



# INTERDISTRICT SCHOOL FOR ARTS AND COMMUNICATION

## 2023-2024 ISAAC Profile

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**Dr. Nicholas J. Spera**  
ISAAC Executive Director

**William Linski**  
Principal

**Tanya Collins**  
Associate Principal

**Amy Geary**  
Director of Student Supports

**Kat Machnik**  
School Counselor

### ISAAC by the Numbers

Established: 1997  
Grades: 6th, 7th, and 8th grades  
Enrollment: 276 students  
Towns: 17 sending districts including Colchester, Essex, East Haddam, East Lyme, Groton, Ledyard, Montville, Middletown, Mystic, New London, Norwich, Pawcatuck, Preston, Stonington, Waterford  
Demographics: 62% Hispanic/Latino, 13% White, 16% Black or African American, 9% Other, 64% eligible for free or reduced lunch

### School and Community Overview

ISAAC, established in 1997, is a public charter middle school operated by a board of directors. Enrollment is at max capacity with 276 students who are accepted through an open, non-merit-based lottery that currently draws from 17 different towns and cities in southeastern Connecticut. The charter states that 50% of students must come from New London while the other 50% come from all other surrounding districts. In 2014, ISAAC was awarded the CT State Department of Education School of Distinction Award for the Highest Progress. In June 2020, ISAAC received a 4-year Charter Renewal extension from CSDE. ISAAC offers an extensive array of arts and communication-themed programs and opportunities, as well as academically rigorous high school preparatory classes that meet the needs of all students. Sixth graders are heterogeneously placed in courses that are preparing them for the skills needed in three years for high school. In seventh grade, advanced levels of study are offered in Pre-Algebra. During the 8th grade year, students can enroll in advanced courses such as Algebra I and Spanish. Students must take foundational art courses that prepare them for advanced art courses in the 6th and 7th grade years in order to take electives in the 8th grade year. The ISAAC Music Department is one of the strongest middle school music programs in southeastern Connecticut. Students can participate in athletics including boys' and girls' basketball, cross country, volleyball, and fencing and beginning in 2023-2024, boys and girls soccer. In October 2022, the Board approved the move to add STEM related courses and the creation of a \$2.8 million STEAM expansion project.

### ISAAC Highlights

- ISAAC received the CT Department of Education School of Distinction Award for highest progress in 2014
- ISAAC reached its highest levels of academic achievement in
- The CT State Board of Education renewed ISAAC's charter for 4 total additional years in June 2020
- ISAAC was awarded the 21st Century Learning Community Centers Grant for over \$1.1 million for five years
- ISAAC Board of Directors expanded the arts & sports programs by adding dance/theatre & multi-media arts positions and increasing sports by 200% in the 2021-22 school year
- STEM courses were added along with a \$2.8 million expansion project that includes an aquarium science lab

### ISAAC Core Values and Beliefs About Learning

*At ISAAC Middle School, we pride ourselves on fostering a safe, fun, and nurturing environment that promotes hard work, happiness, and effort for all who work, learn, and grow within our school community. We believe that All Students Can Succeed with high expectations, maximum effort, and a growth mindset. Our success as an ISAAC Family is deeply rooted in the positive relationships shared among our diverse student body, devoted staff, and engaged families. Our professional learning community of talented and passionate educators is committed to the delivery of a rigorous and innovative curriculum, which promotes the shared belief that Effort Creates Ability. We support the growth of each student by developing the academic, civic, and social skills essential to succeed in high school and beyond.*

### ISAAC Vision of the Graduate

The ISAAC Vision of the Graduate is that all graduates are proficient in the following competencies:

- Write effectively for various purposes
- Speak to diverse audiences in an accountable manner
- Develop the behaviors needed to interact and contribute with others on a team
- Analyze and solve problems independently and collaboratively
- Be responsible, creative, and empathetic members of the community

### Facts About Connecticut Charter Schools

- Q: What are charter schools and what makes them unique?  
A: Charter schools are public schools that offer personalized learning experiences for students, no matter their needs, circumstances, and learning styles. Charter schools offer freedom and flexibility for families in choosing a type of education for their children, and schools have more flexibility to innovate and implement unique programs for students.
- Q: Are charter schools free to attend?  
A: Charter schools, as public schools, are free to attend.
- Q: Are charter school teachers required to be certified?  
A: All staff serving in Connecticut's public charter schools must be authorized by the state to serve in those schools, and the state regularly reviews schools for compliance.
- Q: How do charter school students perform relative to other students?  
A: Charter school students are often outpacing and improving faster than their traditional public school peers. More than 80% of public charter school students in Connecticut are outpacing their traditional public school peers in year over year academic improvement in math and English Language Arts.
- Q: How is the performance of a charter school evaluated?  
A: The Connecticut State Department of Education is the sole school authorizer. Annual audits of the school can include written reports, school site visits, or conditional plans associated with the school's charter renewal. At the conclusion of the charter extension, a comprehensive review of the school takes place.