



# THE POTOMAC SCHOOL

## 2020–21 ACADEMIC PROFILE

1301 Potomac School Road  
McLean, Virginia 22101

**CEEB #471396**

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### SCHOOL MISSION

*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.*

### 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, 1,061; Upper School, 459
- 170 full and part-time faculty
- 71% of faculty have advanced degrees
- Students receiving financial aid: 21%
- Students of color: 41%
- Senior class enrollment: 113
- Graduates attending four-year colleges: 100%
- Upper School average class size: 15
- Class of 2020 National Merit Semi-finalists: 5
- Class of 2020 National Merit Commended Students: 26

### 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.
- The Potomac School does not rank students or provide a GPA.
- Honors, AP, and Advanced enrollment is based upon departmental approval.
- Due to the structure of the curriculum, very few students take AP or Advanced courses prior to 11<sup>th</sup> grade.

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 AP English Literature and AP U.S. History in addition to the regular level. While the 12<sup>th</sup> grade English, history, and science electives are not designated as honors courses, they are taught at a level commensurate with work done after the completion of 11<sup>th</sup> grade work.

### GRADING POLICY – Potomac School Academics during COVID-19

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Potomac moved to remote learning on April 1, 2020, following Spring Break. Final grades in the 2019–20 academic year relied heavily on first semester work. The second semester has been factored into the year-long average; however, the first semester grade served as a “floor” grade below which students could not dip if they completed all second semester assignments and assessments with a good faith effort. This system allowed the school to support students and teachers in the shift to distance learning. One-semester classes in the spring semester 2020 were graded on a P/F basis.

Potomac began the 2020–21 academic year in distance learning mode and has moved to a hybrid learning model. Student engagement continues to be very strong. Grades are being issued on Potomac’s standard letter scale (A-F). Please note that the first marking period is being extended to allow students and faculty to settle into the academic year. Whereas first marking period grades are typically released in the first week of November, they will not be available until mid-November this year. We appreciate colleges’ patience and will be happy to provide these grades when available for our Early Decision and Early Action candidates.

### COURSE NOMENCLATURE CHANGES (as of 2019-20)

- 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 will have three levels: Honors, Extended, and Regular. Former names were Accelerated (H), Advanced, and Regular.

## POTOMAC OFFERS

### 25 courses at the Honors level:

Honors Algebra 2	Honors Precalculus
Honors Art History	Honors SERC 10 Chemistry & Physics
Honors Biology	Honors SERC 10 Science & Engineering
Honors Chemistry	Honors SERC 11 Research
Honors French 2, 3, 4, 5	Honors SERC 12 Documentation & Presentation
Honors Geometry	Honors Spanish 2, 3, 4, 5
Honors GPAC 10	
Honors GPAC 11	
Honors Greek	
Honors Latin 2, 3, 4	
Honors Physics	

### 18 courses at the AP level:

AP Biology	AP Music Theory
AP Calculus AB	AP Physics C (Mechanical)
AP Calculus BC	AP Spanish Language & Culture
AP Chemistry	AP Spanish Literature & Culture
AP Comparative Government & Politics	AP Statistics
AP Computer Science A	AP U.S. Government & Politics
AP English Literature	AP U.S. History
AP French Language & Culture	
AP Latin	
AP Macroeconomics	
AP Microeconomics	

### 9 courses at the Advanced level (college-level equivalent):

Advanced Chinese I	Advanced Humanities
Advanced Chinese II	Advanced Computer Science: Python
Advanced Francophone Literature	Advanced Organic Chemistry
Advanced Mechatronics	Advanced United States History
Advanced Linear Algebra	

## CONCENTRATION PROGRAMS

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

- Global Perspectives and Citizenship Program (GPAC): 13 students in the Class of 2020
- Science and Engineering Research Center (SERC): 8 students in the Class of 2020
- Visual and Performing Arts Concentration (VPAC): 14 students in the Class of 2020 – 3 Music, 6 Studio Art, 5 Theatre

## MOVING BEYOND THE AP

Beginning with the 2022–23 academic year, the Potomac School will no longer subscribe to the AP curriculum. The highest level of course work will be 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.

Over the past two years, 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 continues 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 80 member schools and currently offers approximately 50 rigorous online courses 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. We piloted the GOA program with seniors in 2019–20. 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. Distribution requirement waived for 4-year participants in a music ensemble group or VPAC)
- Non-academic requirements (9 of 12 seasons of athletics/activities)

## 2020 STANDARDIZED TEST RANGES

ACT (68 tested)	MIDDLE 50%	MEAN
COMPOSITE	30-35	32.4

SAT (68 tested)	MIDDLE 50%	MEAN
COMBINED	1375-1505	1426
EBRW	675-750	707
MATH	690-770	719

## 2020 AP SCORES

- 197 students sat for 507 exams in 26 subjects.
- 78% of our students earned a 4 or 5.
- 93% earned a 3 or better.

## COLLEGE MATRICULATION LIST 2017-2020

American University	Haverford College (2)	Tulane University (10)
Amherst College (3)	High Point University	United States Naval Academy
Barnard College	Indiana University (7)	University College London
Baylor University	Ithaca College (2)	University of Alabama
Berklee College of Music	James Madison University (4)	University of California, Berkeley (2)
Boston College (4)	Johns Hopkins University	University of California, Los Angeles (4)
Boston University (5)	Kenyon College (3)	University of Chicago (12)
Bowdoin College	Lehigh University (2)	University of Colorado, Boulder
Brown University (4)	Massachusetts Institute of Technology (2)	University of Denver
Bucknell University (8)	McGill University	University of Edinburgh (2)
California Institute of Technology	Middlebury College (4)	University of Florida
California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo	Moore College of Art & Design	University of Georgia (2)
Carleton College (3)	New York University (8)	University of Maryland, College Park (4)
Carnegie Mellon University (2)	Northeastern University (4)	University of Miami
Clemson University (5)	Northern Virginia Community College	University of Michigan (8)
Colby College (5)	Northwestern University (7)	University of Notre Dame (6)
Colgate University (6)	Oberlin College	University of Pennsylvania (7)
College of Charleston (2)	Occidental College	University of Pittsburgh
College of William & Mary (21)	Pennsylvania State University (2)	University of Richmond (4)
College of Wooster	Pratt Institute	University of Rochester
Colorado School of Mines	Princeton University (5)	University of San Diego
Colorado College	Purdue University	University of South Carolina (2)
Columbia University (7)	Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (3)	University of Southern California (3)
Connecticut College (4)	Rhode Island School of Design (2)	University of St. Andrews (4)
Cornell University (6)	Rice University (5)	University of Vermont
Dartmouth College (7)	Santa Clara University (6)	University of Virginia (29)
Davidson College	Sarah Lawrence College	University of Washington
Denison University	Sewanee: University of the South	University of Wisconsin, Madison (2)
Drexel University (2)	Skidmore College	Vanderbilt University (2)
Duke University (5)	Southern Methodist University (6)	Vassar College (2)
Elon University (3)	Spelman College	Villanova University (2)
Emerson College (2)	St. John's University- NY	Virginia Commonwealth University
Emory University (4)	St. Lawrence University	Virginia Tech (9)
Fordham University (3)	St. Olaf College	Wake Forest University (14)
Franklin & Marshall College (2)	Stanford University (5)	Washington & Lee University (6)
Furman University	Stevenson University (2)	Washington University in St. Louis (10)
George Mason University (3)	Syracuse University (5)	Wellesley College
Georgetown University (6)	Texas Christian University	Wesleyan University (4)
Georgia Institute of Technology (4)	The Catholic University of America	Widener University
Hamilton College (2)	Trinity College	Williams College (6)
Harvard University (9)	Trinity College, Dublin	Xavier University
	Tufts University (11)	Yale University (5)