

# Upper School



## GRADES 7-9

The Upper School program is thoughtfully designed to allow our students to become the very best versions of themselves—as students, community members, and citizens—demonstrating increasing levels of achievement in academics, the arts, and athletics. In subject matter, as well as in quality and vigor of discourse, many of our classes resemble high school classes. We set high expectations for Upper School students, fueling their appetite for learning and acceleration toward greater independence and maturity as they take full advantage of the many resources BCD offers. Our 9th graders graduate with a strong sense of self, able to see how they will engage going forward across multiple dimensions and areas of study. They are well-prepared to fully embrace and take on any high school program, and, equally importantly, our graduates are ready and eager to assume a variety of leadership roles.

### Program & Curriculum Highlights

- Each Upper School grade is stewarded by a team of two teachers who serve as advisors and homeroom teachers. In addition to guiding BCD's social-emotional curriculum during these crucial adolescent years, advisors are the first line of contact between their advisees' parents and the School for questions or concerns of a general nature. Topics stemming from the pillars of BCD's core values—Quality, Respect, Sustainability, Community, Wellness, and Citizenship—provide the structure for related conversations, activities, and community engagement opportunities aligned with positive personal and social growth.
- The Upper School English curriculum engages students with sophisticated novels, plays, short stories, and poetry. The emphasis is on learning to read critically, the consideration of essential questions, the interpretation of themes, and the ability to synthesize ideas in cohesive, analytical writing. Students hone their reading, writing, discussion, and critical thinking skills in small classes and through a variety of activities and assignments that guide them toward proficiency and individual success.
- The social studies/history curriculum stresses analysis and understanding. Over three years, students study American history through Reconstruction in Grade 7; the shaping of Western society and the development of European culture in Grade 8; and modern world history in Grade 9.
- Primary source materials, textbooks, print and online reference materials, and connections in literature are used as resources for background and further context. Assessments include quizzes and tests, projects, class participation, and the preparation of major papers.
- The Upper School Math program concentrates on pre-algebra, algebra, and geometry. Students use technology, such as Geometer's Sketchpad software and graphing calculators, as tools for processing concepts and advanced calculations.
- Our lab-based science curriculum, encompassing Physics in Grade 7, Physical Science (Environmental and Chemistry) in Grade 8, and Biology in Grade 9, is interactive, hands-on, and rigorous, providing a strong foundation for high school courses.
- Berkshire Country Day School requires that Upper School students study two languages at advanced levels, one of which must be Latin. French and Spanish classes are conducted predominantly in the target language. An intentional component in our curriculum, we believe Latin will enhance success in many other subject areas and strengthen students' communication, processing, and evaluative skills as they gain an appreciation for classic literature and ancient history.
- The unique "Arts Block" provides Upper School students with the opportunity to choose two studio arts electives each trimester in a wide range of offerings such as photography, graphic design, painting, drawing, ceramics, sculpture, music, wood-working, digital music composition, theater, vocal ensemble, and jewelry design. In addition, Upper School Band offers opportunities to perform as part of an ensemble.
- The Upper School Theater Ensemble works with practicing professional area performing arts directors to produce several shows each year, fully mounted in the nearby proscenium theater at the Winthrop Estate campus. Recent productions have included plays by Shakespeare, Molière, and Checkov, adaptations of Broadway musicals and fairy tales, and original works.
- Extended overnight trips provide culminating experiences and connect to curricular themes each spring as the 7th Grade travels to Washington, D.C.; the 8th Grade spends a week in The Everglades National Park; and the 9th Grade takes a capstone trip to Paris, France, and Barcelona, Spain, for a weeklong immersion in language and cultural experiences.
- Upper School students participate on boys' and girls' varsity soccer and lacrosse teams, as well as a co-ed cross-country ski team, competing against other area independent and public schools. Working together on our athletic teams provide students with opportunities for physical conditioning, skill development, sportsmanship, cooperation, social interaction, dependence on others, and the power of a team experience.