



WHERE
EXTRAORDINARY
BEGINS

GETTING TO KNOW
THE LAB SCHOOL'S
LOWER SCHOOL

TABLE OF CONTENTS

2 **WELCOME TO LAB**
An Introduction to the Lower School

4 **COMPETENCE STARTS WITH CONFIDENCE**
Our Focus on Belonging

6 **LEARNING HOW TO LEARN**
The Lower School Curriculum

8 **ACADEMIC CLUBS AT LAB**
An In-Depth Look at a Signature Course

| 0 **TRAINING THE BRAIN FOR HIGHER-LEVEL THINKING**
The Arts & the Mind

| 2 **A TYPICAL DAY THAT IS ANYTHING BUT TYPICAL**
A Snapshot of a Student's Day

| 4 **LEARNING THAT EXTENDS BEYOND THE CLASSROOM**
Lower School Supports & Extracurriculars

| 6 **GROWING HERE MEANS GROWING STRONG**
Your Next Steps

WELCOME TO LAB

At The Lab School, children discover how they learn best.

Here at The Lab School of Washington, the journey to extraordinary begins the moment a child is seen for who they truly are. Our students think differently, ask questions, and deepen their curiosity — all because they understand themselves and how their minds work best.

Our arts-based curriculum, hands-on learning, expert staff, and small class size make this discovery possible. The result is confident and curious students who are ready to tackle increasingly complex learning while thriving through it all.

3:1

Our student-teacher ratio is among the lowest of schools serving students with learning differences. Because of this ratio, students benefit from hands-on, tailored instruction in the areas in which they need the most help.



“At Lab, we empower our students to embrace their learning differences as advantages, rather than as something that needs to be ‘fixed.’ Our students develop self-knowledge and the ability to advocate for themselves, critical skills for success. Our approach is holistic because the world needs different thinkers who can solve difficult problems.”

— KIM WARGO, HEAD OF SCHOOL

staff-ulty: Lab’s deep bench of expert faculty and staff working to support students with language-based learning differences





COMPETENCE STARTS WITH CONFIDENCE

Belonging is where learning begins.



A sense of belonging is the foundation for every child's growth at Lab.

Students learn best when they feel safe, understood, and connected. It's why social-emotional learning and belonging is woven into each part of the day: from Morning Meeting to Closing Circle.

Here, staff intentionally build spaces that value differences and that help students learn to trust themselves as learners. Students become well-versed in the skills that help them navigate school and relationships: naming feelings, asking for help, managing frustration, and addressing mistakes. Our staff teach these skills directly and reinforce them consistently.

Small class sizes allow teachers to notice subtle cues — a student becoming overwhelmed, a peer needing space, a group ready for a new challenge — and respond with individualized support. In small groups, students practice turn-taking, flexible thinking, and perspective-taking, while movement breaks throughout the day build self-awareness and self-advocacy.

Most importantly, students learn that they are part of a community that celebrates who they are. Here, students begin to see themselves as capable learners and kind, thoughtful peers.

At Lab, we see belonging as the starting point for everything that follows.



“For the first time, my child loves going to school. I was hoping this day would come. I just didn’t expect it to happen so quickly.”

— LAB PARENT



At Lab, we believe in:

Learning: We make discovery *joyful*.

Audacity: We empower students to *take risks*.

Belonging: We are *invested* in each other.



AT LAB, LEARNING HOW TO LEARN MEANS LEARNING HOW TO:

- Manage time
- Make connections
- Understand their brains
- Make and carry out plans
- Activate and direct attention
- Show flexibility of thinking
- Advocate for what they need
- Organize things and thoughts
- Differentiate between relevant & extraneous information
- Communicate & collaborate with peers

LEARNING HOW TO LEARN

The community where children with language-based learning differences thrive.

All subjects at Lab come to life through our unique hands-on and arts-based approach. This approach fosters creativity and resilience, deepens understanding, and keeps learning accessible and engaging. **This is the beauty of beginning at Lab: evidence-based teaching that gives students the skills and confidence for real, lasting growth.**



READING

- Individualized instruction in triads and dyads
- Diagnostic and prescriptive approaches informed by the Orton-Gillingham framework
- Phonics, decoding, fluency, and comprehension



SCIENCE AND STEAM

- Discovery of the world around our students
- Using design elements to engineer and solve problems
- Fostering curiosity and creating the space to follow where curiosity leads



WRITING

- Building from sentences to stories
- Cursive writing
- Approaches informed by The Writing Revolution



MATH

- Individualized and multisensory
- Diagnostic and prescriptive small-groupings
- Hands-on and interactive modeling and instruction

“You make a few decisions as a parent that shape a child’s future forever. Sending a child to Lab is one of them.”

— LAB PARENT

ACADEMIC CLUBS AT LAB

Since 1967, Academic Clubs at Lab take experiential learning a step further.

Unique to Lab, Academic Clubs are foundational to the Lower School curriculum. Academic Clubs are daily classes where students immerse themselves in the humanities through a dramatic framework. Following one multidimensional theme throughout the year, learners explore history, geography, literature, science, sociology, archaeology, and art. The dynamic and hands-on small-group Clubs bring elementary school curricula to life and are a favorite among students.

LOWER SCHOOL ACADEMIC CLUBS HAVE INCLUDED:



**Club Discovery
(Nature Studies)**



**Gods & Goddesses
Club**



**Great American
Cities**



Museum Club

CLUB DISCOVERY: IN DEPTH

Students step over the classroom threshold into a space transformed into a forest ranger's cabin. In their daily coursework, they take on the characters of actual figures through history who have helped raise awareness of our fragile relationship with the natural world, learning about the work of writer Rachel Carson, botanist George Washington Carver, and Mt. Everest explorers Tenzing Norgay and Edmund Hillary, among others.

Following a curriculum tied to the natural year, they study the history and science of the earth, and the cause and effect of our actions on this planet while developing outdoor skills.

In Club Discovery, a student who begins the school year with little knowledge of — or interest in — the outdoors or the area's abundant wildlife engages in close observation and daily project work. They build bird nests, learn bird calls, and model bird beaks. On hikes in national parkland, a short walk from campus, students practice skills such as folding a bandana, reading trail signs, and making and using a walking stick.

By year's end, that same student has become an enthusiastic and confident citizen of nature — at ease in the forest or field and eager to share their newfound knowledge with others. What's more, they are able to compare and contrast the challenges we face locally in nature with those experienced in other parts of the world.

OUR CURRICULUM AT LAB IS BASED ON:

Academic growth

We nurture fluency and celebrate scholarship.

Arts-based, hands-on learning

We believe that creating is learning.

A holistic approach

We support and challenge the child, not just the learner.





AT LAB, WE EMBRACE DIFFERENCES
AS ADVANTAGES.

TRAINING THE BRAIN FOR HIGHER-LEVEL THINKING

Leaning into the science behind the arts–mind connection



Art lies at the center of how students learn at Lab, and for good reason. Research shows

that when students engage in creative work, their brains build connections across language, memory, attention, and problem-solving systems. For young learners with language-based learning differences, these connections deeply matter. Art offers an accessible, low-stakes way to explore ideas, build skills, and express understanding.

In the Lower School, art is woven into daily instruction. Students step inside stories through drama to build comprehension.

They use paint, clay, and collage to make sense of math concepts. They map ideas visually to support sequencing and executive functioning. These hands-on experiences give students multiple pathways to understanding and help abstract concepts “click.”

Art also builds the habits that help students lead: persistence, flexibility, imagination, and the courage to try again. By participating in the process of creating, students practice what it means to iterate and refine. This resilience then carries over into their academic work, allowing them to read, write, and problem-solve with confidence and tenacity.

The science is clear: when children create, they learn more deeply. And when they see their ideas take shape in physical form, they begin to trust what their minds can do.

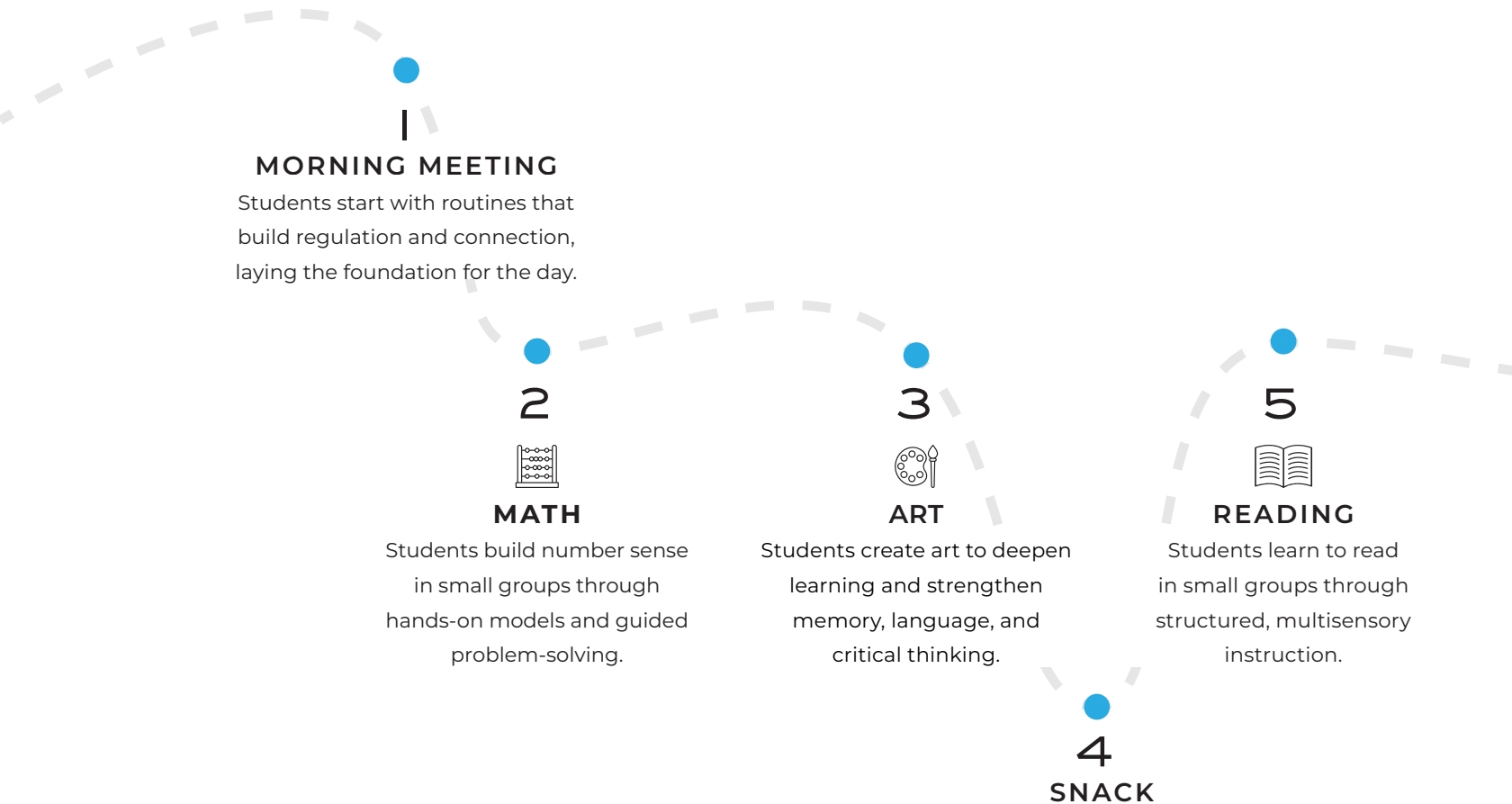


“The arts focus here is astounding. Through the arts, students develop so much self-esteem and satisfaction that then shine in other areas of difficulty. Lab is unique in this offering; most other schools don’t approach learning this way.”

— DMV-AREA PSYCHOLOGIST

A TYPICAL DAY THAT IS ANYTHING BUT TYPICAL

Learning, brought to life.



AGE RANGE: 6–11 (the equivalent of grades 1–5)

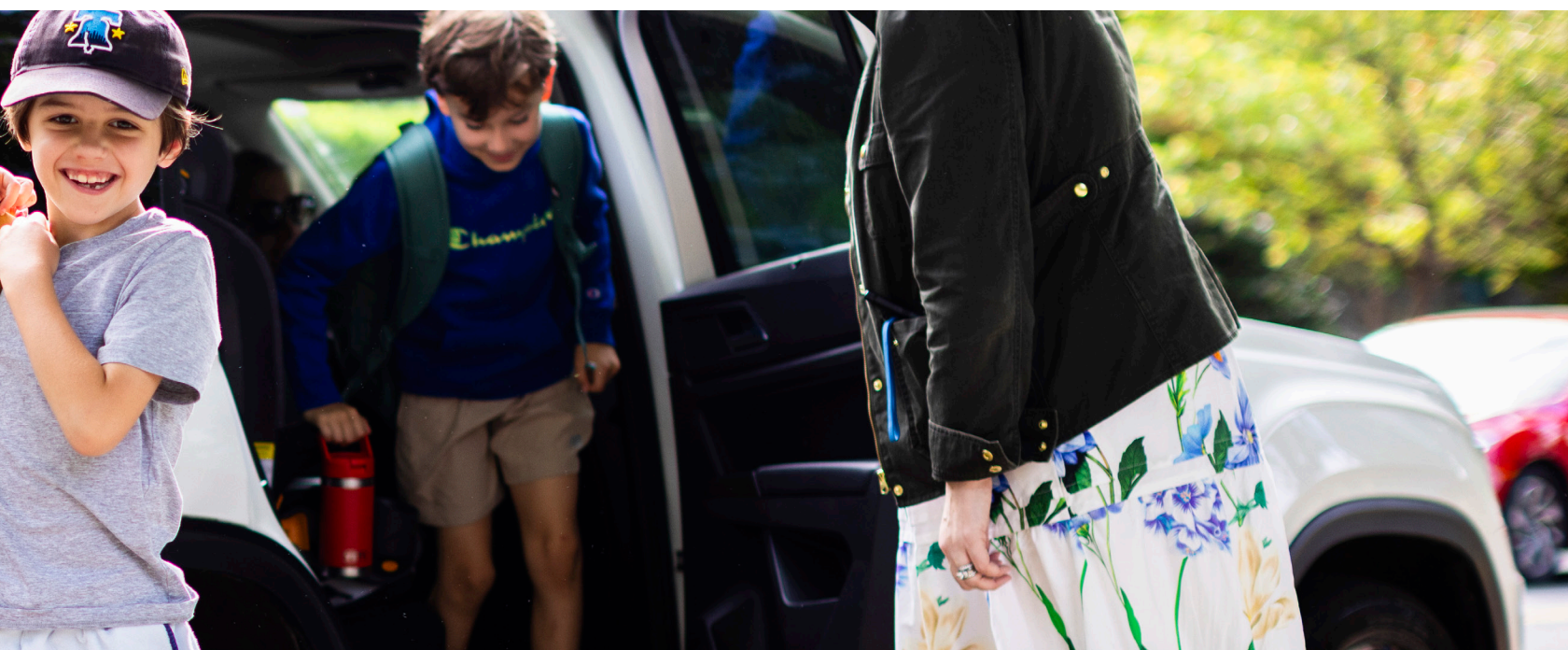
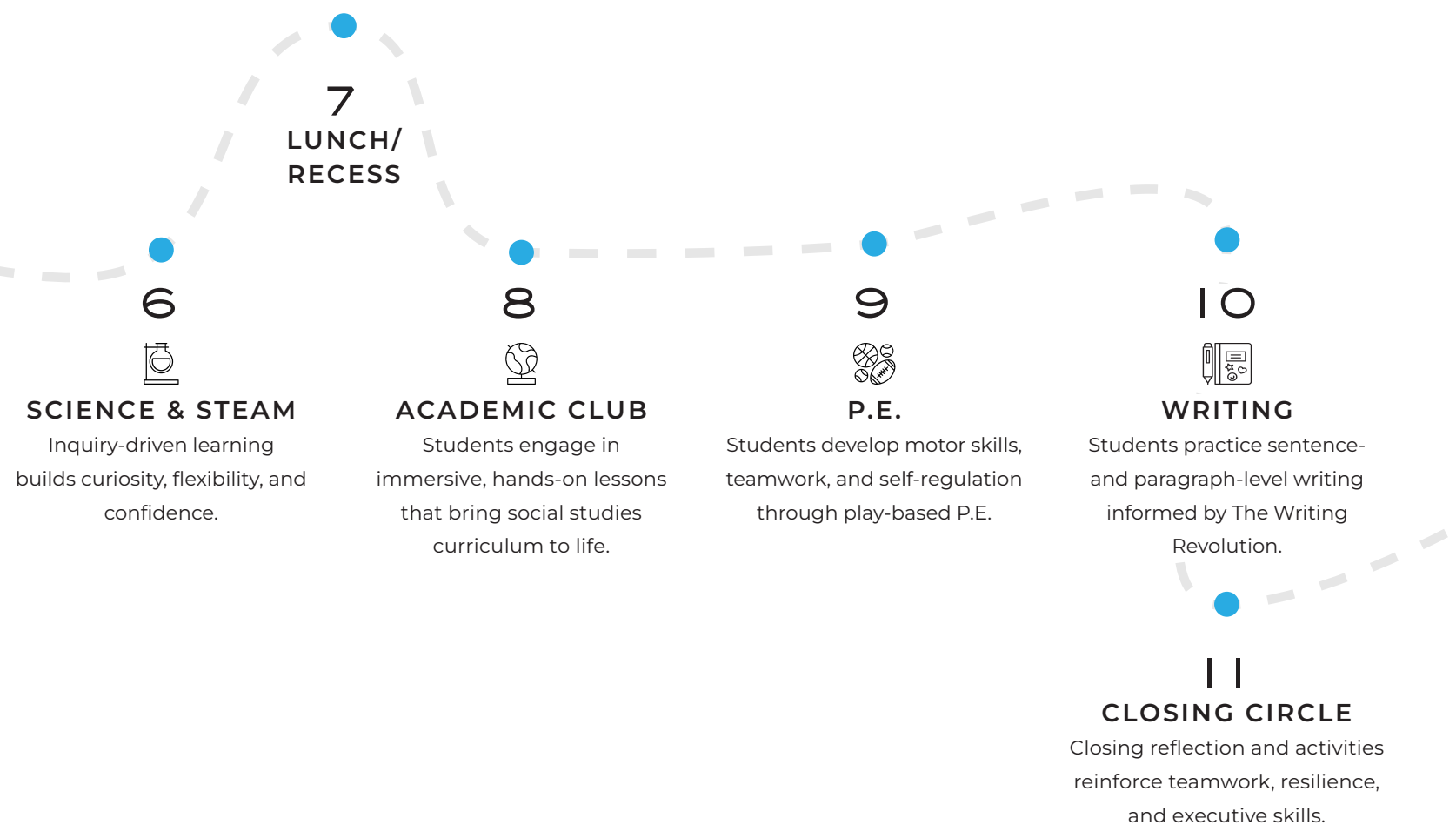
AVERAGE STUDENT-STAFF RATIO: 3:1

Wide variety of extracurricular activities, including developmental athletics

After-school enrichment daily until 5:30 p.m.

EXPERT CLINICAL SERVICES PROVIDED ON SITE:
occupational therapy; speech, language, & literacy;
psychology & wellness







AT LAB, WE:

Uncover potential.

We guide students to hone their unique gifts, skills, and talents.

Unearth pathways.

We illuminate for students how to put their skill sets to use in the world.

Unlock progress.

We accelerate students' learning and achievement through it all.

LEARNING THAT EXTENDS BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

We balance academics, play, enrichment, & extracurriculars to grow the whole child.

Learning at Lab continues long after a lesson ends.

Our after-school offerings are an important part of our students' ongoing exploration. Some students gravitate toward the stage or art studio; others find confidence on the field or in student-run clubs. Others discover their passions in STEAM. These activities all help students stretch their abilities and see themselves in new ways. They also provide natural opportunities to collaborate and solve problems in new, varied settings.

At Lab, learning is a family affair. It's why we describe ourselves as a community, not just a school. Lab parents learn and connect alongside their students through our expert speaker series, family events, and regular meetings with Lab staff.

We know what it takes to support a child with language-based learning differences, and we're here for the parents who do the hard work at home each and every day for our students.



“Children with learning differences suffer in silence. Their parents do, too. Here, parents are supported; they are a part of Lab’s story. Not every school does this, at least not the way Lab does.”

— LAB PARENT

GROWING HERE MEANS GROWING STRONG

Consistent support, increasing challenge, & intentional skill-building prepare students for life.

A Lab education is intentionally cumulative. Skills like curiosity, self-regulation, and confidence grow alongside strong academics to give students a sturdy foundation for the rigor and independence that are a part of Lab's upper divisions.

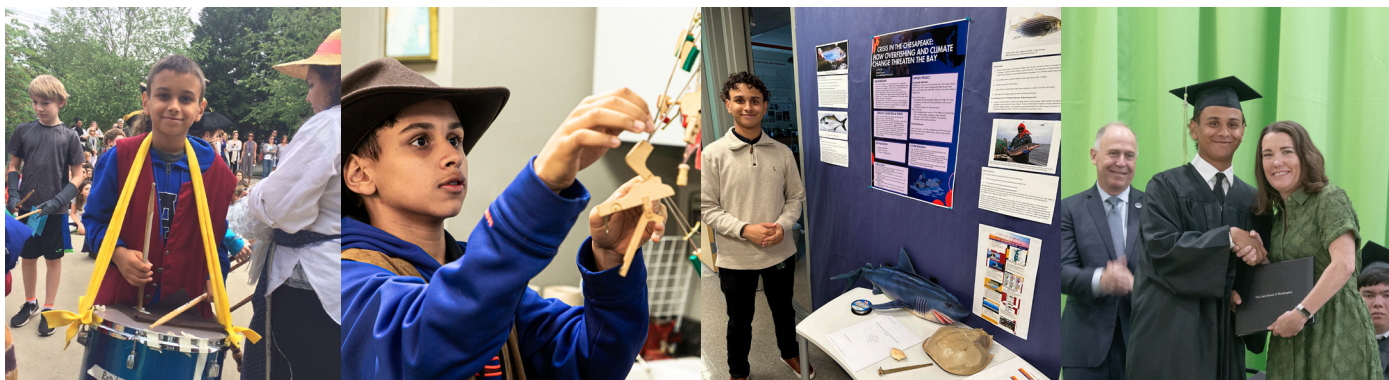
In Middle School, students build on what's familiar while stepping into new responsibilities, all while strengthening the habits that work for them.

In Upper School, students are fine-tuning their executive functioning skills and toolbox while managing increased rigor and, often, college-level work.

Students who graduate from Lab are not only ready for higher education, but also ready for *life*. They are fluent in self-advocacy and self-knowledge, qualities that bode well for a future where authentic thought and inquiry will be needed even more.

“When we started sending our child to Lab, I had no idea it was going to be this good. People kept telling me it would be transformative. I thought that was overblown. But it really has transformed our whole family’s life.”

— LAB PARENT



YOUR CHILD'S FUTURE STARTS HERE.

Start your Lab Journey by completing an Inquiry Form today. See included insert for more information.

Already started the process? Reach out to check in: admissions@labschool.org