



Course Descriptions

Visual Arts

In arts electives, students explore and create a variety of visual artwork by experimenting with different artistic mediums and developing their creativity. Students learn about different art forms, tools, and means of expressing themselves through art. Units will include drawing two- and three-dimensional objects, graphic design, digital photography, jewelry and clothing design, and street art. Partnerships with New York City outreach programs and trips to museums and cultural institutions extend classroom experiences and create a vibrant curriculum. Next Steps students participate in IDEAL's annual ArtBeat, a body of work display allowing students to curate and introduce their work to a larger audience.

Performing Arts

Students will participate in music and theatre in order to build their artistic expression. In music class, students draw from their knowledge in other subjects, personal life experiences, heritage, and viewpoints, and explore how music is both a product as well as an influencer of culture. While studying theatre, students work as a team to produce a piece of work and explore the fundamentals of drama. Students extend their knowledge of music and theatre by engaging in community experiences.

Community Exploration

Community Exploration serves as an extended four-period block each Friday. This block reinforces skills learned that week while building community engagement and independence. Students will travel into the community with transition support professionals to build social, financial, literacy, and transportation skills. While in the community, students will eat lunch as a group, whether this is a picnic planned and prepared by students, a sit-down lunch at a neighborhood restaurant with the tip calculated by students, or a casual lunch at a grab-and-go dining spot. Examples of Community Exploration activities might include a trip to a New York City museum to visit a piece of work that was studied in art class, a trip to the movies where students must plan according to movie schedule and budget for refreshments, volunteering at a local garden to contribute their skills and give back to the community, and an outing to a bowling alley to be planned by students. Students will work with transition support professionals to increase their independence with regard to travel, finances, and activities.

Daily Living Skills

Daily Living Skills fosters student independence based on their individualized goals. Students will engage in hands-on daily living activities designed to prepare them for life beyond IDEAL. Students will learn to organize and clean, engage in self-care, prepare snacks and meals, safely navigate the community, shop, and maintain interpersonal relationships. Student participation is monitored by transition support professionals, who will work with each individual student to help them grow in specific areas of need.



Fitness

Fitness class is designed to promote the health and wellness of students, exposing them to fitness opportunities both at IDEAL and in the greater community. Students will learn healthy practices to incorporate into their daily routines and identify various places in the community where they can explore fitness opportunities.

Hobby Building

The Hobby Building class will hone a variety of skills and encourage student passions. In this class, students will be exposed to a variety of recreational activities, from playing checkers, to knitting, to participating in a book club. Transition support professionals will assist students in continuing their chosen passions and help them identify places in the community to practice these skills beyond IDEAL.

Internship

Internships are an integral part of the Next Steps Transition Program, providing individuals with opportunities to gain hands-on experiences in business, science, the arts, media, the law, retail and service industries, and other areas. Students will participate in internships based on their interests. The Next Steps internship program provides job coaching and support as appropriate. In addition, students will set internship goals and track their progress at various internship sites. While not at internship sites, students will work with job coaches to refine vocational skills.

Literacy and Communication

Literacy and Communication serves as the students' daily English block. In this class, students will read level-appropriate current events and engage in relevant discussions. Additionally, students will expand on their practical writing skills by practicing how to write letters, emails, cover letters, resumes, and presentations. Students will learn appropriate ways to communicate, expand their vocabulary, and build their confidence by practicing their public speaking skills.

Nutrition and Health

Next Steps promotes student wellness by teaching Nutrition and Health to its students. In this weekly class, students will promote their physical health by identifying how to make healthy choices, understanding the effects of choices on their overall health, and maintaining physical fitness. Students will learn about mental and emotional health, including strategies for coping with stress and the anxieties of life and navigating healthy and appropriate relationships.

Personal Finance

Personal Finance allows students to apply mathematical and financial concepts to real-world experiences. Students travel into the community to practice their money skills and plan activities in the city to solidify their understanding of time and money management. Through



this math class, students will engage in IDEAL's student-led business, the school store. Students will spend time surveying their peers to identify high-interest items, placing online orders for a variety of items, identifying how to price items to make a profit, keeping track of inventory, using a functional cash register, and supplying customers with their change and a receipt from their purchase. Students will incorporate social skills into their business-practices while selling to both Upper School and Lower School divisions.

In order to support their understanding of personal finance, students will monitor bank accounts, make trips in the community to make deposits and withdrawals, and practice maintaining a budget. While engaging in community trips to support their financial literacy, time is also spent understanding elapsed time and navigating the city using bus and train schedules. Concepts of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division are applied to real-world activities in order to allow students to become as independent as possible.

Self-Advocacy

Students in Next Steps will prepare to appropriately self-advocate. First and foremost, students will work with teachers and therapists to express their interests, hobbies, passions, opinions, thoughts, and needs. They will practice and strengthen how to speak confidently about themselves within a variety of scenarios. Depending on their needs, some students will create a presentation to inform others about who they are. Other students might learn how to present themselves at a job interview or learn where to seek help when working at a job or internship site. They will learn to identify what they need, identify who to ask for help in that situation, demonstrate confidence in themselves, learn how to appropriately ask for help, and exhibit appreciation once that help is received. Students will acquire strategies and have the opportunity to practice these skills regularly. This weekly class addresses the unique needs of each individual and fosters independence and success.

Technology and Coding

Technology and Coding allows students at all levels to build their critical thinking skills through the use of technology. Students will use various apps to understand the fundamentals of coding and, if appropriate, design a website catered to their interests. Students will identify different apps and websites that support their daily functioning.

Travel Skills

Travel Skills meets students at their individual readiness levels in order to support their travel independence. Students will learn to navigate their community independently and identify places of significance in the community (eg, the police station, post office, bank, etc.). Depending on their goals, students will prepare to travel on public transportation by reading subway and bus schedules, allocating enough time to get from place to place. Some students will use mapping technology to identify the best route to a destination; others will learn to use a ride-hailing app in order to travel safely to a destination. Students will be assisted by transition support professionals as they work to increase their travel independence.