

# UPPER DIVISION

Grades 6-12



## OUR MISSION

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**WE WILL GRADUATE STUDENTS** WHO ARE ACCOMPLISHED IN THE ACADEMIC SKILLS ONE WOULD EXPECT; AT EASE BEYOND THEIR BORDERS; TRULY FLUENT IN A SECOND LANGUAGE; GOOD WRITERS AND SPEAKERS ONE AND ALL; CONFIDENT BECAUSE THEY EXCEL IN A PARTICULAR PASSION; ARTISTS NO MATTER THEIR FIELD; PRACTICAL IN THE WAYS OF THE WORLD; EMOTIONALLY UNAFRAID AND PHYSICALLY FIT; HUMBLE ABOUT THEIR GIFTS AND GENEROUS OF SPIRIT; TRUSTWORTHY; AWARE THAT THEIR BEHAVIOR MAKES A DIFFERENCE IN OUR ECOSYSTEM; GREAT LEADERS WHEN THEY CAN BE, GOOD FOLLOWERS WHEN THEY SHOULD BE; ON THEIR WAY TO WELL-CHOSEN HIGHER EDUCATION; AND, MOST IMPORTANTLY, ARCHITECTS OF LIVES THAT TRANSCEND THE ORDINARY.

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**WE WILL SHARE OUR PROSPERITY** WITH THOSE WHO NEED IT, INITIALLY THROUGH TRADITIONAL FINANCIAL AID AND, AS WE GROW, IN MORE INNOVATIVE AND BROADER-SCALE WAYS THAT LEAP THE WALLS OF OUR CAMPUSES.

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**WE WILL PROVIDE OUR FACULTY** AND STAFF MEMBERS A SPECIAL PLACE TO PURSUE THE SCIENCE AND ART OF TEACHING. WE WANT TO ALIGN THE REWARDS OF TEACHING MORE CLOSELY WITH THE VALUE IT BRINGS TO SOCIETY, PROVIDE TEACHERS OPPORTUNITIES TO DEEPEN THEIR SKILLS AND BE A PLACE WHERE CAREERS, IN AND OUT OF THE CLASSROOM, CAN FLOURISH.

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**WE WILL ADVANCE EDUCATION** BY SETTING AN EXAMPLE AS AN EFFECTIVE, DIVERSE AND ACCOUNTABLE SCHOOL; BY CONTINUOUSLY INVESTING IN WAYS TO BECOME BETTER AT WHAT WE DO; AND BY MAKING AVAILABLE OUR DISCOVERIES, LARGE AND SMALL, TO COLLEAGUES IN THE CAUSE OF EDUCATION.

## AVENUES NEW YORK

**A**venues New York is the first campus of our global system of independent schools in major cities around the world. Avenues: The World School opened in 2012 with the mission to educate students to become global citizens of the 21st century. Our campus in New York is centered around a 10-story landmark building in the West Chelsea arts district of Manhattan. Avenues has three distinct divisions: the Early Learning Center (grades nursery, pre-kindergarten and kindergarten), the Lower Division (grades 1-5) and the Upper Division (grades 6-12). The Early Learning Center and Lower Division provide a language immersion track in either Chinese or Spanish. Students in the Upper Division continue their language study through intensive, interdisciplinary language courses and experiential learning opportunities in New York City and on trips abroad. All Avenues students follow a rigorous academic program that focuses on the qualities, competencies and knowledge necessary to live meaningful lives in an increasingly interconnected world.

The demands of the Upper Division curriculum and the discussion-based, interdisciplinary learning environment necessitate a highly selective admissions profile. In our admissions process, we aim to identify students who we believe will enrich and thrive in all aspects of Avenues. Some of the factors we consider are growth and potential; interests and activities; character and personality; and future contribution to the Avenues community. Avenues values a diverse learning environment and embraces diversity in all its forms. Avenues New York families represent 75 countries and speak more than 40 languages.

### A NEW SCHOOL OF THOUGHT

Avenues' graduation requirements are comparable to those of any top-tier private school in New York City and around the world. What sets Avenues apart, however, is the culture of flexibility and innovation that permeates our curriculum and that drives our commitment to problem- and project-based learning. A further distinction of Avenues is our mission to cultivate globally minded students who are "at ease beyond their borders." As never before, citizens of the world must understand the dependencies and connections between peoples and countries; they must move easily across boundaries; they must be comfortable with difference and ambiguity; they must speak languages other than their own; and they must search for answers beyond themselves. This is an Avenues education.

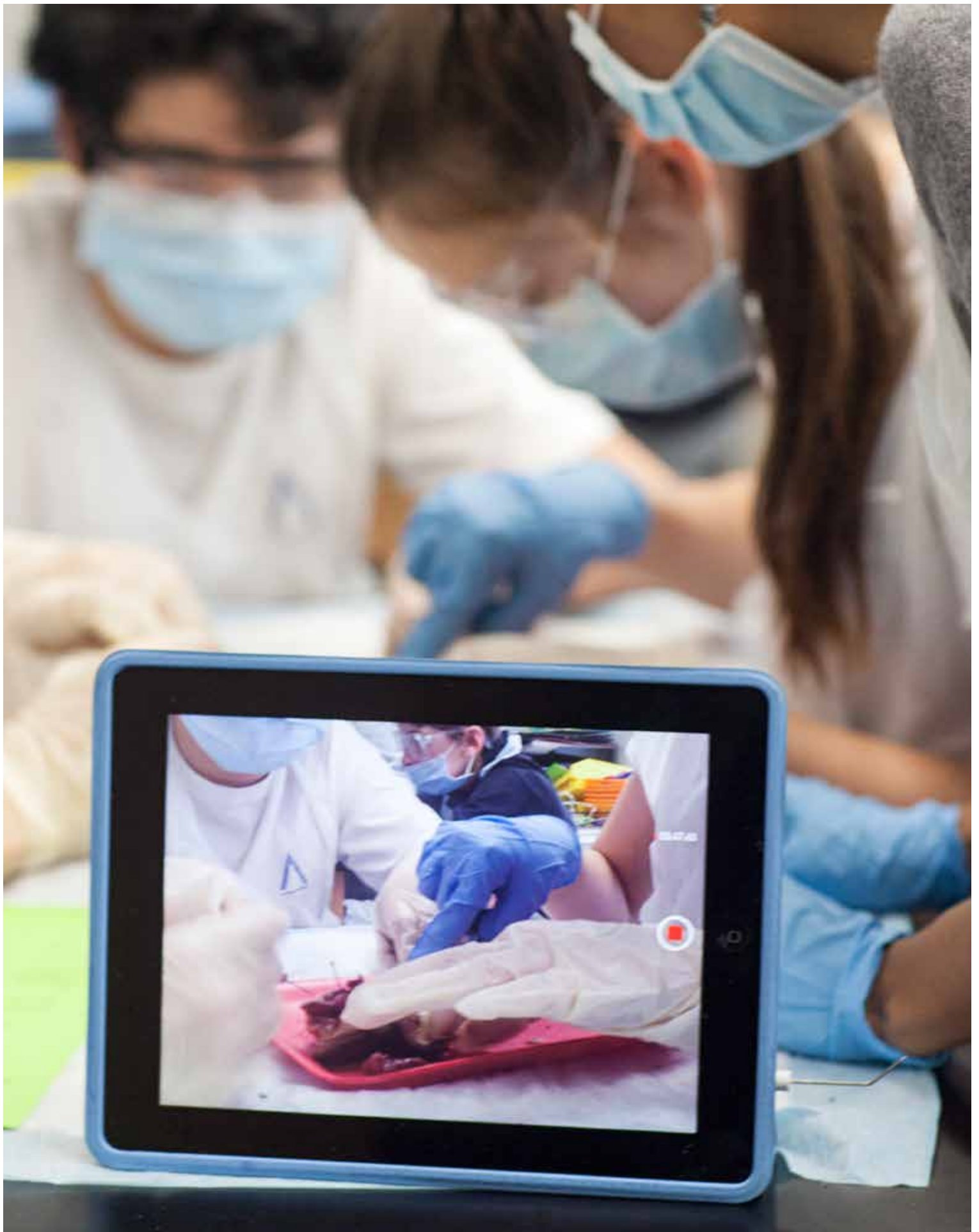


**MIDDLE  
GRADES  
PROGRAM**

**GRADES 6-8**

**T**he middle grades are an opportunity to instill a love of learning that will inspire students for the rest of their lives and prepare them to navigate an increasingly complex and competitive global community. Research shows that children’s brains grow more at this time than at any other, with the exception of the first 17 months after birth. This growth allows students to make enormous cognitive leaps, especially in their ability to focus and absorb rich and complex information. At the same time the physical changes their bodies undergo can create a sense of disequilibrium and self-consciousness that affects social interactions. During this time of flux, middle-school-age children must find new ways to relate to others and to the wider world. We ensure that our students achieve the specific learning outcomes that will help them succeed academically, socially and emotionally as they move through school. By challenging our students to use their skills and knowledge in creative ways, we develop confident, collaborative and enthusiastic learners.

In the middle grades, students start to move from classroom to classroom. They acquire greater depth and proficiency in all their academic and co-curricular subjects, as well as an increasing facility with critical thinking. Assignments individualize opportunities for students to pursue their particular interests in depth, grounded in a common curriculum. Curricular emphasis is on reinforcing the core skills already acquired in earlier years. Courses include English, World Course, math, science, intensive language study in either Chinese or Spanish, the arts (drama, music and visual art) and physical education. Students of this age thrive in collaborative environments, so we often assign work in small teams on independent projects. The curriculum is progressive in its focus on depth of learning over breadth of exposure, its project- and problem-based orientation and its interdisciplinary nature.



## UPPER GRADES PROGRAM

### GRADES 9-12

In the upper grades, students consolidate and extend previous learning, as they grow increasingly independent, capable of abstraction, socially responsible and eager to pursue their interests in greater depth.

Through probing discussions of annotated texts in a discussion-based classroom setting, students discover how to direct their own learning with the teacher as coach and guide. They learn to analyze events as a historian does, to write like a poet, to debate like members of a scholarly symposium and to respect one another's perspectives. In short, every student finds their voice and develops the independent study habits that are crucial for success beyond high school. Sharing perspectives extends to math, too, where students work collaboratively on problems and present solutions to each other, discovering mathematical principles rather than simply committing them to memory.

Our mastery program allows students to engage in individual (or small group) pursuit of a cherished interest or passion. Our rich co-curricular program, shaped and led entirely by students, offers opportunities for students to pursue journalism, performance, governance, social reform, community service and a range of other special interests.

At all grade levels in the Upper Division, students meet regularly with their assigned dean of students. Specialists in the academic and social-emotional development of adolescents, our deans form strong connections to their students and steward each family through school transitions. In the upper grades, the deans are experienced college counselors who guide students through every step of the college application process.

At Avenues, Upper Division students bring energy, enthusiasm and individuality to the classroom, the playing fields and to the larger school community. We are committed to building a strong community through our core values of "welcome, safety and respect." In the Upper Division, those values are manifest in the connections that students make with one another and that we see blossoming into lifelong friendships.

HUMANITIES CLASSES IN THE UPPER DIVISION  
ARE CONDUCTED AROUND CIRCULAR TABLES  
TO FACILITATE STUDENT-LED DISCUSSION.





## GLOBAL HUMANITIES

All courses at Avenues are taught through integrated frameworks that encourage students to make connections and identify common themes across the curriculum. In the upper grades, students complete a three-year global humanities sequence in which they explore with increasing complexity the history, literature and cultures of the world. Students develop skills through close reading, narrative writing, scholarly discussion and, most importantly, by generating questions that allow them to react with empathy to the lives of others. In all humanities courses, students produce an extensive portfolio of narrative and analytical essays. Seniors conclude their humanities study by enrolling in English electives. Similarly, all seniors enroll in advanced seminars—yearlong, interdisciplinary capstone courses taught by instructors from multiple disciplines.

## MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

### **Singapore Math: Grades 6 and 7**

Avenues selected the Singapore math curriculum because it encourages inquiry and problem-based learning without sacrificing computational fluency. Based on the framework developed by the Singapore Ministry of Education, Singapore math draws on the best practices from around the world and takes problem-solving and bar modeling as the focus of mathematical learning. Throughout all units of study, students learn problem-solving skills and practice using mathematical language to explain their reasoning. The curriculum covers fractions, decimals, ratios and percentages, measurement, graphing, pre-algebra and geometry. Students make strong connections between math, art and science in STEAM projects. Towards the middle of seventh grade, students begin to engage more methodically in discussion-based mathematics, in preparation for the transition to Exeter math in eighth grade.

### **Exeter Math: Grades 8-11**

Exeter math is an integrated, problem-based approach to mathematics instruction that advances numeracy skills through sustained, deep engagement with mathematical concepts and operations. All students enroll in integrated math 1, 2 and 3, which employ the Exeter curriculum.

### **Electives**

In integrated math 3, students develop high levels of fluency in algebra, geometry, trigonometry, advanced algebra and precalculus. Those capable of advanced work tackle problems based on the foundational principles of calculus. At the completion of integrated math 3, faculty recommend students for higher-level math electives based on the sophistication of their problem solving and their demonstrated mastery of mathematical operations.

### **Science: Grades 6-8**

Students explore concepts in physics, biology and chemistry with a focus on making abstract concepts concrete. All science labs are undertaken in pairs and students are required to record their work meticulously in diagrams, graphs and analyses. Our project-based labs often take students outside the classroom, from the school's hallways to the city's parks to Black Rock Forest, an educational consortium in the Hudson Highlands that hosts overnight field trips for the study of river ecology and photosynthesis.

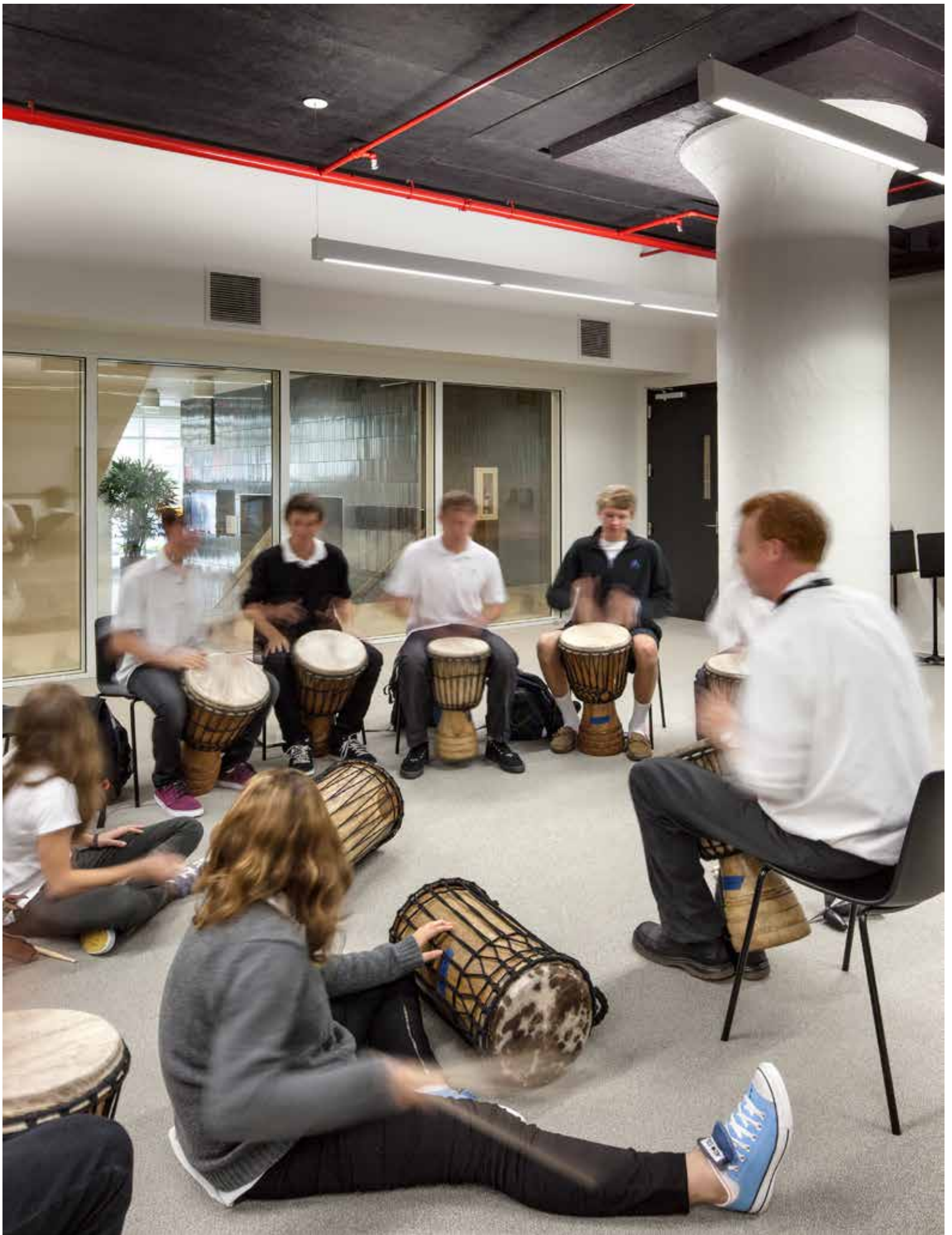


### Science: Grades 9–12

By engaging in authentic investigations and design projects, students in these grades develop a deep understanding of the big ideas that underscore all science and engineering work. These include the properties, structure and behavior of matter; energy transfer and resources; the biodiversity of ecosystems; and system dynamics. Our three-year sequence of integrated science leads students through a rich series of projects and experiments that emphasize core ideas in physics; biology; chemistry; earth and space science; and engineering design. Students master scientific concepts by making meaningful connections to the real world in thematic, project-based units.

With faculty recommendation and after completing the required three years of integrated science, students may enroll in advanced-level coursework in physics, chemistry and biology. Special topic electives are also available in the upper grades.

NINTH-GRADE PHYSICS STUDENTS WORK  
IN TEAMS TO DESIGN AND BUILD WORKING  
GENERATORS.



## THE ARTS

### Grades 6-8

In the middle grades, students continue to explore and discover their artistry while developing foundational techniques. They gain a deeper understanding of both the artistic process and the role of the arts culturally and historically. Instrumental and vocal students undertake solo and group work and perform throughout the year. In drama, students analyze and create texts, study the art of adaptation and explore various approaches to theater. In visual art, students practice a wide range of techniques while investigating a variety of 2-D and 3-D materials.

### Grades 9-12

In the upper grades, the art and design program encourages students to find their voice while pursuing their particular passions. Through individual and collaborative work, students develop rigorous artistic practices and learn how to iterate on each assignment. All ninth grade students take a course on the creative process that helps them make meaningful connections between ideas, materials and methods in the art studio. Tenth grade students are invited to select a workshop in either design and engineering or visual and digital arts, which prepare them for deep-dive electives in junior and senior years. Performing arts are offered as additional electives throughout the upper grades; more advanced electives in drama and music are also available in junior and senior years.

## HIGH INTENSITY PRACTICE

A metal worker eager to learn the art of ceramics enthusiastically enrolls in a university course. After struggling to get the clay to hold, he asks his teacher what he's doing wrong. The instructor says, "First throw a thousand pots, then we'll tackle that question." Through a program we call High Intensity Practice (HIP), offered in writing and math, our Upper Division students throw the equivalent of a thousand pots. HIP doesn't replace or reduce classroom instruction in writing and math, nor is it about deficit repair. Through HIP, we embrace the idea that the best strategy for cultivating lifelong skills is to spend a lot of time doing something with the right kind of guidance and coaching. To achieve this goal, we ask students to write on a variety of prompts and solve problems with quiet purpose. HIP builds fluency and promotes flexible, fast and fluid thinking.

## SOCIAL INNOVATION (GRADES 9-12)

Avenues' social innovation program develops young, action-oriented change-makers and helps them graduate with creative and entrepreneurial confidence, real-world problem-solving skills and project management experience. Each year, we select a group of students with strong records of social innovation work and a demonstrated commitment to transforming communities to serve as social innovation fellows. As fellows, they collaborate over the course of the year to launch projects that aim to benefit the community and create social good.

## THE WORLD COURSE

The heart of the Avenues curriculum is the World Course, a comprehensive and cohesive N-12 curriculum that aims to develop students who are not only at ease beyond their borders but also active and responsible citizens in their:

- Knowledge of the world's history, geography and ecology
- Intercultural understanding of and respect for diversity
- Awareness of the wider world and their place in it
- Willingness to take action
- Understanding of issues of justice and equality

In sixth through eighth grades, the World Course serves as one branch of the humanities in connection with English. In ninth through twelfth grades, the World Course is offered through electives on topics such as global social innovation, public health, developmental economics, emerging technologies, conflict resolution and the global eco-system. These courses are project based and encourage students to discover and develop meaningful connections to the world around them.

## INTENSIVE LANGUAGE STUDY

Graduating students who are “at ease beyond their borders” and “practical in the ways of the world” is a focal point of our mission statement. We see second language proficiency as a critical expression of these qualities, as well as a means of fostering strong communication skills in our students. In the Upper Division, we build on our eight-year immersion program with intensive language study in either Chinese or Spanish, stressing both cultural and linguistic proficiency. Combined with our diverse faculty and student body, our language program makes Avenues a truly international environment: walking through the halls, one regularly encounters teachers and students of all ages reading, writing, researching, speaking and singing in Chinese or Spanish. Students are assessed each year on reading, writing, speaking and listening using standardized ACTFL measures each spring. We place students based on their proficiency rather than their years of study, since our overall goal is facility in the second language. At present, the Upper Division offers up to four levels per grade in Chinese and Spanish. Introductory level language classes are offered for students entering sixth grade and above.

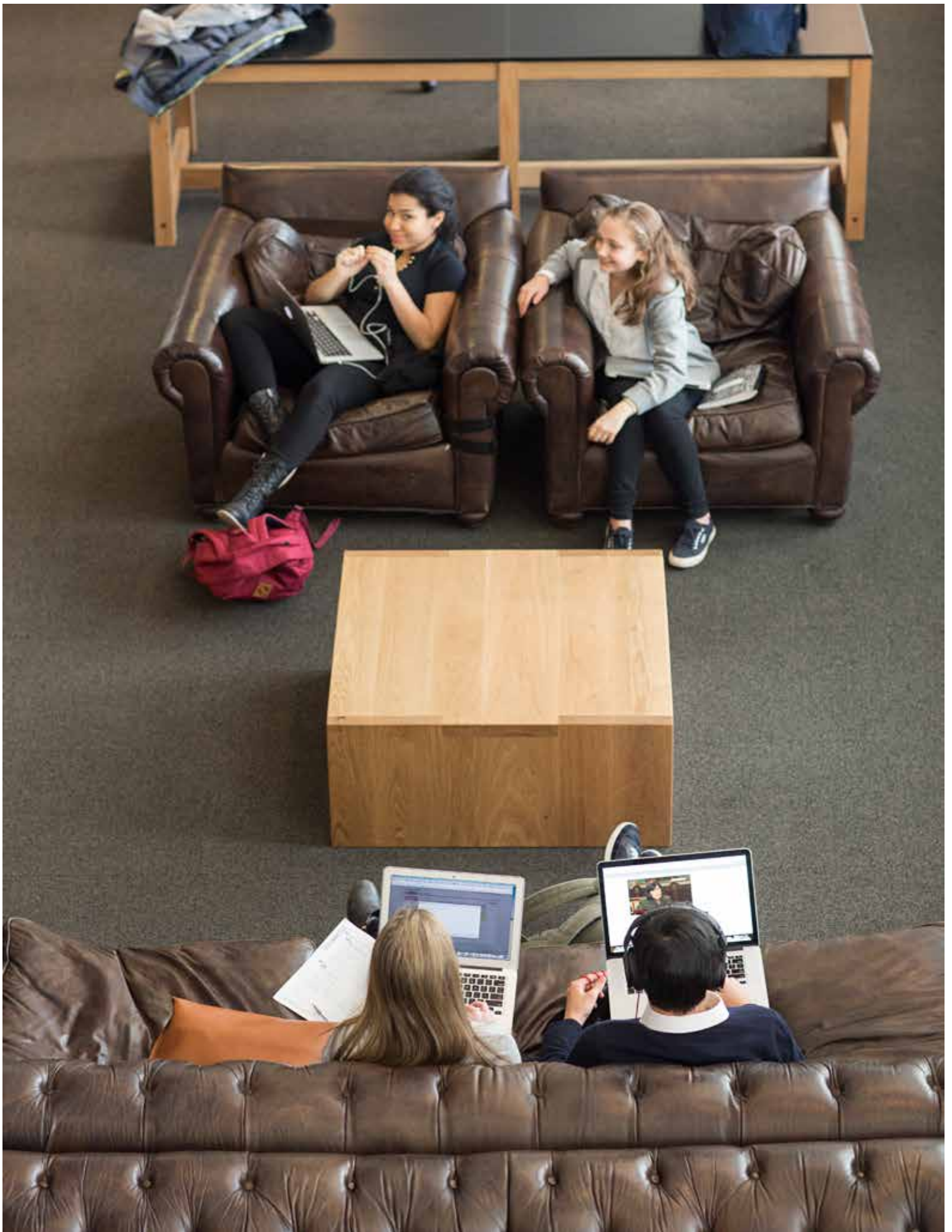
## GLOBAL JOURNEYS

Avenues offers opportunities for students to experience life in other countries through travel abroad in connection with language study or to other elements of the curriculum. Our goal is for each student to travel internationally on these programs at least once during sixth through eighth grades and again during ninth through twelfth grades.

## PROJECT-BASED LEARNING

Avenues provides a distinct and rigorous education that emphasizes collaboration, innovation and interdisciplinary inquiry. We cultivate these capacities in students through a project-based curriculum that prioritizes depth of understanding, critical thinking and problem-solving skills, as well as command and critique of written, oral and visual modes of communication. Throughout the Upper Division, students work in teams and as individuals to complete sub-





stantive interdisciplinary projects. Projects are designed to promote creativity and cognitive flexibility while teaching design thinking and research skills.

Project-based learning also plays a large role in our STEAM courses. STEAM is an educational approach that uses science, technology, engineering, the arts and mathematics as access points for inquiry, dialogue and critical thinking. STEAM classes emphasize the application of scientific knowledge and encourage students to think, research and conduct experimentation in the manner of professional scientists, engineers and artists. By the end of the course, students have learned to take thoughtful risks, be persistent in their problem solving and embrace collaboration.

### **TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION**

Avenues is privileged to be named an Apple Distinguished School for the second time, an honor received in both our second and fourth years of operation. This designation is reserved for programs that meet criteria for innovation, leadership and educational excellence and that demonstrate a clear vision of exemplary learning environments. Our 1:1 program provides every student with a MacBook Air as their primary learning tool. Students use technology to access course materials in the cloud. This dynamic platform gives faculty the flexibility to customize their courses at any time using the most current eBooks, online textbooks and multimedia sources available. The entire Avenues campus is a showcase for students' creative work and supports platforms for collaboration. Students can present their multimedia projects or e-portfolios via interactive displays and even on our multimedia video walls. Most importantly, we give students the tools to collaborate with their peers and teachers, both in their classrooms and around the world.

### **DEANS AND COLLEGE COUNSELING**

Charged with ensuring the success of our students, the deans of students are highly experienced educators who provide academic and social support throughout the Upper Division. Deans work closely with both students and parents, reporting on student progress and taking steps to ensure students and their families have a robust and rewarding educational experience at Avenues. Upon entering sixth grade, students are assigned a dean that will work with them through ninth grade. The relationship between student and dean provides a powerful source of continuity for students as they transition from the middle to the upper grades. For tenth through twelfth grades, students are assigned a new dean with expertise in college counseling.

Deans meet frequently with students, in small groups and one-on-one, to guide them in their academic and extracurricular choices and to raise questions that encourage self-reflection and self-exploration. By getting to know their advisees over multiple years, deans develop strong relationships that allow them to support students in producing compelling and competitive college applications. Avenues also offers a full range of resources and programs to support the college search and application process, including a spring break college tour, practice administrations of the SAT and ACT, standardized test preparation courses and a college essay writing course. Deans organize meetings each fall for students to speak with college admission representatives at the Avenues campus. Students have further opportunity to investigate colleges at our annual college fair, held each spring.



## FINDING YOUR PASSION

### **Minimester: Grades 6–8**

To provide further opportunities for students to explore areas beyond the regular curriculum, classes in the middle grades program stop for a week each year for minimester. During minimester, students choose a morning class and an afternoon class from a host of extra-curricular offerings, ranging from cooking to sports journalism, sailing to forensic science. For middle grades students, this opportunity to explore the unknown and find new interests builds confidence and helps prepare them for more self-directed study in the upper grades. Having gained knowledge of their gifts in minimester, students are ready to enter the mastery program in ninth grade.

### **Mastery Program: Grades 9–12**

As a cornerstone of the Avenues upper grades experience, the mastery program has one mission: to inspire a world of happier, more meaningful lives through the engagement of one's passions. Mastery provides students with time and space during the school day for the focused achievement of exceptional skill in a desired domain. A young historian might conduct research into a neglected historical figure that adds to the academic literature on that period; a team of budding scientists might work with college professors to harness the power of radio waves; a songwriter might work with musical mentors to write and produce her first album. The possibilities are endless in mastery, and our students' work is limited only by their imaginations. The mastery program culminates in a large-scale senior project, which students present in a public exhibition and support in an oral defense. Every student is placed in a learning community overseen and guided by a faculty or staff member who shares their passion. As students continue through the program, we encourage them to seek formal mentorship opportunities and field experiences in the areas in which they are working.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Developing a sense of responsibility towards the local and global community is a critical part of an Avenues education. Instead of focusing on hours, we provide a holistic program of community engagement in which students design independent portfolios focused on enterprise and social innovation. In community days, afterschool clubs, internships, minimesters, mastery projects or fifth term electives, students solve problems, perform advocacy, form partnerships, build coalitions and take direct action. Here, our students embody the spirit of the Avenues mission statement, as they strive to make a difference in our ecosystem and be great leaders when they can be, good followers when they should be—within and beyond the school day.

**Avenues**  
THE WORLD SCHOOL

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