



# THE POTOMAC SCHOOL

## 2024-25 ACADEMIC PROFILE

1301 Potomac School Road  
McLean, Virginia 22101

**CEEB #471396**

**JOHN KOWALIK**  
*Head of School*

**TIM JAEGER**  
*Associate Head of School*

**SARAH BECK**  
*Interim Head of Upper School*

### THE SCHOOL

- Founded in 1904 in Washington, DC
- K-12; co-ed
- Upper School added in 1987
- Accredited by Virginia Association of Independent Schools
- Enrollment K-12, 1,070; Upper School, 475
- 180 full and part-time faculty
- 72% of faculty have advanced degrees
- Students receiving financial aid: 19%
- Students of color: 45%
- Senior class enrollment: 122
- Graduates attending four-year colleges: 100%
- Upper School average class size: 15
- Class of 2024 National Merit Semi-finalists: 7
- Class of 2024 National Merit Commended Students: 19

### COLLEGE COUNSELING

**STACY RICHARDSON**  
*Director*  
srichardson@potomacschool.org  
(703) 749-6382

**JAMES HIGHTOWER III**  
*Director of Community Engagement*  
jhightower@potomacschool.org  
(703) 873-6154

**SANIL PATEL**  
*Associate Director*  
spatel@potomacschool.org  
(703) 749-6386

**CHRISTOPHER ZISSI**  
*Associate Director*  
czissi@potomacschool.org  
(703) 873-5545

**KAREN DJORUP**  
*Coordinator*  
kdjorup@potomacschool.org  
(703) 883-2242

### ACADEMIC PROGRAM

- All courses are highly rigorous and college preparatory.
- All Upper School students take at least five academic courses each semester.
- The school year consists of two semesters.
- Each year-long course is worth one credit.
- Honors and Advanced enrollment is based upon departmental approval.
- Due to the structure of the curriculum, very few students take Advanced courses prior to 11<sup>th</sup> grade.
- The Potomac School does not rank students or provide a GPA.
- At Potomac, English and history do not offer an Honors level in grades 9 and 10. In 11<sup>th</sup> grade, students have a choice of College Prep or Honors English and Advanced U.S. History, in addition to the College Prep level. In 12<sup>th</sup> grade, students have the opportunity to take electives, some of which are taught at the Advanced level.
- Beginning with the 2023-24 academic school year, Potomac transitioned from a two-day rotation with classes meeting every other day for 75 minutes to a six-day rolling rotation with classes meeting every other day for 70 minutes.

### UNDERSTANDING COURSE NOMENCLATURE

- In an effort to streamline and clarify courses that are accelerated, Potomac faculty and administration made the decision in 2019 to rename all courses that are taught at an honors or advanced level. While these courses were denoted on the transcript with an (H) under 'level' prior to 2019-20, many courses carried different names depending upon department. Former names included accelerated, advanced, and honors. In the case of honors science courses, the course name did not contain 'honors' at all (e.g., Physics: Mathematical Models and Chemistry: Quantitative Analysis).
- The Math Department has four levels: Advanced, Honors, Extended, and College Prep. Former names were Accelerated (H), Advanced, and Regular.

### SCHOOL MISSION

*At The Potomac School, we believe that intellectual development, love of learning, and strength of character are complementary, and equally essential, educational goals. With a firm commitment to our core values and a rigorous academic program, we prepare students to lead lives of purpose, achievement, and generosity of spirit.*

## CONCENTRATION PROGRAMS

Potomac offers four concentration programs for students who are interested in intensive study in a particular discipline. Students in the EFEB, GPAC, and SERC concentrations design and conduct original research projects. All four programs have required courses; VPAC includes after-school and/or co-curricular commitments, and the SERC and EFEB concentrations require summer work between 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades. The number of students admitted to GPAC, SERC, and VPAC is limited, and admission to these programs is competitive.

- Global Perspectives and Citizenship Program (GPAC): 15 students in the Class of 2025
- Science and Engineering Research Center (SERC): 11 students in the Class of 2025
- Visual and Performing Arts Concentration (VPAC): 11 students in the Class of 2025 – 5 Music, 5 Studio Art, 1 Theater
- Economics, Finance, Entrepreneurship, and Business (EFEB): 14 students in the Class of 2025

## POTOMAC HONORS AND ADVANCED COURSE OFFERINGS

### 30 courses at the Honors level

Honors Algebra 2  
Honors Art History  
Honors Biology  
Honors Classics: Introduction to Homeric Greek  
Honors Chemistry  
Honors Chinese 3, 4  
Honors Concert Band/Jazz Band  
Honors English 11  
Honors French 2, 3, 4, 5  
Honors Geometry  
Honors GPAC 10: Global Studies  
Honors Handbells Ensemble  
Honors Latin 2, 3, 4  
Honors Physics  
Honors Precalculus  
Honors Rhetorical Analysis  
Honors SERC 10: Integrated Chemistry & Physics  
Honors SERC 10: Topics in Science & Engineering  
Honors Spanish 2, 3, 4, 5  
Honors Spanish: Food, Culture, and Society  
Honors Spanish: Latin American Studies

---

### 42 courses at the Advanced level (college-level equivalent)

Advanced Biology  
Advanced Calculus 1  
Advanced Calculus 1 and 2  
Advanced Chemistry  
Advanced Children's Literature  
Advanced Chinese  
Advanced Comparative Politics: Power and Politics in the 21st Century  
Advanced Computer Science  
Advanced Ethics  
Advanced Film Studies  
Advanced French: Global Challenges and the Francophone World  
Advanced French: Francophone Literature  
Advanced GPAC 11: Research  
Advanced GPAC 12: Documentation and Presentation  
Advanced Humanities Seminar: World War I, "The Wasteland," and the Aftermath  
Advanced Latin: Vergil's *Aeneid* & Caesar's *De Bellis Gallicis*  
Advanced Linear Algebra  
Advanced Lyric Poetry  
Advanced Macroeconomics  
Advanced Masterpieces of British Women's Literature  
Advanced Mechatronics  
Advanced Microeconomics  
Advanced Minds on the Edge: Representing Troubled Psyches in Literature  
Advanced Modern Women Writers  
Advanced Multivariable Calculus  
Advanced Music Theory  
Advanced Organic Chemistry  
Advanced Physics: Electricity and Magnetism  
Advanced Physics: Mechanics  
Advanced Populations and Environmental Studies  
Advanced Python Applications  
Advanced Python Programming  
Advanced Queer Studies  
Advanced Representing Women in Literature  
Advanced SERC 11: Independent Research  
Advanced SERC 12: Documentation & Presentation  
Advanced Spanish Language & Culture  
Advanced Spanish Literature A: Pícaros, Donjuanes and Quijotes: Archetypes of Spanish Golden Age Literature  
Advanced Spanish Literature B: Identity and Reality in Spanish and Latin American Contemporary Literature  
Advanced Probability and Statistics  
Advanced United States History  
Advanced U.S. Government & Politics

## 2024–25 STANDARDIZED TEST RANGES

ACT (44 tested)	MIDDLE 50%	MEAN
COMPOSITE	32-35	33

  

SAT (77 tested)	MIDDLE 50%	MEAN
COMBINED	1270-1510	1386
EBRW	660-760	695
MATH	620-770	691

## AP SCORES

- 77 members of the Class of 2025 took 164 exams in 19 subjects in May 2024.
- 78% of them earned a 4 or 5.
- 95% earned a 3 or better.

## MOVING BEYOND THE AP

Beginning with the 2022–23 academic year, The Potomac School no longer subscribes to the AP curriculum. The highest level of course work is designated as “Advanced.” We made this decision as part of our ongoing curriculum review and in the interest of offering our students the most relevant and enriching education possible.

Our Upper School faculty and administration began the work of developing rigorous course options that will offer students interdisciplinary learning experiences and opportunities for independent work. Potomac faculty continue to develop challenging advanced courses that address student interests and build critical skills.

## GLOBAL ONLINE ACADEMY

The Potomac School partners with Global Online Academy (GOA), a consortium of independent schools that enables its members to offer their students online courses that address particular academic interests and may be outside the scope of their curricula. GOA has over 125 member schools and currently offers approximately 40 rigorous online courses available to Potomac students in a wide range of academic disciplines. Taught by faculty from the member schools, GOA classes bring together students from across the U.S. and around the world, creating an academic experience shaped by shared interests and multiple perspectives. Potomac credit is awarded upon successful completion of these courses.

## GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

21 credits, including successful completion of

- English (4 years)
- History (3 years: 2 world history and 1 U.S. history)
- Mathematics (3 years, including geometry and algebra 2)
- Science (3 years: biology, chemistry, and physics)
- World Languages (3 years of the same language)
- Arts (3 semesters in 2 different areas: visual art, music, or theatre or four full years of art in the same area. Distribution requirement waived for four-year participants in a music ensemble group or VPAC)
- Non-academic requirements (8 of 12 seasons of athletics/activities)

*The Potomac School is a founding member of the Association of College Counselors in Independent Schools (ACCIS) and a member of the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) and complies with the Guide to Ethical Practice in College Admission.*

## COLLEGE MATRICULATION LIST 2021-2024

American University (3)  
Amherst College (3)  
Auburn University (3)  
Barnard College (3)  
Bentley University (1)  
Boston College (13)  
Boston University (6)  
Bowdoin College (2)  
Brown University (7)  
Bucknell University (6)  
Carleton College (1)  
Carnegie Mellon University (1)  
Case Western Reserve University (4)  
Claremont McKenna College (2)  
Clemson University (5)  
Colby College (7)  
Colgate University (7)  
Colorado College (1)  
Columbia University in the City of New York (3)  
Cornell University (4)  
Dartmouth College (13)  
Davidson College (3)  
Denison University (1)  
Dickinson College (3)  
Duke University (10)  
Emory University (6)  
Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (1)  
Fordham University (1)  
Franklin and Marshall College (2)  
George Mason University (2)  
George Washington University (1)  
Georgetown University (7)  
Georgia Institute of Technology-Main Campus (1)  
Gettysburg College (1)  
Hamilton College (7)  
Harvard University (10)  
Haverford College (1)  
Howard University (1)  
Imperial College London (1)  
Indiana University (Bloomington) (5)  
James Madison University (4)  
Johns Hopkins University (3)  
Kenyon College (2)  
Lafayette College (3)  
Lehigh University (2)  
Loyola Marymount University (1)  
Loyola University Maryland (1)  
Macalester College (1)  
Marymount University (1)  
Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences (1)  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology (1)  
McGill University (1)  
Merrimack College (1)  
Michigan State University (3)  
Middlebury College (7)  
Missouri University of Science and Technology (1)  
Morehouse College (1)  
New York University (7)  
Northeastern University (6)  
Northwestern University (8)  
Oberlin College (1)  
Occidental College (1)  
Ohio State University-Main Campus (1)  
Pennsylvania State University (4)  
Pitzer College (2)  
Pomona College (2)  
Princeton University (5)  
Providence College (1)  
Purdue University (3)  
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (1)  
Rice University (2)  
Saint Anselm College (1)  
Santa Clara University (3)  
Savannah College of Art & Design (1)  
Shepherd University (1)  
Skidmore College (1)  
Smith College (1)  
Southern Methodist University (1)  
Spelman College (3)  
St. Lawrence University (1)  
Stanford University (6)  
Swarthmore College (2)  
Syracuse University (5)  
Texas Christian University (2)  
The Catholic University of America (1)  
The George Washington University (3)  
The University of Montana (1)  
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (2)  
The University of Texas at Austin (1)  
Trinity College (1)  
Trinity College Dublin (2)  
Tufts University (4)  
Tulane University of Louisiana (7)  
United States Naval Academy (3)  
University of Arizona (1)  
University of California, Berkeley (2)  
University of California, Los Angeles (3)  
University of California, Davis (1)  
University of Chicago (6)  
University of Colorado Boulder (1)  
University of Denver (3)  
University of Georgia (2)  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (1)  
University of Mary Washington (1)  
University of Maryland-College Park (3)  
University of Miami (6)  
University of Michigan-Ann Arbor (4)  
University of Notre Dame (2)  
University of Oxford (1)  
University of Pennsylvania (9)  
University of Richmond (5)  
University of Rochester (1)  
University of South Carolina (1)  
University of Southern California (7)  
University of St Andrews (1)  
University of Virginia (19)  
University of Wisconsin-Madison (4)  
Vanderbilt University (2)  
Villanova University (2)  
Virginia Commonwealth University (1)  
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (3)  
Virginia Tech (2)  
Virginia Wesleyan University (1)  
Wabash College (1)  
Wake Forest University (11)  
Washington and Lee University (8)  
Washington University in St Louis (7)  
Wellesley College (1)  
Wesleyan University (4)  
William & Mary (18)  
Williams College (6)  
Worcester Polytechnic Institute (2)  
Xavier University (1)  
Yale University (1)