

Squashbusters & James P. Timilty Middle School, Boston

[SquashBusters link to: www.squashbusters.org] is the first youth enrichment program of its kind in the country, combining squash, academics, and community service to support students as they move through middle school into high school and beyond. Founded in Boston in 1995, SquashBusters now serves 175 Boston youth each year in grades 6 through 12. The Timilty is SquashBusters' original school partner and in 2007-08 they entered into their 12th year of collaboration. Thirty-six 6th and 7th graders from Timilty are released from school at 3:15 two days a week – 18 students on Mondays and Wednesdays, 18 students on Tuesdays and Thursdays - to participate in the SquashBusters program at Northeastern University, plus one additional practice on either Friday afternoon (a weekly early release day at the Timilty) or Saturday.

Content

- **Squash (4.5 hours per week):** Timilty students have squash practice each program day, where they work on skill building and conditioning and prepare for competitions, including the annual Urban Team Nationals.
- **Academics (4 hours per week):** SquashBusters staff designs and implement curriculum units around service learning, the arts, and other academic enrichment areas, with a goal of helping prepare students for MCAS and SATs. Staff and volunteers also work with Timilty students on their homework each program day.
- **Community Service (30 hours per year):** All students participate in service projects throughout the year, which focus on broadening students' awareness about social issues, exposing them to new populations, empowering them to make change, and building their confidence in new social environments.
- **Family Engagement:** SquashBusters communicates closely with families and considers family participation critical to student success.
- **Alumni Support:** SquashBusters recently launched an alumni engagement initiative to support students beyond their participation in the program, with a focus on students' transitions to high school and college.

Conditions for Success

- The Timilty is SquashBusters' original school partner; the school and organization have been building a relationship over the past 12 years.
- SquashBusters staff travels to the Timilty five days a week to pick up students and escort them to the program's dedicated squash and academic facility at

AT A GLANCE: The Timilty School

Principal: Valeria Lowe-Barehmi

Grades served: 6-8

Number of students: 639

School Schedule:

Monday – Thursday: 7:20-4:15
Fridays: 7:20 – 11:40

School Demographics:

% **Special Ed** – 21.2
% **Limited English** – 13.1
% **Low-income** – 84.4

Other partners include:

Massachusetts General Hospital, Northeastern University, and Simmons College

nearby Northeastern University. This presents an opportunity for staff to touch base with Timilty teachers about student work, behavior, and needs, as well as keep them up-to-date on SquashBusters news.

- The Timilty has a daily Advisory period from 3:30-4:10 where students get help with their homework and meet in small groups with teachers and staff; students that participate in SquashBusters miss Advisory two days a week, but the program addresses the same goals (HW help and mentoring) in a different setting.
- Every Timilty 6th grader participates in an “awareness workshop” and site visit to Northeastern to learn about SquashBusters. Teacher recommendations help Squashbusters’ staff narrow down and select participants.
- SquashBusters recruits, trains, and supports a large volunteer base, which includes local college students, to work with students on squash and academic support and act as mentors throughout their tenure with the program.
- SquashBusters’ Executive Director is a former Boston Public Schools principal with deep ties to the school system and long-standing relationships with school leaders, including the Timilty principal.

Staff

- SquashBusters’ full-time Executive Director and Program Director oversee the partnership with the Timilty and are in close contact with Timilty leadership.
- A full-time Director of Middle School Academics & Community Service and Director of Squash head up the Timilty groups.
- 4 work-study students and 60 volunteer tutors and squash coaches work to support the program throughout the year.

Funding

- The Squashbusters-Timilty partnership is funded through Squashbusters private fundraising efforts, including a Massachusetts 2020 ELT School-Community grant to support collaboration between SquashBusters staff and Timilty teachers.

Contact

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