

The Navigator Institute at

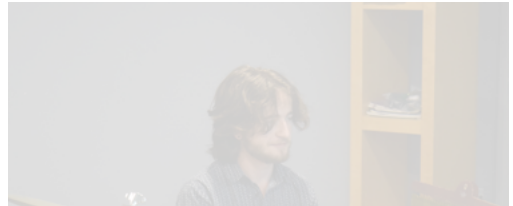
POUGHKEEPSIE

 **DAY SCHOOL**

Your compass for the journey ahead.

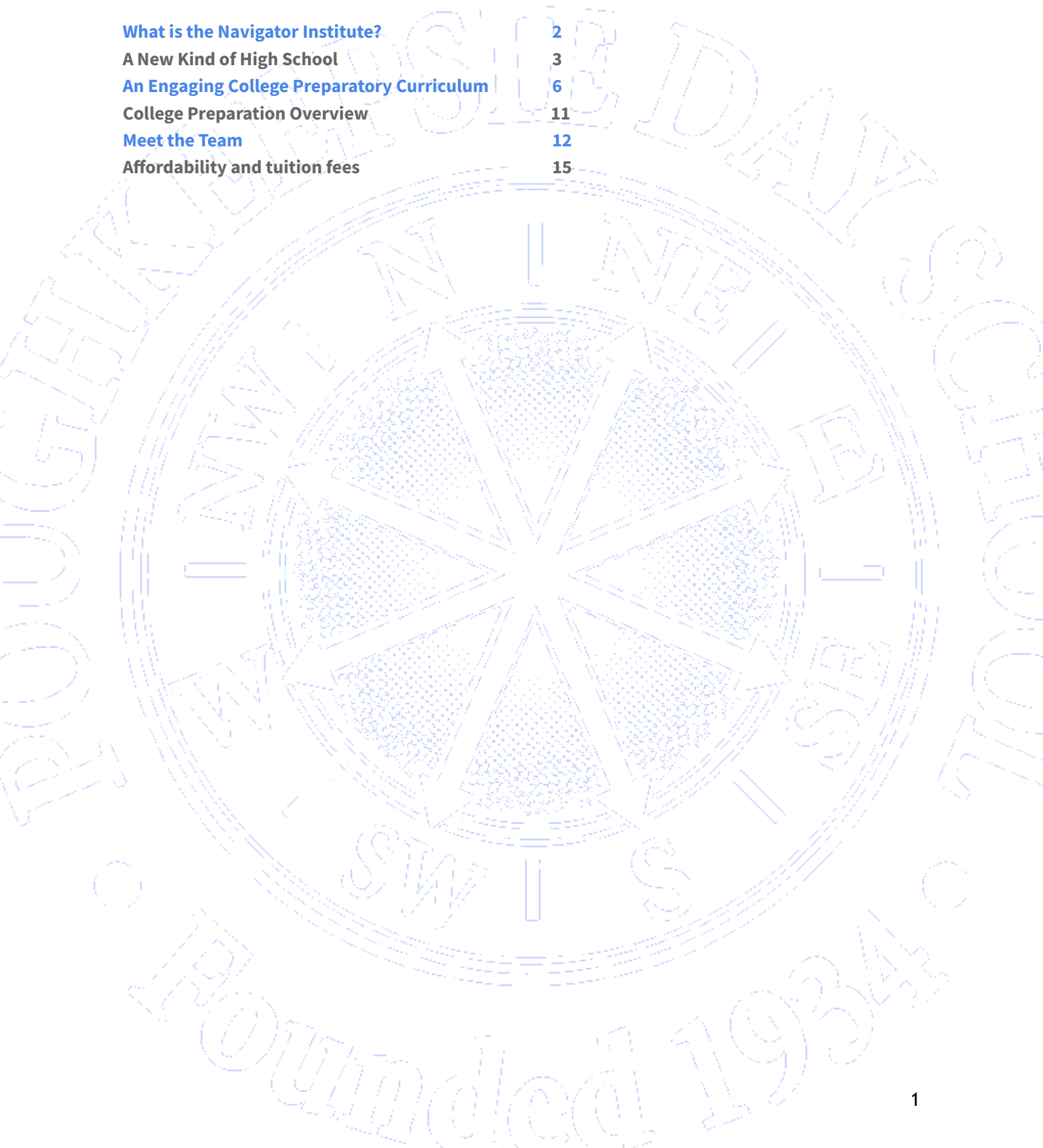
Launching Sept. 2024

Accepting applications for Grade 9



Index

What is the Navigator Institute?	2
A New Kind of High School	3
An Engaging College Preparatory Curriculum	6
College Preparation Overview	11
Meet the Team	12
Affordability and tuition fees	15



What Is the Navigator Institute?

The Navigator Institute is Poughkeepsie Day School's new high school program, launching with 9th grade in September of 2024. A challenging but flexible college-preparatory program, the Institute is designed to orient students towards a prosperous future by fusing their own passions and talents with the demands of a rigorous academic curriculum. Focusing on three core values—service, engagement, and self-efficacy—students will be given opportunities not only to excel where they are most comfortable, but to boldly confront areas where they might otherwise meet hurdles. As students complete demanding coursework in core subject areas, their experience will also include enrichment like life drawing and music recording, independent studies with expertise from local colleges, access to high-level performing arts with [Star 2B](#), and professional athletic training with [Edge Athletics](#) right on our campus. The Navigator Institute's new approach will strengthen Poughkeepsie Day School's already compelling track record of college acceptance, as well as our long list of successful alumni. It will graduate guided, compassionate, able, and purposeful young adults.



A New Kind of High School. Creating Active, Thoughtful Citizens

Why now?

The Hudson Valley is a wonderful place to raise a family, and there are many educational options. The Navigator Institute is distinct. Beginning with Poughkeepsie Day School's mission—creating transformative learning experiences that inspire intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, creativity, and compassion—we are building a curriculum around students and the demands of the world awaiting them. Our school's strong connection to local colleges, and our narrative reports and non-graded system that are already well-known to some of the nation's most prestigious universities, added to a new curriculum that is built with the missions and visions of local organizations in mind, set us on a sure path to create a generation of powerfully inquisitive and generous individuals. Students will begin that journey as soon as they walk through the door. Together, with devoted faculty and deliberate experiential learning, they will begin to advocate for themselves, for each other, and for the world.

The new program, focused on service, engagement, and self-efficacy, reflects a carefully considered balance of elements, including academic coursework, community involvement, and personal wellness support. Each student will be supported by their teachers, an advisor, and, from freshman year, a college counselor. We understand that young adults benefit from guidance towards discovering significant meaning in their learning. Both in and out of the classroom, students will be supported in their quest to explore their own interests, take intellectual risks, and find comfort in unfamiliarity. We support students to embrace and work through the inherent discomfort in the process of learning. As independence grows, responsibility for oneself and the community are recognized.

Courses That Are Both Challenging and Engaging

Students are continually enrolled in courses that fall into the categories of: humanities, math, science, arts, world language, central study, physical education, and health & wellness. By creating a curriculum that meets 21st-century needs and the interests of the individual, we are setting the parameters for students to reach for ever-greater levels of excellence in their coursework, and discover new strengths and interests as they deepen their knowledge base.



An Advisory Program That is Woven Into the Fabric of the Day

A small advisor to student ratio fosters thoughtful and purposeful guidance. Advisors are student advocates and the primary point of contact between school and home. They work closely with students to set goals, identify strengths and needs, and individualize programs as needed. Advisors will also work with students to prepare for family conferences. Group meetings provide opportunities

to practice life skills, strengthen connections to the school community, and discuss important school and societal dynamics. Every student will have a daily check-in with their advisor to recognize the day's achievements, make a plan for completing work, and set objectives for the next day.

What is Community-Engaged Learning? Why is Service so Important?

Since 1934, Poughkeepsie Day School has been a strong community; the support network extends far beyond one's assigned teachers and an advisor. All faculty and staff are in regular contact with each student and their family throughout the school day. This means that students are seen, heard, known, and valued; we know their likes and dislikes, learning style, and their hopes and dreams for themselves and for the world. Being at this level of familiarity is a boon to planning external and internal community engagement and service learning opportunities. It is our priority not only to learn about the world outside of our school, but to find our place within it, and have an impact. To that end, it will be an expectation that every student at the Navigator Institute is involved in at least one mission-consistent organization. The expertise they gain in this area will extend into the school day with mixed age teaching and student leadership opportunities. In the 2023-24 school year, we have already built connections with over two dozen local groups in preparation for our incoming 9th graders. At Poughkeepsie Day School, we believe that it is each of our responsibility to positively impact the lives of others. A foundation in community-engaged learning is fundamental to that.

Personalized College Preparation

Beginning in 9th grade, students' strengths, struggles, and personal interests guide their advising program. Wednesday's Central Study is the equivalent of having a different area of specialization each semester. As students take part in these intensive courses, including performing arts projects, math and science research with specialists in and out of school, and literary projects where they'll connect with published authors, our faculty will guide them towards opportunities that further their skills, knowledge, and passion. Add to this an expectation of service linked to all of the above, and the result is a highly competitive application to a college of choice. Poughkeepsie Day School graduates have attended our nation's most prestigious universities, and we will prepare our new generation of Navigators to reach even higher. When students arrive at their junior year, regular family meetings with our college counselor will thoroughly guide this process. Those pursuing the visual arts and music will be supported in building portfolios to aid in their applications. Students applying to STEM fields will be partnered with specialists to ensure that their projects give them a competitive advantage. We will make the college application process understandable, manageable, and personalized.

Evaluation

PDS uses comprehensive narrative evaluations in place of letter or number grades. Students will not be ranked. Official transcripts will list courses taken and credits received. Evaluations will address all aspects of student performance, noting strengths as well as areas of need that may require greater attention and support. Narratives are written with the expectation that even the most able and accomplished students can enhance their skills and understanding. Admissions departments at some

of our nation's most prestigious universities have noted that our students' reports tell them more information than any other type of evaluation format.

Graduation Expectations

By the end of their career at the Navigator Institute, students will have developed:

- Self-reliance in managing time, fully completing work and recognizing completion of projects;
- The drive to interconnect with the community in meaningful ways and to be helpful to others in truly significant and ongoing ways;
- Competence generating written, well-documented arguments in a range of disciplines;
- A strong, ongoing demonstrable interest, skill, or discipline which has been sustained over a period of more than one year.

An Engaging College-Preparatory Experience

The Interdisciplinary Approach and Central Studies

While all Poughkeepsie Day School courses have an interdisciplinary approach, our Central Study courses fully embody it. Central Study provides an intensive experience for students, dedicating a several-hour-long block of time to a particular area outside of the core curriculum one day a week. These courses are a means for students to explore areas of interest or, especially as they get older, specialize and build a profile that reflects a specific area of fascination. Many offerings will include community engagement and service learning, building bonds with the local community organizations and people.

Potential topics include:

- Redline Maps: How Mapping Inequality Impacts Poughkeepsie Today
- Visual Art: Creator, Critic, Curator
- The Brain: A Study of Human Behavior
- The Art of Architecture
- Adventures in Food / Food Explorations
- Creative Arts Collective: Building a Literary Magazine
- Philosophical Explorations: The Self, Happiness, & the Good Life

The Humanities: English and History

History and English courses at the Navigator Institute give students the material, skills, and support to creatively explore themselves and the world around them, and to critically examine the structures that frame our lives. Classes will be built around the close reading of texts in their historical-cultural contexts, and take them as jumping-off points for exploration, leading to a better understanding of ourselves, our cultures, other cultures, and other people—across the span of history and the breadth of the globe. Participation in seminar-style discussions, with comments reflecting a careful reading of the texts and respect for the opinions of others, creates an authentic processing of information. We believe in teaching students to talk about what they learn. Potential humanities topics include:

- Latin American History and Culture
- History Through Art: Renaissance to Baroque
- Philosophy, Politics, and Economics
- Gender, Race, and Class
- Nature, the Unnatural, and the Supernatural
- Dis/informing ourselves: Stories We Tell and Why We Tell Them

Research and Writing

The Navigator Institute provides a specific course in Analytical Research and Writing (ARW). While a



humanities course may focus on a historical era or specific study of narrative and expository literature, ARW is the vehicle that will provide students with a place to powerfully adapt their thinking to writing. Assignments will range from critical essays and creative writing exercises to collaborative and independent research, resulting in presentations, creative responses, or contributions to the community. The course will begin by introducing the principles and methods of effective, reliable research and clear, substantive writing.

Mathematics: Analyzing, Understanding, and Representing Patterns in Numbers and Forms

Throughout the math program, students will be asked to seek connections, abstract and generalize, translate verbal expressions to mathematical ones, check work against common sense, read math texts, review past work, keep math portfolios, use technology in appropriate and meaningful ways, ask questions, reason deductively and inductively, and argue sensibly in oral and written form. Classwork will emphasize cooperative group work and problem-solving, while daily written assignments will allow each student to explore new problem-solving techniques independently. In all problems, students will be asked not only to arrive at reasonable answers, but also to describe the processes they use or the rationales for their answers. The mathematics program for the Navigator Institute has been planned within a traditional sequence of courses, ranging from pre-algebra to calculus, as well as a choice of additional coursework at various levels. Courses in the timeline include:

- Geometry
- Algebra 2
- Pre-Calculus: Function Analysis
- Pre-Calculus: Trigonometric and Circular Functions
- Pre-Calculus: Analytic Geometry
- Statistics
- Calculus
- Advanced Calculus

Science: A Fine Balance of Research, Data Collection, and Field Work

The science program is designed to foster curiosity about the natural world, and give students the experiential and analytical tools they need to develop a deep understanding of processes in nature. Courses in biology, chemistry, physics, geology, and astronomy will provide opportunities for students

to collect their own data in both the field and laboratory, as well as learn to appropriately analyze the scientific literature and foundational theory to build persuasive arguments. The curriculum we implement is attentive to the interdisciplinary nature of science. Applied topics in medicine, biotechnology, environmental studies, and natural history are consistent areas of exploration across the curriculum. Laboratory skills and analytical thinking will be stressed throughout the program, and students will be expected to generate precise hypotheses and experimentally testable questions, design and implement scientifically sound experimental protocols, and analyze data thoughtfully. Science topics include:

- The Changing World: Environmental Science
- Cellular Biology
- General Chemistry I & 2
- Geology
- Astronomy
- Physics of Motion
- Animal Behavior
- Anatomy and Physiology

World Language: Communication Skills and Cultural Literacy

Learning an additional language teaches students how to understand and navigate a new language system, provides opportunities to study and connect with other cultures, and promotes global citizenship. The Navigator Institute's world language teaching resembles the process of learning a first language through guided instruction in a new one. Focusing on Spanish for most of our incoming 9th graders, our world language program will develop students' ability to understand and use structure, create meaning, and build fluency (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) in context, while also paying special attention to the cultural aspects of the Spanish-speaking world. Historically, Poughkeepsie Day School's language programs have involved plenty of opportunity to engage in conversation and practicing language skills, while the instructor gears curriculum toward each student's level of proficiency. In the curriculum for the new crop of Navigators, students will be taking their skills on the town as they connect with local organizations in their community-engaged learning experiences, purchase groceries at local stores, and engage with local residents from Spanish-speaking countries.

Spanish classes offered include:

- Beginning Spanish
- Intermediate Spanish
- Advanced Spanish
- Spanish Seminar
- Spanish Literature (native level)

Additional language options may be available through independent study. For IS courses, students will be assigned a dedicated faculty advisor.

Art: Authentic Individual Expression

Our arts program aims to provide students with a stimulating range of opportunities to develop as young artists. Courses are designed to challenge students creatively while connecting their individual engagement to a broader awareness of larger cultural perspectives. In each discipline, the emergence of an individual voice or vision is supported by an awareness of historical context and a sense of art's potential for engaging contemporary issues. The curricula also recognize the important role of technology as a vehicle of artistic expression, utilizing these tools alongside more traditional forms.

Performing Arts

With Star 2B Performing Arts on our campus, all students have access to their incredible offerings at a generous discount, including stage productions in the James Earl Jones Theater and several enrichment classes. Depending on the season, Star 2B classes might include dance, introductory acting, improv, and more. Recent performances have included Annie, Mean Girls, Finding Nemo, and Mary Poppins.

Visual Arts

The visual art curriculum engages students in the production and critical analysis of works of art that are an iteration of larger issues and topics. The studio courses will introduce problems that underscore the relationship between thinking and making: that art production is concept-driven - a way of making ideas manifest in visual form. A life drawing course, included in tuition fees, will be offered after school. A portfolio course will also be offered for students who wish to further hone their craft. As our Navigators approach the college application process, they will receive college counseling with respect to BA programs with Studio Art majors as well as BFA art school programs. Art courses include:

- [Exploration in Drawing, Collage, and Material](#)
- [Portfolio](#)
- [Art History: Renaissance to Baroque/Art and the idea of Beauty](#)
- [Life Drawing \(After school art elective\)](#)

Music Education and Appreciation

The music program at The Navigator Institute consists of regularly scheduled co-curricular ensemble opportunities and private lessons on campus, both during and after school. The overarching goal is to enable students to explore a broad range of musical interests, nurture and develop their individual talents, examine the



function of music within the context of global societies and cultures, acquire fundamental music skills, and develop the collaborative skills needed to participate in ensemble work.

Music courses include:

- Pop Icons (after-school elective)
- Black Music in America
- The American History of Rock and Roll
- World Music and the Roots of Modern Western Music
- Music in America
- Composition and Recording Intensive
- Music Ensemble

Physical Education

Through the promotion of lifelong fitness activities and skills. A variety of options are available for students, including an indoor basketball court, outdoor soccer fields, and access to our weight training room. By promoting developmentally appropriate fitness, the program as a whole will instill knowledge and skills that students can carry forward. Activities might include Badminton, Basketball, Pickleball, Dodgeball, Frisbee, Kickball, Personal Fitness, Skiing/Snowboarding, Softball, Volleyball, and others by demand.

Health and Wellness

The Navigator Institute's program places high value on wellness education and recognizes the impact that health has on students and their academic learning. We believe that a balanced life is important. Learning the important non-academic skills to navigate the social landscape and to stay safe is crucial. Our Life Skills and Health curriculum will be delivered to 9th graders by PE health staff with assistance from invited guests and outside organizations. We will support students in learning about physical and emotional health, as well as skills such as communication and self-advocacy. The curriculum will cover such topics as:

- Social dynamics, healthy friendships
- Communication skills: conflict resolution, problem-solving, assertive vs. aggressive behavior, constructive ways of expressing feelings
- Basic nutrition and healthy lifestyles
- Depression, self-injurious behavior, and suicide
- Eating disorders
- Sexually transmitted infections
- Stereotypes and discrimination
- Internet abuse and bullying behaviors; sexting
- Self-empowerment around sexual relationships. Recognizing and stopping unsafe situations
- Drugs, alcohol, and tobacco use and abuse
- Stress and anxiety
- Family dynamics

- Growth and development

College Preparation Overview

As the 2028 Navigators arrive, we will support them and their families through all steps of the college preparation process. We encourage all students to consider higher education as well as various career opportunities, and can guide them through the process of taking even the most challenging programs available at the Institute and applying to colleges and universities that are the best fit, based on multiple criteria.

Grades 9 and 10

While Grade 9 students are often curious about the college process, our primary message at this stage is to focus on challenging themselves in their coursework and testing new waters. Students at this age are often learning study, communication, and self-advocacy skills.

Grades 11 and 12

In Grade 11, students will take the PSAT in October and they may take the SAT as early as the spring. They will also begin to consider the types of colleges they feel may be a good fit. Our college advisor invites college representatives from across the United States each year. As we get to know our Navigators, some of these representatives will be invited based on our student body and particular interests. For example, in the arts, representatives from BFA programs come to the school to review student portfolios. All students in Grades 11 and 12 will be invited to attend meetings with representatives to learn about different programs and ask questions. These representatives are often the ones who read applications, and it is of great value to our students to have the opportunity to meet them. *Many of our nation's most prestigious colleges and universities are already familiar with the Poughkeepsie Day School narrative report. Our non-graded assessment gives our students an advantage in the application process.*

Beginning in the spring of Junior year, families will be encouraged to meet with the college counselor to make progress on their child's college list. By the fall of their Senior year, students will be well along their way in the process of selecting colleges to apply to. Their letters of recommendation will have been produced by teachers and the college office, and their college essays and supplemental essays will be ready to polish and complete in the fall and winter.

Meet the Team

We are launching the Navigator Institute

Spiro Gouras (he, him) – Head of School.

Spiro comes to Poughkeepsie Day School from Trevor Day School in New York City where he was a Third Grade Head Teacher as well as Curriculum Coordinator of English Language Arts. He was also a member of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee and facilitated his Division's White Employees for Racial Equity (WERE) group. As part of the group that recreated our school's Mission and DEIJ statements, Spiro is committed to making sure that students and families at The Navigator Institute have an earnest sense of feeling like they belong. Spiro has also taught at a number of other schools including La Scuola D'Italia in New York City and St. Mary Magdalen Primary School in Brighton, England. He has a BA in Communications from SUNY New Paltz and an MEd in Literacy Education from Hunter College. Spiro holds a Master of Education (EdM) in Progressive School Leadership at Bank Street College.

Stephen Haff (he, him) – Upper School Humanities and World Language Teacher.

Stephen comes to PDS from Still Waters in a Storm, a free one-room school for immigrant children of all ages in Bushwick, Brooklyn, which he founded in 2007. He has also taught English, Latin, Mathematics, and Theater for more than 25 years at elementary schools, middle schools, high schools, and colleges in New York City, Vermont, and Canada. He earned his Masters in Theater at Yale University. He has extensive experience as a theater educator and he used to make his living directing plays Off-Broadway, writing for several publications including The Village Voice. While at Still Waters he directed the Kid Quixote project, an original, collective translation, and adaptation of the novel "Don Quixote" as musical theater. At Bushwick High School in Brooklyn, he co-founded Real People Theater (RPT) with his students. His most passionate academic love is for language, and he also takes pleasure in playing baseball and the violin.

Ben King (he, him) – Art Teacher.

Ben holds an MFA from the University of Chicago and a BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. His visual art has been exhibited widely in the United States and internationally and his artworks are held in many private collections. In the Fall of 2021, acclaimed literary critic, Terry Castle, wrote a new essay celebrating Ben's work on the occasion of his past solo exhibition at Freight+Volume gallery in New York City. Other reviews and reproductions of Ben's work have appeared in journals like ARTnews, Modern Painters, Mousse, The Huffington Post, Hyperallergic, and Bomb. Ben is a fellow of the Edward F. Albee Foundation and a repeat recipient of the DNA Artist Residency. Ben's work as a curator was recognized in the Exit Art and MIT Press publication titled Alternative Histories in 2010, a compendium documenting New York alternative art since the 1960s.

Ben received a teaching fellowship from the University of Chicago in 2005. Most recently Ben worked on the Kossak Painting program at Hunter College and was also lead drawing faculty at the Mt. Gretna School of Art.

Ken McGloin (he, him) – Music Teacher, Adjunct Music Coordinator.

Ken is looking forward to working with our Navigator Institute students to help them reach their goals and to achieve their full potential as musicians. Ken has a Bachelor of Science from SUNY New Paltz. He is currently a working musician who performs and does workshops throughout the United States. His experience includes adjunct teaching at SUNY New Paltz and Suffolk Community College. He has also started a ukulele program at our middle school. Ken is currently teaching private lessons in guitar, bass, and ukulele and leads ensembles at both High Meadow School and Poughkeepsie Day School.

Lisa McVey (she, her) – Health & Wellness, Movement, and Advisor.

Through her career, Lisa has taught physical education and movement and coached modified soccer, modified basketball, varsity volleyball, and varsity softball. She joined the school in 1992 as a Physical Education teacher and coach. In 2014, she became the Athletic and Wellness Director. In the upcoming school year, she is looking forward to serving in many different capacities including teaching movement, and health and wellness, supervising after-school intramural sports, and being the Navigator Institute's lead advisor. Lisa completed her undergraduate work at SUNY Cortland and has a graduate degree in History. She is dual certified to teach K-12 Physical Education as well as 7-9 Social Studies.

Tammy Reilly (she, her) – Director of Admissions and Director of College Counseling.

Tammy has worked full-time at PDS since 2002. She is the parent of Alum Ashlee Reilly '07. Prior to that, she worked at Vassar College in the office of Development for Leadership Gifts. Tammy has also devoted much of her time to volunteer work at PDS as well as at NYSAIS, the New Paltz Ballet Theater where she served as President of the Board, and the Milton Elementary School PTA where she was Co-President. Tammy maintains close relationships with admissions departments at many of the colleges our alums have attended over the years. She is also instrumental in helping teachers develop relationships with local organizations to facilitate service learning and internships.

Christian Enrique Sauer (he, him) - Spanish Teacher and Director of After School & Enrichment Program.

Christian comes to Poughkeepsie Day School from Andres Bello School in the city of Girardot, Colombia, where he worked for 6 years as a Spanish language teacher. In that time, Christian taught grades three, four, and five as a head teacher. At Andres Bello, he was also the coordinator of extracurricular activities. Christian gained additional experience working in other schools such as Rafael Pombo and Alejandrito Corazón, both located in Colombia. As a university student completed two cultural exchanges abroad, where he gained experience working with children from all over the world. Christian holds a degree in Humanities with emphasis in Spanish language from the University of Cundinamarca as well as a specialization in children's pedagogy from the Escuela Normal Superior de Girardot.

Shira Teich (she, her) – Upper School Math and Science Teacher, Faculty Representative on Belonging, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (BEDI) Committee.

Shira has more than a decade of experience teaching chemistry, biology, forensics, and earth science

to high school students in both private and public school settings. She holds a Masters of Education in Science Curriculum and Instruction from Concordia University and is a member of the National Science Teachers Association, National Education Association, and American Chemical Society. Her goal is to facilitate learning, exploration, enthusiasm, and mastery of science at The Navigator Institute! Shira has also coached field hockey and has extensive experience in facilitating the creation of Jewish studies curriculum and programs.



Affordability and Tuition Fees

Making the Navigator Institute accessible

An education that is second to none is what everyone wants for their child. We are committed to doing our best to make an education at the Navigator Institute possible for your family. In addition to offering competitive tuition fees, we offer additional options to bring the Institute within reach, including need-based scholarships as well as payment plans. **We are proud to announce a special scholarship available for incoming 9th Graders, the first class of the Navigator Institute. [Click here to learn about the Class of 2028 Navigator Scholarship. Inquire, and let's start the conversation!](#)**

Tuition for 24-25	Maximum Amount
Full pay	\$26,500
With scholarship	\$18,550

A reduced tuition amount may be determined upon completion of a TADS application. Ask our admissions office for details. "Maximum Amount" is the maximum tuition for a family that does not complete a TADS application. Please contact our admissions office at 845.462.7600 ext. 201 or admissions@poughkeepsieday.org if you have questions.

Welcome to PDS.

admissions@poughkeepsieday.org

