

U P P E R S C H O O L

Program Highlights 2024-2025



Through a unique arts-centered curriculum, the Upper School offers engaging courses that build the academic and executive functioning skills needed for college and career success, while simultaneously promoting our school values of resilience, responsibility, creativity, curiosity, and kindness.

The Lab School's program is guided by the principles put forth by John Dewey who promoted a progressive education based on a variety of authentic learning experiences that engage the natural curiosity of students.

LAB STUDENTS LEARN TO:

- be problem solvers, collaborators, and creative thinkers.
- be self-aware and self-directed, take risks, confront challenges, and stretch themselves.
- know that we'll be there to support them.
- discover their strengths and passions and develop strategies to tackle what's challenging.

“My ADHD actually makes me feel very gifted because Lab School has taught me how to use it to my advantage. Sometimes I think I have a secret weapon that others don't have.”

— Lab School Student

OUR ARTS-CENTERED CURRICULUM

The arts — central to our students’ experience at Lab — encourage students to tap into their creativity and stretch their imaginations. Students gain confidence and discover new ways to solve problems and express themselves, as they learn to think like artists and view the world in alternative ways.

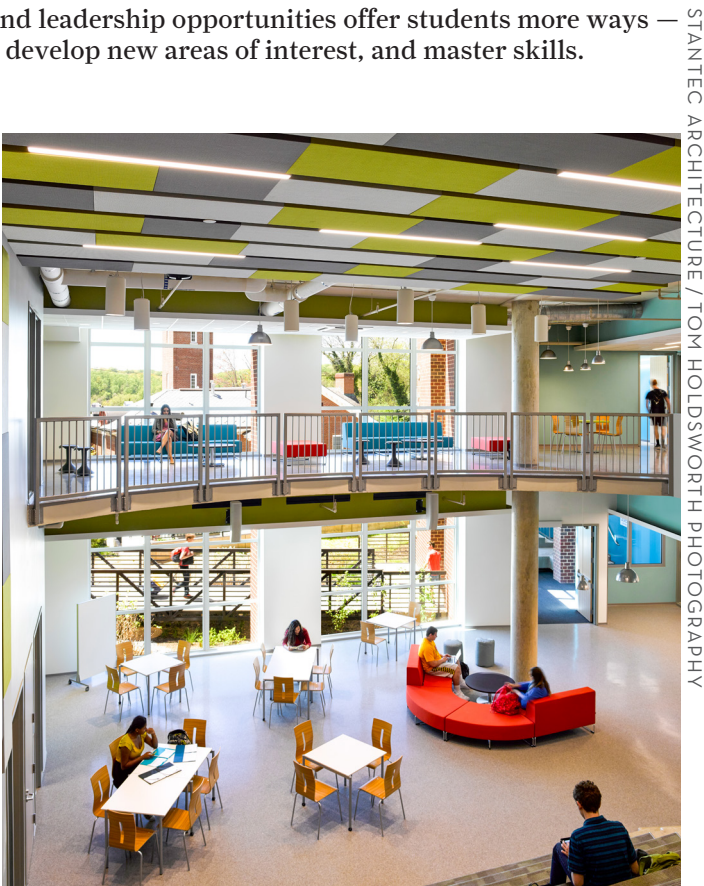
Courses			
Advanced Scenic Design	DC History	Food, Identity & Culture	Physical Science
Algebra I	Digital Filmmaking	Forensic Science	Physics
Algebra II	Digital Photography I, II	Freshman Seminar	Principles of Engineering
American Sign Language I, II, III, IV	Drawing	Geometry	Probability/Statistics
Ancient World History	Drawing, Painting, & Sculpture Intensive	Government	Rehearsal & Performance
Applied Math & Science Seminar	Earth Science	Health	Rhetoric
Biology	English 9 - Finding Our Voice	History of People of Color of America	Robotics
Calculus	English 10 - Being Informed & Creating Change	History vs. Hollywood	Scriptwriting & Dramaturgy
Ceramics	English 11 - American Literature	Introduction to Stagecraft	Shakespeare and Beyond
Chemistry	English 12 - World Literature	Jewelry Making/ Metalsmithing	Spanish I, II, III, IV
Computer Science	Environmental Chemistry	Modern World History	Studio Art
Conditioning	Environmental Science	Music Perspectives	Trigonometry/Pre-Calculus
Dance	Financial Literacy	Music/Rock Band	US History
		Musical Theatre	Yearbook
			Class sizes range from 4 to 15 students.

Our myriad Upper School clubs, extra-curricular activities, and leadership opportunities offer students more ways — beyond the classroom — to explore their interests, take risks, develop new areas of interest, and master skills.

CLUBS, AFFINITY GROUPS, ACTIVITIES, AND LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Options include:

- Affinity Groups
 - Family Structure/Adoption, Race, Gender/ Sexuality, Ethnicity, Religion
- Business/Stocks
- Chess
- Coding/Robotics
- Cooking/Baking
- Council for Equity and Social Justice
- Creative Writing
- Drama Club
- Philosophy
- Science and Art
- Student Government
- Sci-Fi/Anime



GLOBAL STUDY

We develop life-long learners who engage with the world around them.

- In recent years, students have participated in an arts and historical tour of New York City, a cultural tour of Japan, a civil rights tour in Alabama, and an ecology focused trip to Costa Rica. This year, in addition to NYC, students will travel to New Orleans, London, and Paris.
- International destinations — exploring history, culture, language, science, and economy — have included Costa Rica, France, the Galapagos, South Africa, Italy, China, Ecuador, England, Cambodia, Vietnam, Spain, Morocco, Germany, and Poland.



SPORTS

The Upper School is a member of the Metro Independent School Athletic League and the Independent Small Schools Athletic Conference. Our teams are competitive, yet open to everyone. Athletes learn teamwork, sportsmanship, and self-discipline.

The 2024-2025 team sports include:

- Basketball
- Tennis
- Cross Country
- Track
- Golf
- Volleyball
- Soccer

TECHNOLOGY

Our one-to-one Chromebook program and online learning management system help students connect, engage, and create. Students will have the tools to become more effective, efficient, and independent learners. We use apps that support:

- organization
- writing
- reading
- researching
- note-taking
- study skills

BELONGING TIME

“Belonging Time” provides our students with a foundational understanding of the intersections of a person’s identity. Within this understanding, students cultivate a respect for and admiration of the differences among people. “Belonging Time” ensures that each student leaves embracing the multiplicity and fluidity of identity while being instilled with an inviolable self-pride.

During “Belonging Time,” students work with age-level definitions of: diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, self-love, and identity – elucidating identity in the markers of: age, physical ability, appearance, race, sexual orientation, gender, geographic location, family structure, ethnicity, religion, communication style and thinking style.

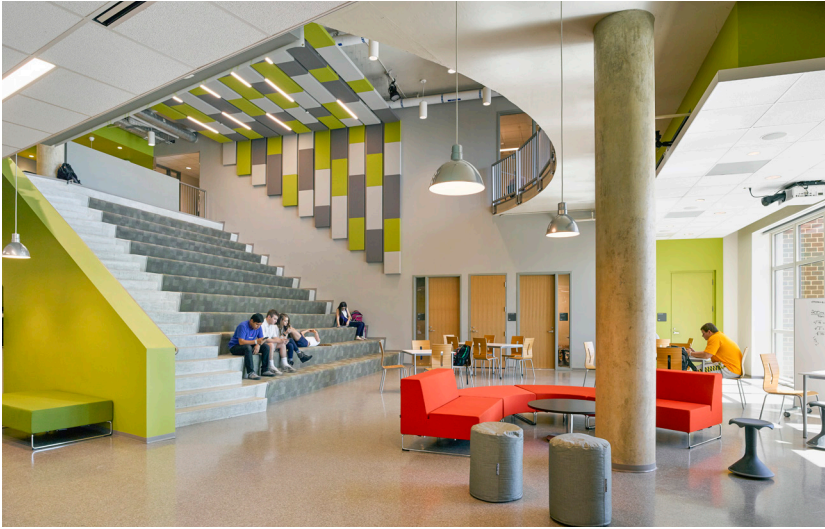
SEL

Social emotional learning is integrated into the Upper School curriculum. We focus on five competencies we know are essential for students: self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision making, social awareness, and relationship skills.



OUR STAFFULTY

Our teachers, more than 80 percent of whom have advanced degrees, inspire our students through innovation, commitment, passion, and caring.



PREPARING FOR COLLEGE AND CAREER

JUNIOR-YEAR INTERNSHIP

We value the learning and experiences that take place beyond the classroom walls. Our unique year-long internship is truly an experiential learning opportunity. Each student has a chance to intern in a structured, supportive environment — aligned with their interests — which can lead to avenues for further study.

Our internship placements are as varied as:

- GTM Architects
- American University Police Department
- National Child Research Center Preschool
- Howard Theater
- National Museum of American History
- DC Office of the Mayor
- The George Washington University's Medical Faculty Associates
- Signature Theatre

SENIOR PROJECT

A culminating experience for each Lab School student is the Senior Project.

- Students pursue a line of inquiry that requires the blending of academic skills, such as research, writing, presentation, revision techniques, and editing, with professional skills, like goal setting, planning, time management, and collaboration.
- Choosing topics that align with their interests, students investigate their subjects throughout the first semester of English 12, develop their theses, and show the practical applications of what they've learned.
- Recently, senior projects included studies of cartography and human evolution; the gentrification of urban neighborhoods; a survey of gender bias in the art world using AI; and the impact on riding style when building surfboards out of alternative materials.

COLLEGE ADVISING

From the start of 9th grade, our College Advisor gets to know every Upper School student, developing an understanding of interests and goals, recommending summer programs and other pre-college activities of interest to the student, securing accommodations for the ACT test, and working with the student and family to determine the best postsecondary fit. Upperclassmen and their parents use Naviance, software that matches students with colleges and tracks application materials, to facilitate the college search process.