



MISSION

Our mission—*shaping the minds and the hearts of the people who will change the world*—is a promise to our students and our families.

At SPA, our mission is more than just a sign on the wall. It inspires us to be thoughtful about everything we do. It inspires us to be our best and reminds us that we have the responsibility to respect the unique potential in every child. There are literally thousands of decisions made every day by our faculty, staff, and students, and these decisions define who we are. We ask everyone in our community to use our mission statement as a filter: is this decision in alignment with our mission?

Our mission gives us purpose. It represents our greatest aspirations and values. But most of all, it reflects our deep belief in the talents and capabilities of our students.

VALUES

The SPA experience is shaped by five core values:

Community
Excellence
Belonging
Kindness
Purpose

STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Highlights of the Upper School experience at SPA include:

- discussion-based seminar classes that emphasize thoughtful participation and clear expression of ideas.
- independent research papers in history.
- use of sophisticated lab equipment and practice in scientific writing.
- focus on logic, critical thinking, and clear communication in math.
- oral proficiency and cultural competence in world language.
- creative expression in music, theater, visual art, and design.

SPA graduates arrive at college:

- accustomed to working independently using discipline-specific modes of thinking and writing.
- comfortable consulting teachers with questions and building rapport with faculty mentors.
- ready to use the skills, habits, and attitudes that enable them to thrive and lead from the start.

2

campuses in the heart
of Saint Paul, MN

34%

identify as
students of
color (PreK-12)

952

PreK-12 students

Approximately

\$4.75M

30% of students receive financial aid

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INDEPENDENT CURRICULUM

- All courses are independently designed (not based on exams such as AP or IB), in order to challenge all students at a high level comparable to, or exceeding, the difficulty associated with exam-based courses. All courses emphasize student engagement and collaboration.
- College-level texts are used in most junior/senior year courses.
- SPA does not use block scheduling, and the maximum course load is 7 classes per semester.

COURSE LEVELS

- Our standard curriculum is taught at a challenging level meant to prepare students for the rigors of university coursework.
- Honors sections offer accelerated study only in required courses for Math, Biology, and Chemistry. Placement by faculty.
- English, History, World Language and CSE departments do not have honors sections.
- Advanced courses offer a very high level of academic challenge using college-level materials and assignments.
- SPA students may choose to take an AP exam after completion of courses [marked ✧]. Of those who do, more than 90% score 3 or higher and more than two-thirds earn a 4 or 5.

UPPER SCHOOL CURRICULUM AND REQUIREMENTS

ENGLISH 4 years required including English 9 English 10 Junior and Senior semester electives, two sets of electives are offered in alternate years	Semester 1 courses ✧ Big Books: The Epic Classics in Society Literature and the Environment Literature of Migration Writing Seminar: Critical Contexts	Semester 2 courses ✧ Creative Writing: Poetry and Poetics Gender in Literature Literature of Monstrosity Literature in the Asian Diaspora Topics in Literary Analysis: Visual Narrative	
HISTORY 3 yearlong courses required World History 9 World History 10 ✧ US History ✧	Semester 1 courses Gender in the Americas Government and Citizenship History of Refugee Communities History of Thought Native American Studies	Semester 2 courses Economics History of Law History of Medicine History of Race South Asian American Studies US Foreign Policy since WWII World Religions	Advanced Courses Adv US History Seminar - Sem 1 Adv Historical Research: Directed - Sem 1 Adv Historical Research: Applied - Sem 2
WORLD LANGUAGE 3-level requirement including two years' study in the upper school	Year long courses: Chinese I, II, III, IV French I, II, III, IV German I, II, III, IV Spanish I, II, III, IV, V	Advanced Courses Sem 1 ✧ Adv Chinese: Ancient Politics Adv French: Justice & Revolution Adv German: Democracy Falters Adv Spanish: Identities of Spain	Advanced Courses Sem 2 ✧ Adv Chinese: Modern Politics Adv French: Local Connections Adv German: Fighting Fascism Adv Spanish: Caribbean Identities
COMPUTER SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING No requirement Academic credit bearing electives	Semester 1 courses Programming and Problem Solving Robotics Principles of Engineering	Semester 2 courses Principles of Data Science Principles of Engineering	Advanced Courses Adv Programming I, II ✧ Adv Projects: CSCI & Engr Adv Topics Engr: Electrical Adv Topics Engr: Product Adv Topics in Engr: Aerospace
MATH 3 yearlong courses required Faculty place students by level Standard: Geometry, Algebra II, Precalculus or Probability and Statistics I/II Honors: Geometry, Algebra II Precalculus	Semester 1 courses Probability and Statistics I Calculus I Data Science	Semester 2 courses Probability and Statistics II Calculus II	Advanced Courses Adv Probability and Statistics I, II ✧ Calculus A, B ✧, C ✧ (3 separate semester courses) Topics in Data Science - Sem 2 Adv Topics: Diff Multivariable Calculus Adv Topics: Discrete Dynamical Sys 2026-27: Adv Topics in Linear Algebra Combinatorics
SCIENCE 3 yearlong lab science courses required: Physics 9 (year) - all take same level Faculty place students in Regular or Honors for: Biology (year) Chemistry (year)	Prerequisite Physics (PC=Precalc) Relativity and Quantum Physics Advanced Courses Adv Mechanics with Calculus ✧ Electricity & Magnetism with Calculus ✧	Prerequisite Biology (PC=Precalc) Environmental Science Neuroscience Genetics Human Physiology Botany Advanced Courses Adv Science Research Sem 1 or 2 with faculty approval Adv Biology (PC) ✧	Prerequisite Chemistry (PC=Precalc) Forensic Science Advanced Courses Organic Chemistry (PC) Adv Chemistry (PC) ✧
VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS .75 credits required, typically 3 semesters	Visual Art Semester Courses: Level I & II Drawing I, Drawing II: Mixed Media Painting I, Painting II: Mixed Media Ceramics I, Ceramics II: Fabrication, Ceramics II: Wheel Throwing Photography I, Photography II: Expanded Projects Video Arts I, Video Arts II: Animation Sculpture I	Music and Theater Semester Courses Academy Chorale Summit Singers US Jazz Band Academy Symphony Theatrical Arts	Advanced Courses Honors Sinfonia Adv Art: 2D Workshop Adv Art: 3D Workshop Adv Art: Photo Workshop Adv Art: Video Workshop Adv Theater: Directing Adv Theater: Acting
DEBATE, JOURNALISM, YEARBOOK Academic credit-bearing elective courses with competition or production components beyond class time	Level I Courses (semester) Beg Debate Public Speaking Writing for Publication Graphic Design Photojournalism	Level II Courses (year) Journalism: Print Journalism: Multimedia Journalism: Yearbook	Advanced Courses Adv Debate Edit. Leadership: Print Edit. Leadership: Multimedia Edit. Leadership: Yearbook

GRADES, SCORES, AND TESTING CHOICES					GRADING	
GPA CUMULATIVE GPA (UNWEIGHTED)	STUDENTS MEAN	2025	2024	2023	All grades and GPA are unweighted, and the highest grade earned is an A. We do not report class rank. A = 93-100 C = 73-76 A- = 90-92 C- = 70-72 B+ = 87-89 D+ = 67-69 B = 83-86 D = 63-66 B- = 80-82 D- = 60-62 C+ = 77-79 	
		95 3.72	96 3.68	98 3.75		
ACT	TOOK ACT					
	MID 50%	25-34	26-34	26-34		
SAT	TOOK SAT					
	MID 50%	1320-1480	1310-1500	1290-1500		

STATE AND NATIONAL RECOGNITION	
STEM • ISEF International Science Fair national award winners in five of the past six years. Students qualified seven consecutive years, 4 students in 2025. State Science Fair: 60 students in 5 years • National Junior Science and Humanities Symposium: presenters in 2022-2025, winner in 2020 • Teams: State Science Olympiad 2nd in 2023. Robotics teams to state 2023-2024; State Math Team 2024	
DEBATE • Public Forum teams have qualified for state and nationals four of the past five years.	
ATHLETICS • 27 NCAA recruited athletes 2021-2025 • State Titles: Boys tennis 2022-2025; Boys soccer 2023-2025, Girls soccer 2024, 2nd in 2023 • State Qualifiers: Teams: Girls nordic 2021-2025; Girls and Boys fencing placed Top 5 2022-2025 Individuals: swim and dive, cross-country, alpine skiing, fencing, track, golf, tennis 2021-2025	
PUBLICATIONS • The Rubicon (print newspaper) and RubicOnline: NSPA All American with Distinction; Pacemaker Finalist / Winner 2015-2025; CSPA Crown Winner 2015-2025 • Iris Art & Literature Magazine: CSPA Crown Winner 2024; NSPA Pacemaker Award 2021-2023 and Design of the Year Award 2023; NCTE Realm Award 2023 • IBID yearbook Jostens National Program of Excellence 2023 • National High School Journalism Teacher of the Year: Distinguished Adviser 2025 • Minnesota Journalist of the Year Award winner 2024	
ARTS AND HUMANITIES • Quiz Bowl: 5th at Nationals 2023; qualified for Nationals 8 out of the past 10 years • Drama awards from Hennepin Theater Trust: dramatic play - 2022 (13), 2023 (14); musical - 2021 (22), 2025 (21). One Act Play earned top honors at State Festival 2022 • National gold medalist in the Scholastic Art and Writing competitions 2025 • Minnesota Scholastic Art Competition: 18 awards (4 Gold Keys) 2025	

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT	
STUDENTS ENGAGE IN A WIDE RANGE OF CULTURAL AND COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES.	
 10+	 45+
affinity groups	clubs and special interest groups
 86%	 75%
participate in the arts	play at least one sport

