DUKE SCHOOL

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MISSION STATEMENT

Curiosity, active inquiry, and discovery are at the core of what we do.

Here, where children are known and connected, they learn to think critically, collaborate, and communicate.

Duke School students meet the future with confidence and purpose.

DUKE SCHOOL

3716 Erwin Road, Durham, NC 27705
www.dukeschool.org

Duke School is an independent preschool (three-year-olds) through eighth-grade project-based school. Founded in 1947 as the lab school at Duke University and independent since the mid-1980s, we are celebrating 80 years in progressive education.

ABOUT DUKE SCHOOL

Duke School is a non-sectarian, progressive school serving approximately 500 students from preschool through eighth grade on a vibrant 20-acre campus in Durham, NC. Most families live in Durham or Chapel Hill, and the Southern Association of Independent Schools accredits the school.

Our graduates leave well-prepared for a wide range of high school experiences—independent, public, and boarding—across North Carolina and beyond. Many go on to earn top academic honors, and it's not uncommon to find Duke School alumni among the student body at the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics each year.

OUR PROGRAM

At Duke School, learning begins with curiosity. Our students explore big questions through hands-on projects and purposeful instruction across disciplines. In every grade, students take on three extended projects, each building core academic skills and one featuring design thinking as a central component.

Our curriculum combines academic rigor with creativity and joy. Nationally recognized standards guide our work, including the NCTM in math, NAEYC in early childhood education, NGSS in science, and NCSS in social studies. Our approach is rooted in deep understanding, whether students are solving real-world math problems, conducting lab experiments, writing with voice and clarity, or investigating the past through a social justice lens.

Social-emotional learning is woven throughout. In Early Childhood and Lower School, the Responsive Classroom approach supports autonomy, competence, and strong relationships. In Middle School, the Developmental Designs framework carries that work forward, helping ensure every student is known, valued, and empowered through adolescence.

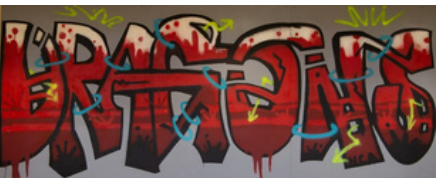
Duke School students grow into agile thinkers, skilled collaborators, and confident learners—ready to lead in whatever comes next.

ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING

Assessment at Duke School is ongoing, thoughtful, and personal. Teachers use benchmarks in every subject to track growth and guide instruction, setting individualized goals based on how each child learns best.

Families receive detailed progress reports twice per year, including both narrative reflections and checklist indicators of benchmark progress. Each student also receives a Learner Profile, which highlights strengths and goals across three dimensions: academic growth, community participation, and self-management.

Middle schoolers take increasing ownership of their learning, leading conferences alongside their advisors and families to reflect, plan, and grow.





THE EIGHTH-GRADE CAPSTONE PROJECT

Eighth graders spend the last three and a half months of their careers designing and carrying out their own projects. Topics have ranged from building a clock to designing a piece of street art (left: art designed by Noah Andrews '19 for their Capstone), from researching Jewish food in the South to investigating paradoxes, and more. Each student conducts significant research, seeks guidance from an expert in the field, determines a way to make an impact with their new knowledge and skill, and culminates the effort with a twenty-minute presentation to teachers, parents, and peers. Alumni regularly report that they surpass their high school peers in planning and executing projects of significant scope as well as in delivering presentations.

One alum notes, "The Capstone project is your final chance to create a toolkit that will set you up for all your future endeavors. You don't quite realize everything you learn from Duke School until after you graduate."

DUKE SCHOOL IN THE COMMUNITY

- Area high school teachers appreciate Duke School alumni for their engagement, autonomy, and willingness to see teachers as guides and partners.
- Over 70% of Duke School alumni matriculate to highly selective colleges (Barron's College Rankings).
- Educators from around the country learn about the project approach at Duke School's Educators' Institute.

HIGH SCHOOL ACCEPTANCES | CLASSES 2017-2026

LOCAL HIGH SCHOOLS

Cedar Ridge High School - IB Program
Chapel Hill High School
Carolina Collegiate
Carrboro High School
Durham School of the Arts
East Chapel Hill High School
Eno River Academy
Green Level High School
Jordan High School
J.D. Clement Early College High School
Leesville Road High School
Middle Creek High School
North Carolina School of Science & Mathematics
Research Triangle High School
Riverside High School - STEM Program
South Granville High School
Voyager Academy
Woods Charter School

AREA INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

Camelot Academy
Cardinal Gibbons
Carolina Friends School
Cary Academy
Durham Academy
St. Mary's School
Trinity School
Carolina Preparatory Academy
(formerly Montessori School of Raleigh)

BOARDING & INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS

American School Foundation of Mexico City
Chatham Hall
Christ School
Dwight School
Northfield Mount Hermon
Phillips Exeter Academy
St. Andrew's School
St. Paul's School
The Loomis Chaffee School
The Madeira School
The Taft School
United World College - Singapore
Virginia Episcopal School
Woodberry Forest School

COLLEGE MATRICULATION | DS CLASSES 2012-2022

Amherst College (5)
American University
Appalachian State University (6)
Barnard College (2)
Boston College
Boston University
Brown University (4)
California College of the Arts
California Institute of Technology (2)
Carleton College (2)
Carnegie Mellon University
Carson Newman University
Case Western Reserve University (3)
Clemson University (2)
College of Charleston (2)
Colorado College
Columbia University
Cornell University
Dartmouth College (2)
Davidson College (5)
Depaul University
Drexel University
Duke University (14)
East Carolina University
Elon University (8)
Emerson College
Emory University (3)
Furman University (2)
George Washington University (2)
Georgia Institute of Technology
Georgetown University
Gettysburg College
Goucher College
Guilford College (2)
Hamilton College
Johns Hopkins University
Kenyon College (2)
Lafayette College
Lawrence University
Loyola Marymount University
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Mercyhurst University
Miami University
Middlebury College (3)
Muhlenberg College
New York University (3)
New York University - Shanghai
North Carolina State University (20)
Northeastern University (3)
Northwestern University (2)
Oberlin College (4)
Ohio State University
Pennsylvania State University (2)
Pepperdine University
Pomona College
Princeton University (6)
Rhode Island School of Design
Rice University (2)
Rochester School of Technology
Savannah College of Art & Design
Sciences Po Paris
Scripps College (2)
Skidmore College
Smith College
Stanford University
Texas Christian University
Tufts University (5)
Tulane University (3)
University of Arizona
University of California, Berkeley (2)
University of California, Santa Barbara
University of California, San Diego
University of Colorado, Boulder (4)
University of Florida
University of Illinois
niversity of Hawaii
University of Maryland
University of Massachusetts
University of Michigan (5)
University of North Carolina at Asheville (4)
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (45)
University of North Carolina at Charlotte (7)
University of North Carolina at Greensboro (4)
University of North Carolina at Wilmington (5)
University of Notre Dame
University of Oregon
University of Pennsylvania (2)
University of Pittsburgh
University of Rhode Island
University of Richmond
University of Rochester (3)
University of Sheffield
University of St. Andrew's
University of South Carolina (3)
University of South Florida
University of Southern California (2)
University of Tampa
University of Tennessee
University of Texas at Austin (3)
University of Vermont (2)
University of Virginia
University of Washington (3)
University of Wisconsin (2)
Vanderbilt University (4)
Vassar College (5)
Virginia Commonwealth University
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (10)
Wake Forest University (5)
Washington & Lee University (2)
Washington University at St. Louis
Wellesley College
Wesleyan University (5)
William & Mary (3)
Yale University (2)