

MISS PORTER'S SCHOOL

ACADEMICS

August 22, 2022

Dear Students and Families,

I hope that this message finds everyone nearing the end of what has been a relaxing and rejuvenating summer. I also hope that, like me, many of you are eagerly anticipating the start of a new school with its promise of engaging intellectual, athletic, and artistic activity, renewed friendships, and much excitement as we all challenge ourselves to learn and to grow in so many different ways. Administrators and faculty have been busy planning for the year, and I know I speak for all of us in saying how much we can't wait for the moment that makes all of the summer's hard work worth it -- the arrival of our beloved students!

In addition to simply conveying my excitement about the fact that campus will soon be abuzz with life, I am writing to share some highlights of the upcoming year with you.

Schedule

This fall we will have completed our multi-year transition to a modular-block trimester schedule. All classes will be meeting in the modular block in order to facilitate **deep, engaging, and lasting learning**, while also tending to the **health and wellness** of our community by having everyone **focused on fewer things at one time** and by **reducing the frenetic pace and high stress** that come from trying to take six or seven classes at one time.

Curriculum

We are excited to continue to prepare Porter's students to shape a changing world through a curriculum that emphasizes **interdisciplinary connections** and **authentic, experiential learning** focused on the **pressing problems of our time**. Students will be taking a host of exciting and engaging classes that will challenge them and push them to develop the skills they will need for success and fulfillment in our rapidly changing world.

9th Grade Highlights

Our 9th graders will start the year with our **Intro to Inquiry class designed to prepare them for the type of self-directed, exploratory learning** that they will engage in

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throughout their time at Miss Porter's. Their other classes in STEM, the humanities, the arts, and Technology, Innovation, & Entrepreneurship will be integrated to help them see the world and understand problems through an interdisciplinary lens, and they will finish the year completing projects that will tie all of their learning together.

10th Grade Highlights

Our 10th grade students will **continue the interdisciplinary theme** with all students taking an **integrated U.S. History and American Literature course**. 10th graders will begin to have some space in their schedules for elective courses, but the focus will be **assuring that they have gained proficiency in all core academic skills** before moving on to 11th and 12th grade where the curriculum will be much more open and they will have more agency to direct their own unique course of study..

11th Grade Highlights

The highlight for 11th graders will certainly be our **A.I.S. Global Intensive courses** which will take them to **Costa Rica, France, and Germany** as part of a deep interdisciplinary study of the respective country and culture with a focus on issues faced within that region. We are so excited to be able to integrate our travel experiences into a rich academic course. This will be **global education and experiential education at its best!**

12th Grade Highlights

Our seniors will continue the **experiential education through opportunity to participate in internships**, and some will even have the opportunity to complete them as part of **A.I.S. Professional Experience in Economics: Money, Consumerism and Human Behavior**. Seniors will engage in other relevant Advanced Interdisciplinary Seminar courses, and the school year will culminate with presentations from our **A.I.S. Capstone** cohort, including those senior earning **certificates in Global Studies and Technology Innovation, and Entrepreneurship**.

Independent Math and Language Learning Programs

We will be piloting two new programs to support students in continuing their math and language learning during trimesters in which they are not taking courses specifically in those disciplines.

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In order to support **independent learning of math** we are introducing **Math REPS: Review, Extend, Practice, Sustain**. The year-round math support provided by the Math REPS program allows students to:

- brush up on skills for an upcoming math class,
- practice skills from a recent math class,
- practice math skills that are needed on standardized tests, and
- collaborate and engage with the community through problem-solving challenges.

In order to foster **independent learning of language**, we are introducing **LIFT OFF: Language Interaction Following Through in Off trimesters**. During each trimester when students are not taking a language course, they will engage with their language of study each week through participation in activities of their choosing that are appropriate to their level of fluency with their language. These will include community activities that also provide opportunities for cultural learning.

A Focus for the Year

Given our desire to help our students address the pressing problems of the world, throughout this coming year, our community will focus on the **issue of political polarization and the challenge of engaging in genuine dialogue** in today's world.

This summer, all of our incoming 9th graders and the entire faculty will have read Monica Guzman's book *I Never Thought of It That Way: How to Have Fearlessly Curious Conversations in Dangerously Divided Times*, and Ms. Guzman will be coming to speak with our entire community this fall. Wrestling with these issues is of critical importance, for we only learn when we consider new and different ideas, and engaging in genuine open dialogue with people who think differently than we do is the antidote to polarization and conflict. I look forward to conversing with many of you on this topic throughout the year. (Click [here](#) for a review of Guzman's book.)

Future Communications

In addition to our regular News and Notes that will provide you with important information about what is happening at school, I plan to write periodic blog posts as a

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way to share ideas with you about trends in education and about how Miss Porter's will continue to evolve in order to remain the leader in girls secondary education.

You can expect information on the following coming soon:

- Our ongoing shift to a competency-based mastery approach to learning
- Our partnership with the [Mastery Transcript Consortium](#)
- Our curricular focus on examining timeless questions and pressing problem through an interdisciplinary lens

I hope that this information has gotten you even more excited about the coming school year, and I look forward to seeing everyone back on campus soon.

Sincerely,



Timothy Quinn
Chief Academic Officer and Dean of Faculty