



Independent School
of Winchester

2016-17

Handcrafted Education in a Mass-Produced World: High School at ISW



Claire

[B]uilding new forms of education...is not a romantic whimsy: it's essential to personal fulfillment and to the sustainability of the world we are now creating.

Sir Ken Robinson

The Independent School of Winchester opened the doors of our high school program in September 2014. Building upon the foundation of progressive education already laid in our very successful elementary and middle school program, our high school allows students and teachers to co-create a first class education. We use the word “co-create” very deliberately because we believe that education shouldn’t be “visited upon” students. Rather, our students are encouraged to take responsibility not only for day-to-day assignments but also for the trajectory of their high school career. The school focuses on fostering creativity in all its forms: writing, design, graphics, applied math, scientific innovation, visual arts, music, and theater. Our students produce real, meaningful work—building a portfolio that can be shared with the community through performance, exhibition, internship, and publication. In addition to emphasizing academic and personal responsibility, our program nurtures independence and prepares students for college life with increasing levels of latitude.

ISW was founded as a gift to the community, and we are creating programming that benefits talented, committed students from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. While most of our students will enroll full-time in our program, our day is structured so that public school and homeschooled students can enroll in specific programs of interest.

Tracks

ISW is in the process of launching three tracks of specialized study for the high school—Performing Arts, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics), and Writing/Humanities. We began with a pilot for the Performing Arts Track in 2016-17. (STEM is slated for 2018-19, and Writing for 2020-2021.) Our performing arts high school program features a theater “major.” Students pursue college preparatory academic subjects as well as one to two hours of performing arts daily. Students study acting, movement for stage, voice, and stagecraft. As a complement to the formal study of these subjects, ISW has created Huzzah Players, one of the only student-run high school theater companies in the US. Huzzah will afford ISW theater students the opportunity to work with high school students from around the area creating performances for audiences in the larger community.

Admissions

The ISW high school admissions committee looks for capable, enthusiastic students who are academically, socially, and emotionally prepared to handle the challenges of both independent and group learning situations at the high school level and beyond. Successful applicants will exemplify our Core Values: Respect, Responsibility, Integrity, Compassion, and Commitment to Education. Students applying to the Performing Arts track must demonstrate both academic achievement and artistic promise.

ISW students who have successfully completed our Middle School program (with 8th grade credit in all major subjects, including Humanities, Math, Science, Foreign Language, Art, and Performing Arts) are automatically eligible for the High School program. Students coming from other programs must apply. Students interested in the theater major must audition.

Teachers

ISW teachers are experts in their subject matter and visionary educators. They see themselves as co-learners who facilitate the process of learning. Teachers in our high school work in grade level teams so that the focus is on the *student* experience.

Facility

ISW's high school is located at The Youth Development Center. This 10,000 square feet facility affords opportunities for formal and informal collaboration. The high school building includes traditional classroom space, outdoor classroom space, a meeting room for student and adult use, a black box theater, a gym, a game room, a pavilion, and a creek. Students are encouraged to think, study, and meet outside when weather permits.

Weekly Schedule

M/T/Th/F Morning classes 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

- Mid-morning classes will be tailored to meet the needs of teenage students, who naturally go to bed and wake up later than young children.
- Some courses taught on-site
- Some courses may be on-line classes or MOOCs with teacher-coaches on-site. All coursework is mentored and evaluated by qualified ISW personnel.
- Students meet weekly with advisors. Every student has an advisor, and advising groups stay together for four years.

M/T/W/Th/F 12:25 p.m. to 1 p.m. Lunch

M/T/W/Th/F Afternoon classes 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Performing Arts Track classes, including Acting, Dance and Movement for Stage, Voice for Stage, and Stagecraft

One morning a week features self-structured time for students, in consultation with their teachers and advisors, to pursue the subjects about which they are passionate and to work together and individually on major projects. Field trips are sometimes planned for this time slot. In general, these mornings give students experience with time management in preparation for college. Ninth and 10th graders must remain on campus; 11th and 12th graders may work from home.

Course Requirements*

Math: 4 credits or competency points**. Full-time students must take at least 1 math credit per year and must earn credit for Algebra I and II and Geometry.

English/History: A Humanities Approach: 8 credits or competency points with at least 2 credits in American Studies. Full-time students must take 2 credits (one English and one History) in this category per year. Students must take US History and US Government and Economics.

Science: 3 credits or competency points. Full-time students must take at least 1 science credit per year until this requirement is satisfied.

Foreign Language: 3 credits or competency points in a single foreign language or 2 years of 2 languages. Full-time students must take at least 1 foreign language credit per year until this requirement is satisfied.

Arts and Technology: 2 credits or competency points, $\frac{1}{4}$ credit must be Design Lab

Physical education: 2 credits, with $\frac{1}{2}$ competency point*** completed every school year

*ISW is in the process of building the high school program. We reserve the right to modify course requirements as we deem necessary, with the best interest of the students in mind.

**Competency points can be earned by successfully completing (at a B or better level) *preapproved* courses outside the ISW community.

***Students will choose and arrange their own physical education (e.g., travel teams, weekly classes, etc.) outside ISW and produce verification for competency points. Students must be engaged in some physical education at least half of every school year.

Other requirements:

Technology certification: Students must demonstrate competence with technology either through course work or through testing.

Service learning hours: Students must commit to 25 hours per year for a total of 100 over four years.

Milestone Project: Each student must complete an independent study in the 10th grade. Projects, which may take a variety of forms, must be preapproved by the Project committee. 1 credit.

Capstone Project: Each student must complete an independent study during the latter half of the high school program. Projects, which may take a variety of forms, must be preapproved by the project committee. Projects will culminate in Senior Speeches. 1 credit.

Graduation Requirements*:

Each student will apply for graduation when at least 24 credits/points are earned *and* all distribution requirements are met *and* all other graduation requirements have been completed. Typically, this would occur at the end of four years, but some students may apply to graduate early.

Students who wish to earn the Performing Arts Track Diploma must meet all the requirements above as well as four years of the following areas of study:

- Acting: 4 credits
- Dance and Movement for Stage: 2 credits
- Voice for Stage: 2 credits
- Stagecraft: 1 credit

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Full-time students:

Full-time students must take a minimum of 5.25 credits per year. Students can enroll as full-time students without taking all of the Performing Arts Track classes.

Grading system

Progress Reports detail progress on the skills and knowledge base our students are creating in each class. The following ratings are employed:

M Student has mastered all material presented thus far.

P Student is making progress but has not yet attained mastery.

NP Student is not making progress and needs to employ new strategies.

Teachers will post ratings, and students will also be asked to self-assess with ratings. All progress reports will include a "Bottom Line" which indicates whether the student is on-track to earn credit for the course.

Classes

Each student is assigned an advisor with whom he/she meets to create a personalized academic plan. Students will be asked to consider their individual learning styles and to tailor their course plans accordingly. 9th/10th grades and 11th/12th grades will be grouped, so classes such as Humanities and Science are taught on an every-other-year rotation.

The following represents the current plan for offerings. As the high school is a work-in-progress, changes and adaptations may be made as we move forward.

Students have the opportunity to take most classes either at the regular level or the honors level. That decision must be made by the end of the third week of school. Honors classes will be designated on transcripts. Advanced Placement classes will be made available using a combination of on-line resources designed to prepare students for the exam and a teacher/coach on campus.

Math:	American Literature*
Algebra 1*	American History*
Geometry*	AP American History (on-line)
Algebra 2/Trig*	AP English
Precalculus	US Government and Economics*
Calculus	Student/teacher designed electives
Advanced Calculus	
Student/teacher designed electives	Foreign Language
Science	American Sign Language
Biology*	Spanish on-site w/ AP options (on-line)
Chemistry*	Other foreign languages on-line
Geology	Student/teacher designed electives
Physics	
AP Biology (on-line)	The Arts and Technology
AP Chemistry (on-line)	Intro to Creative Arts I*
AP Physics (on-line)	Intro to Creative Arts II*
Student/teacher designed electives	Design Lab*
	Acting 1-4
English/History: A Humanities Approach	Dance and Movement for Stage 1-4
Global I English*	Voice for Stage 1-4
Global I History*	Stagecraft 1-4
Global II English*	Student/teacher designed electives
Global II History	
AP World History (on-line)	

Experiential Education: Together, faculty and students frequently plan curriculum-related field trips or invite speakers to complement the classroom experience.

Typical Ninth Grade Schedule

Each ninth grader works with an advisor to create an appropriate schedule tailored to his/her needs and interests. A “typical” ninth grader may take the following classes:

Math: Algebra I or Geometry or Algebra II/Trigonometry (1 credit)

Science: Biology (1 credit)

English: A Global I Humanities Approach (1 credit)

History: A Global I Humanities Approach (1 credit)

Foreign Language: Spanish (1 credit) or ASL 1 (1 credit)

Art: Introduction to Creative Arts (1/4 credit)

PA Track classes, if chosen, including Acting, Dance, Voice, Stagecraft

Typical 10th Grade Schedule

Each 10th grader works with an advisor to create an appropriate schedule tailored to his/her needs and interests. A “typical” 10th grader may take the following classes:

Math: Geometry or Algebra II/Trigonometry (1 credit)

Science: Chemistry (1 credit)

English: A Global II Humanities Approach (1 credit)

History: Global II or AP World (1 credit)

Foreign Language: Spanish (1 credit) or ASL (1 credit)

Milestone Project (1 credit)

Art: Introduction to Creative Arts (1/4 credit)

PA Track classes, if chosen, including Acting, Dance, Voice, Stagecraft

Typical 11th Grade Schedule

Each 11th grader works with an advisor to create an appropriate schedule tailored to his/her needs and interests. A “typical” 11th grader may take the following classes:

Math: Algebra II/Trigonometry or Precalculus (1 credit)

Science: Geology or Physics (1 credit)

English: American Lit (1 credit)

History: American History or AP US History

Foreign Language: Spanish (1 credit) or ASL (1 credit)

Design Lab (1/4 credit)

PA Track classes, if chosen, including Acting, Dance, Voice, Stagecraft