SRT: What Exactly Are You?

By: Senior Nishad

The Science and Mathematics Academy (SMA) is home to the only Science, Research, and Technology (SRT) classes in the world. But what exactly is the significance of this? For the uninitiated, the fancy name can seem like shadows and mirrors designed to conceal a program with little true merit. Yet if one asks the SMA veterans and graduates, an emphatic and consistent answer can be found. For each decidedly unique individual, differing in career goals and dreaming of disparate destinies, SRT is the most useful class he or she has taken.

If education is a marathon, and the SMA is the hapless body tasked with producing winners within society, then the exceptional SRT program is the feet that drive the unceasing battle towards success. As such, expect pain, constant shocks, and general misery. Yet when it comes to running, it must be admitted: feet, while not absolutely necessary (Oscar Pistorius, anyone?), can come in pretty handy. In a world defined and driven by innovation, SRT is designed and carefully crafted to specifically prepare students to lead innovation.

The first part of the SMA moniker, "Science", is also the first part of SRT, and with good reason. Many of the most stable, fastest-growing, and highest-paying jobs in the world can be found in fields that operate under the overarching umbrella of science. Similarly, modern careers are permeated with aspects of research, from the military to the private sector, from biomedical to economic research. Furthermore, technology is indispensable at every desirable standard of society. SRT drastically improves abilities in all of the above.

## NMSI Information:

By: Junior Natalie and Abbey

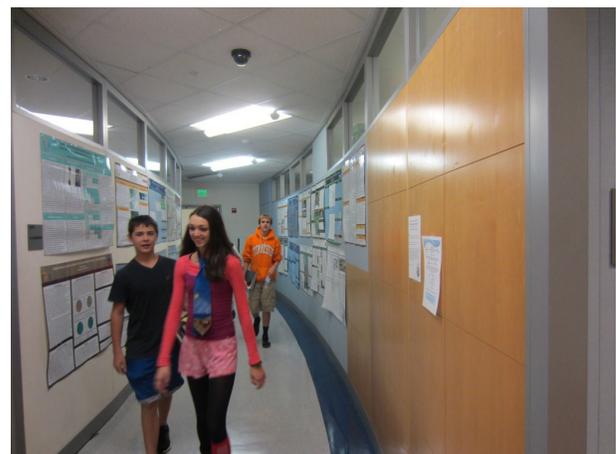
This year, Aberdeen High School has been given the NMSI grant. NMSI stand for the National Mathematics and Science Initiative, which focuses on the success of students taking AP science and mathematics classes. If a student chooses to take a mathematics or science AP class, he or she is expected to participate in the NMSI program, which includes attending several seminars that take place throughout the year and taking the AP test at the completion of the course. The seminars are designed to provide students with skills and strategies that they can use when taking the AP test and better prepare for college coursework. The grant covers half of the cost of each AP test for every student. In addition, a student will receive a financial for every passing score on the AP test, which is a 3, 4, or 5. NMSI has many benefits for the students and their teachers, focusing on the importance of education. For more information, visit the NMSI website at <http://www.nationalmathandscience.org/>.

As freshmen and sophomores, the earthquake tower, Excel, VB, VBA, and Boe-Bots provide headaches and heartaches and practical experience with the ever-expanding engineering field, coupled with a deep respect and relationship for the omnipresent help file. In SRT III, students cycle between Ms. McDonough, emphasizing science and research, Ms. Gabriel, emphasizing environmental awareness, and Mr. Evans and Mr. Leff, emphasizing technological advance and innovation. In SRT IV, students enter the professional world.

SMA is denoted as a magnet program because it irresistibly attracts the best of the best. SRT takes the diamonds in the rough, as it were, and polishes them to academic luminescence highlighted by the annual Senior Capstone Gallery Walk. To witness the effects of SRT and the SMA as a whole, look no further than the who's who list in attendance. What is demonstrated is the culmination of four rigorous, challenging years, underscored by SRT. What exactly is SRT? The answer is both simple and profound: SRT is the builder of the future.



Science and Mathematics Academy Main Hallway



Students walking down the SMA hallway

## Finding Balance

By: Senior Maggie

Life is a constant balancing act. Whether you are dealing with sports, clubs, or school, it is easy to get overwhelmed. The Science and Mathematics Academy does have a rigorous curriculum, but every student can still find the time to get involved! It is all about finding a balance and being able to accept that not everything can be your number one priority all the time. Certain things take precedence, and although it is hard to admit that, realizing what does will allow you to make better use of your time. It is better to be involved in three things you really care about than ten things you just attend the meeting for. By making lists, acting proactively, and being passionate, students can get involved without feeling like they are spreading themselves too thin.

Remember that book they gave you on the first day? It was spiral bound and said "Aberdeen High School Planner." It can do a lot more than just excuse you to the bathroom. It opens doors when it comes to organization. Writing your to-do list in your planner helps for two reasons. First, it ensures that you won't forget anything in your quest to remember everything. Second, it really helps with stress. Everything is over-exaggerated in your head. It is never as bad on paper. Writing down what you need to do, in order of importance, will help organize your priorities and allow you to balance everything that is important to you.

Next, like my English teacher says, "be proactive, not reactive." Waiting till the due date to do your homework, or to talk to a teacher about a project is just going to cause unnecessary stress. In school, plan to get help before you take a test or write an essay, and in organizations, delegate a job if you know you won't be able to do it. It is okay to be unable to

## Wise Words From Alumni

By: Senior Dominique

The class of 2013 is the Science and Mathematics Academy's 6th graduating class. The SMA has evolved greatly in curriculum over time, but has not altered its tradition of producing capable students and future thinkers. Here are some quotes from SMA Alumni about how the SMA has helped them.

### Lauren Betz- Class of 2012- Attending Boston University as a Behavioral Biology Major

"SMA really prepared me for college science classes. I feel way ahead of the curve when it comes to knowing about proper lab protocol and concepts. Also, I've found time management to be very easy for me after my workload in high school. Obviously, college is challenging, but it's less daunting since I've learned what to expect in a more professional environment."

### Prettany Overman- Class of 2011- Attending Hood College as a German Major

"To be honest, if it weren't for the SMA, I'm not so sure I would have done so well in college. Sure going through the program wasn't easy, but it was completely worthwhile. I made amazing friends, and had phenomenal teachers. SMA helped me to find confidence in myself, and taught me that I

do everything yourself, but it is important to ask for help when you need it and do so in a timely manner.

Finally, no matter what you are trying to balance, be passionate about the topic. If you are not passionate about something, than find what you are passionate about! If you are having a hard time planning, why throw in something that is not really important to you? Balancing can be a lot easier if everything you do is what you love. A lot of times students over-join and then take time away from the organizations they are passionate about. Additionally, while we assume colleges want us to have a multitude of club positions and academic titles, doing a few things really well can take you a lot further than a list of empty labels. Avoiding over-joining will save you from the stress and guilt of not being committed and provide you with a lot of time to spend doing what you love.

By being organized, proactive and passionate, you can really forget the stress of what you have to do, and work on what you love to do. Whether it is band, Leo club, or AP German, you can make it work! You just need to give yourself a chance. The American literary critic George Woodberry once said, "Defeat is not the worst of failures. Not to have tried is the true failure." Do not be so caught up in the idea that you will not be able to handle something that you forget to even try. If you can find your balance, you can succeed. Only you, however, can find it. It may take some trial and error, but as good scientists know, proving what doesn't work can be just as useful as what does.



Senior Maggie balancing extracurricular activities with academics

could do anything with a bit of hard work. I owe my success in college to the program, and for their excellent preparation for college type classes. SMA will ALWAYS hold a special place in my heart."

### Evan Kahl- Class of 2010- Attending Drexel University as a Mechanical Engineering and Materials Science Double Major

"SMA Helped prepare me for a lot of the core classes in my major and exposed me to things that my other classmates had not yet experienced. SRT definitely prepared me for engineering projects and programming - which was a significant advantage. Also, a lot of our electives were fundamental classes in my major."

## Questions and Answers

Interviewer: Sophomore Mitchell , Interviewees: Senior Diana and Thomas



**Q : What were you most nervous about as a freshman in the SMA?**

**Diana:** Most kids were most nervous about making new friends but because Aberdeen is my home school I already knew a lot of people and was most nervous about the adjustment to high school. I was most nervous about coming to high school because it's a really big adjustment and I was worried about keeping up with the work and doing well in all of my classes.

**Thomas:** I was nervous about making friends with non-SMA students. I thought that there was a huge divide between SMA students and Aberdeen Students. After the first couple of weeks of school, I realized that there was not. I made a lot of friends that are not in SMA.

**Q : What did you most miss about your old school as a freshman? How, if at all, did you get over this?**

**Diana:** I missed all of my teachers because they all knew me and how I worked. I also missed my friends who did not come to the SMA because even though we still went to the same school I didn't really see them at school anymore. I never really "got over this" but it just wasn't as important anymore because I made a lot of new friends who I became really close with and I also got to know my teachers better.

**Thomas:** I only knew two other people from North Harford who chose to go to SMA, but I was not friends with them. I missed the friends I had in North Harford. I got over this by making new friends.

**Q: How can upperclassmen help you get through your first year?**

**Diana:** I think upperclassmen can help underclassmen with their school work and give them advice on how to handle their teachers and assignments. However I think that to get through freshman year you have to help each other. I know that when I was a freshman what helped me get through the year was making new friends in SMA who understood what I was going through. This helped with not only the school work but it also helped me when I was having a really bad day or when I was really stressed out because no one understands what you're going through more than your classmates.

**Thomas:** Upperclassmen can help underclassmen by being friendly and by minimizing heckling. Upperclassmen have been in their shoes and know what they're going through.

**Q: SMA busses come early and it can be a long ride. Do you have any suggestions for freshmen about how to deal with that?**

**Diana:** I ride an Aberdeen bus so my bus comes at 6:45 but I would recommend sleeping on the bus or making friends with an upperclassman who can drive you!

**Thomas:** I have a two hour long bus ride and I have to wake up at 4:30am for the bus in the morning. I dealt with it by bringing my iPod and sleeping. I also utilized the time of the bus ride home by getting a head start on my homework and reading assignments.

**Q: Does school seem to consume your entire life or do you still have time to go out and have fun with friends?**

**Diana:** School will only consume your life if you let it, being in the SMA and having a social life is totally possible but you just have to plan your time well. Yes there will be some Fridays when you can't hang out with your friends but there will also be times when you have lots of time to hang out with your friends.

**Thomas:** There are periods of time, like towards the end of a quarter, where school is very time consuming because all of the assignments that are due. Sometimes you have to put your social life on hold to succeed in school. That doesn't mean that I don't have a social life. There are just times we all have to make sacrifices. I do make time to hang out with my friends.

**Q: Does being in the SMA interfere with your sports and extracurricular activities?**

**Diana:** Being in the SMA does not interfere with sports and extracurricular activities because I have played sports and participated in clubs all throughout high school. I actually think playing sports while being in the SMA is helpful because playing a sport takes up a lot of your time and this teaches you how to manage your time and prioritize.

**Thomas:** Being in SMA allows me to participate in more extra-curricular activities because as long as I have a ride home I can do whatever I want after school. SMA always has something going on, whether it is a club, a study session, or just a small get together. Soccer was one of the most rewarding experiences of my school career and I am very glad I took the time to participate in it. Don't let SMA be an excuse to not be involved.

**Q: Do you feel that you got a good enough education at the SMA to outweigh the struggles of the program?**

**Diana:** I definitely think the education at the SMA was worth all of the struggles. The SMA is a challenging program and I think that this has made me a better student because the SMA has taught me that you can do anything and no subject or topic is too difficult. Also the SMA has given me a lot of experiences that I could have not have gained at the regular high school. I feel like I've been exposed to so much more than a normal high school.

**Thomas:** Yes, SMA is very worth it. I made life-long friends and I feel like I am very prepared for my future.

Continued on the next page.

**Q: What is the most important experience you had here that you would not have had if you had stayed at your home school?**

**Diana:** My most important experience was SRT 2 . This was my most important experience because this was the first time I had ever done any type of coding and I was terrible at it, however I was able to learn to code and I eventually became pretty good at it. This experience was really important to me because this was the first time I was really challenged and forced to go outside of my comfort zone. I don't think I would have ever been challenged like that at my home school.

**Thomas:** I feel that the teachers in SMA are really good at teaching. I also would not have been able to take as many AP courses at my old school.

**Q: Now that you are four years in, do you have any regrets about coming to the SMA?**

**Diana:** I don't have any regrets about coming to the SMA. Yes it has been difficult but I have been prepared for college and given tools that I feel will put me above a lot of other kids my age. Not to mention I have made lifelong friends who have the same priorities and goals as me.

**Thomas:** I do not have any regrets about joining the SMA. Some classes have been hard, but they have all contributed to my education.

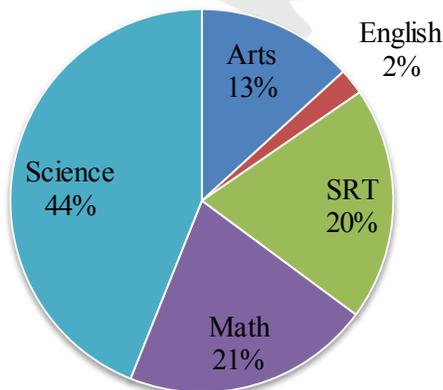
**The Teacher's Corner**

By: Senior Sarah

	Mr. Leff	Mr. Sloan	Ms. Liberto	Mr. Chapman	Mr. Davis	Mr. Evans	Mrs. Gabriel	Mrs. McDonough	Ms. Voskuhl
<b>Have you been here since SMA started?</b>	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
<b>What is your favorite part about SMA?</b>	Teaching students who care about their education.	Teaching interesting topics.	The classes being taught.	AP Chemistry	The variety of projects.	Teaching various, uncommon topics.	The students	Teaching students who care.	The students
<b>What was your major in college?</b>	Industrial Engineering	Secondary education and Physics with a minor in math	Math	Chemistry and Biology	Horticulture (study of growing and producing plants)	Math	Earth science	Biology	Math

**What are SMA Students's Favorite Subjects?**

By: Sophomore Danielle



**A Message from the SMA Newsletter Team**

Dear Readers,

The goal of this newsletter is to educate and inform students about the various happenings at the Science and Mathematics Academy. If you have any comments, concerns, ideas, or questions please contact Mrs. Gabriel.

Thank You,  
SMArticles Team