SORA

THE FUTURE OF SCHOOL

"IF YOU WANT TO BUILD A SHIP, DON'T DRUM UP THE MEN TO GATHER WOOD, DIVIDE THE WORK, AND GIVE ORDERS. INSTEAD, TEACH THEM TO YEARN FOR THE VAST AND ENDLESS SEA."

-ANTOINE DE SAINT-EXUPERY

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Dear Prospective Sora Family,

There is no institution more vital than school, nor one more in need of reinvention.

School should be where creativity, empathy, and ambition are fostered. Yet the traditional education system eschews that in favor of rote lectures, standardized testing, and assignments lacking context and depth. The United States has successfully developed a system that will scale, yes, but not one that will move us forward.

At Sora, we believe better is possible.

Looking at the challenges facing our world and the research about how humans learn best, it's become clear that for a happy, flourishing future, we need to prepare students to tackle complex problems. We must shift our focus from one-size-fits-all education to something that fundamentally reimagines what education can do.

This is why Sora was founded.

We've developed a new way of learning – a humanized system that helps students engage critically and thoughtfully with the world we share; that equips them with the ability to explore life in a way that's meaningful to them, whoever they are.

This is Sora. While your student is with us, we aim to challenge their intellect, embrace their curiosity, and propel them forward into the future.

We hope you'll join us.

Christopher Wilson
Head of Schools

About Sora Schools

The traditional education system is one-size-fits-all, but the best way to learn is self-paced and personalized. The system is designed to teach facts above all, but 83% of Americans fail basic tests about the nation's founding, despite 89% believing they'd pass with flying colors. Even college-bound students forget most of what they learn in school within a couple of years.

As a result, students wind up believing they are not made for school when, in reality, the problem is that schools were not made for them.

Our mission is to empower students to thrive through an education as unique as they are.

Sora is the student-centered middle and high school that provides curious adolescents with the freedom to explore their interests, challenge themselves, and discover their future paths. Our students grow by mastering skills and concepts in projects that reflect the real world while preparing them for the challenges of their future. They are supported by a diverse community, a blend of both live and independent learning, engaged faculty, and a dynamic academic journey.

Traditional school expects students to conform. Sora expects students to discover and inspire. By creating a system that allows students to chart their own course, our students are happier, more engaged, and find school more useful.

Core Learning Experiences

Students receive credit for these units and abilities through three core learning experiences: Expeditions, Activities, and Independent Study Expeditions. These experiences look slightly different from middle to high school, and are designed to support students academically and developmentally as they progress through Sora's program.

Expeditions
Expeditions are group synchronous learning experiences. But they aren't like traditional classes found in most public, private, and online homeschool curriculums. Instead, they are engaging, interdisciplinary, and student-centered explorations of relevant topics such as Artificial Friends: AI in Literature and Film, Sports Technology, History of Rock Music, and Financial Literacy 101.

Activities
Activities provide an asynchronous and independent pathway for students to work on projects that cover new depths of knowledge and abilities. Our Activities Library is full of asynchronous projects, experiments, books, interesting articles, and videos we've created for students to earn credit for units and abilities within a six week cycle.

(Activities are currently only available to high school students)

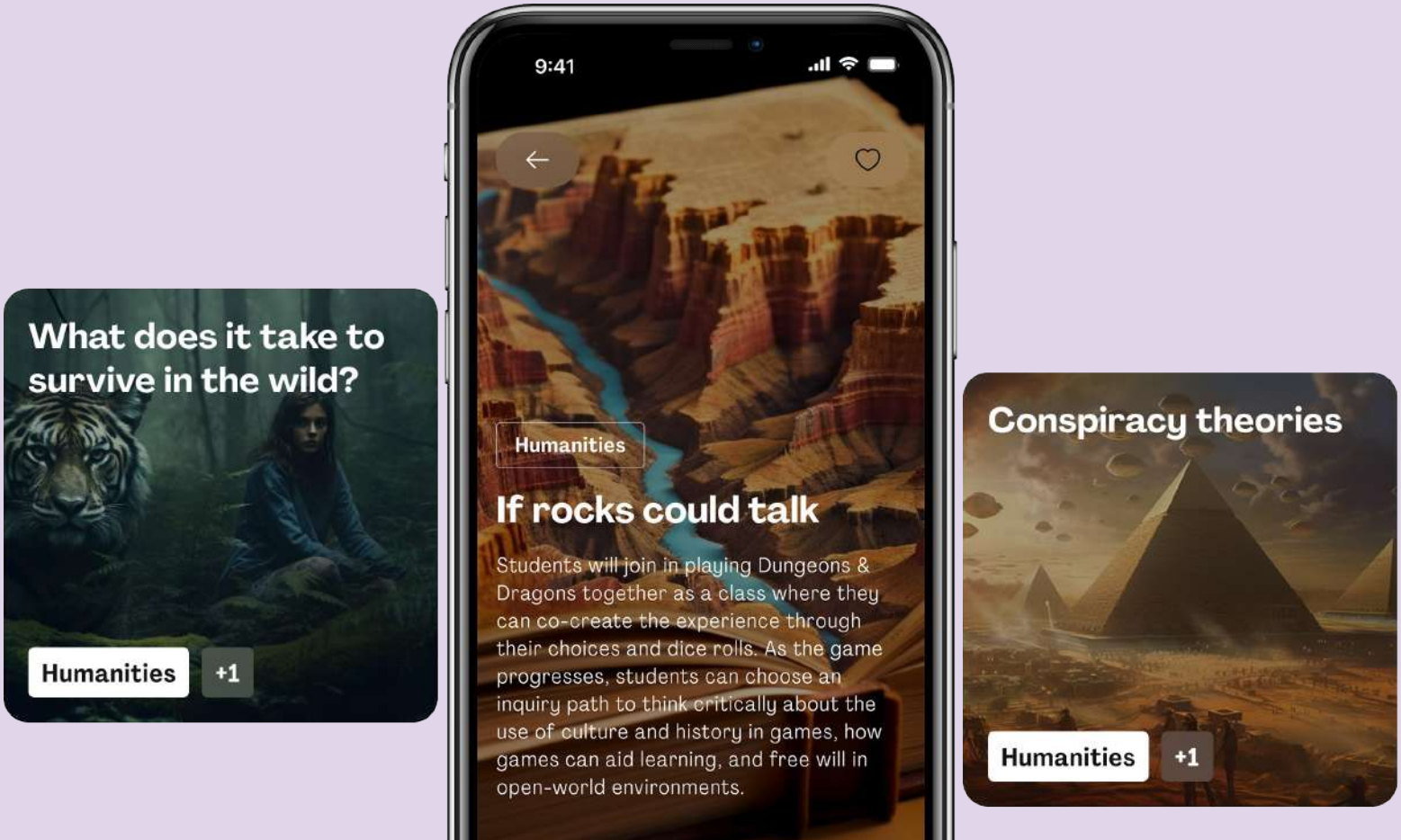
Independent Study Expeditions
Independent Study Expeditions provide avenues for Sora students to engage in a student-proposed project that supports additional depth, breadth, and individualization to the Sora experience. Starting with a guiding question, students partner with a faculty member who acts as their mentor during this course of study as they explore and answer their guiding question, then present their findings.

Courses Students Crave

Our Learning Expeditions aren't like traditional classes: they are interdisciplinary explorations of real-world topics where students work with others and learn academic content to answer a fascinating question, like "How Might We Build a Society on Mars?".

Recent popular Expeditions have included:

- In the Trenches: Combat, PTSD, and War Literature
- Calculating Justice
- The Physics of Shark Movement
- Banned Books
- Commotion in the Ocean
- Dungeons and Dragons
- Microscopic Art
- Forces of Nature: Physics of Sports, Gaming, and the Everyday
- Philosophy of Villainy
- Big Brother Is Watching: The Science Behind 1984

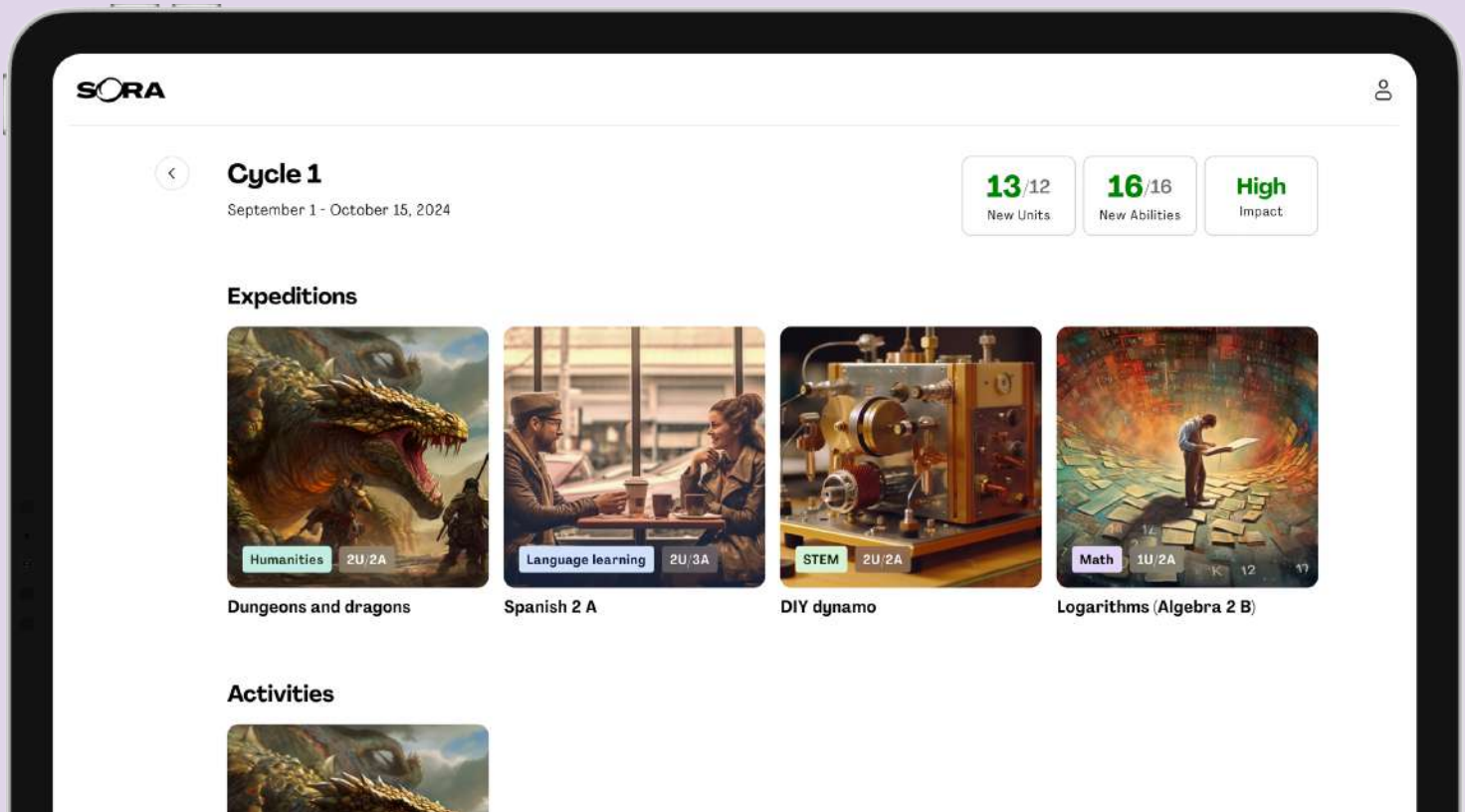


Customize Your Sora Journey

Independent Study Expeditions
Independent study allows for students to engage in a student-proposed project during a unique, individual experience. Independent Study Expeditions are available to all Sora students who complete the planning process and are approved to participate. This looks slightly different from middle school to high school, and is designed to support students academically and developmentally as they progress through Sora's program.

Through an individual study expedition, students submit proposals for individual study projects. Projects provide additional depth, breadth, and individualization to the Sora experience, and students can work on projects in their areas of interest that they create and scope in collaboration with our faculty. Examples include coding video games, writing fantasy novels, or conducting scientific research on plants.

Core to Sora's curricular model, students utilizing independent study not only get to explore what they're genuinely curious about or interested in, but they demonstrate mastery in math, science, English, history, and all of the academic subjects you'd find in a traditional high school curriculum through their individualized project work. They also learn important life skills like time management, project management, teamwork, and communication.



Activities Library

Additionally, high school students can earn credit independently through Sora's Activities Library. The Activities Library features an incredible catalog of asynchronous projects, experiments, books, interesting articles, and videos curated by Sora's faculty and curriculum team. Students can utilize activities to enhance their learning, fill any knowledge gaps, or simply explore new topics! This can range from diving into the question "how do you develop your startup idea?" to learning how to develop websites using HTML and CSS, unleashing the power of mathematics to build your own Rube Goldberg machine, and analyzing power and corruption in George Orwell's "Animal Farm". Activities are designed around a guiding question and are completed within a 6-week cycle timeframe. While activities are largely independent, students will meet periodically with a faculty advisor, during the 6-week cycle, for guidance as they produce a final project deliverable.

Capstone

The capstone project is a multifaceted reflective project and is a mandatory graduation requirement for all fourth-year high school students attending Sora Schools. High school students in their fourth year curate a digital portfolio that showcases their specific career-related work, as well as their overall Sora experience, contributions, and achievements. The digital portfolio might include a personalized career plan, project-based learning samples, achievements and honors, awards, and evidence of participation in activities such as internships, community service projects, or school clubs. The capstone project culminates with a presentation during the Capstone Symposium.

A Unique Model

One of the things that makes Sora unique is that we break down traditional subject matter (think courses like World History, American Literature, and Biology) into smaller components we call units and abilities.

Units

Units represent what you know. Using state standards, we distilled traditional high school subjects into their component parts. There are 128 units addressing each of the subjects you'll master for graduation, like cell biology, polynomials, the U.S. Constitution, and the politics of literature.

Abilities

Abilities show what you can do. Abilities grow with students over their time at Sora and each should be demonstrated about 4x/year in order to practice applying them in different situations, under different circumstances. This includes things like problem solving, citizenship, and working with data.

Middle School yearly requirements

English Language Arts **ELA** (**6**)	American Literature: Fiction American Literature: Non Fiction World Literature: Fiction World Literature: Non Fiction Creative Writing Expository/Persuasive Writing
Math (**1**)	Math Foundations (MS) Pre-Algebra (MS) Algebra 1 (HS) Geometry (HS) Algebra 2 (HS)
Social Studies (**6**)	Founding the US World Changing and Current Events World Geography Cultures/Religions HIstorical Activism Diversity and Ancient Civilizations
Science (**6**)	Physics Life Science: Organisms Life Science: Ecosystems Earth and Space Science Environmental Science
World Language *__Optional__*	Through Sora's program with Rosetta Stone, Middle School students have the option to take and receive High School Language Credit during their Middle School experience.
PE	To be completed independently with parent/coach verification.
Abilities	Effective Communication Truth Seeking Curiosity Creativity Self - Awareness Empathy Agency

High School Graduation Requirements

English Language Arts ELA (**4**)	2 credits must be Foundations ELA 2 credits must be Extensions ELA
Math (**4**)	3 Credits must be Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra 2. Elective options include Precalculus, Calculus (with a Precalculus prerequisite), Statistical Reasoning, and Advanced Mathematical Decision Making.
Social Studies (**3**)	3 credits must be US History, World History A & B
Science (**4**)	3 Credits must be Biology, Chemistry, Physics (all lab-based). Elective choices include Anatomy and Physiology, Earth Science, Environmental Science, and Oceanography.
World Language (**2**)	2 credits of the same world language through Rosetta Stone or another accredited program.
PE	To be completed independently with parent/coach verification.
Health (**0.5**)	Personal Health, Healthy Living, Physical Fitness
Electives (**4**)	
Capstone Project	Typically completed in year 4 and will be required for graduating high school students.
Abilities	16 demonstrations of each of the 8 abilities: • Analyzing History • Conducting Primary Research • Conducting Secondary Research • Designing Solutions • Quantitative Reasoning • Reading Critically • Effective Communication • Writing

A Different Way to Evaluate Success

Traditional education is designed to be unnecessarily stressful. You won't find endless worksheets or high-stakes tests at Sora. Instead, we employ a mastery-based assessment system where students choose how they want to demonstrate their learning, and can overwrite any score at any time.

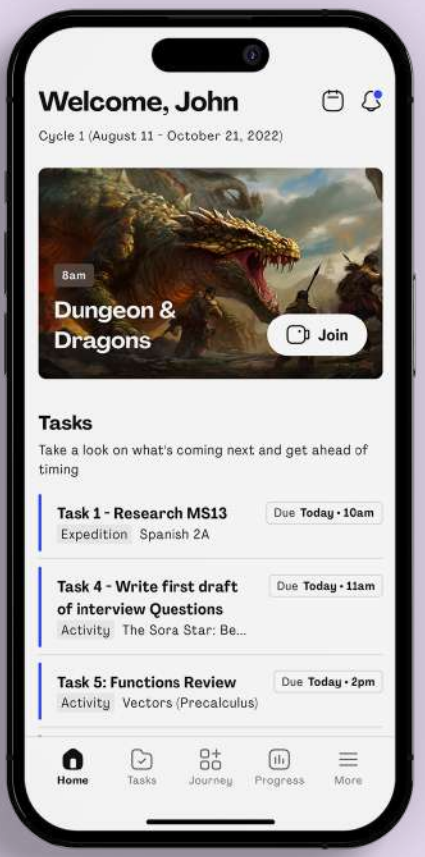
Stay On Track With Sora Home

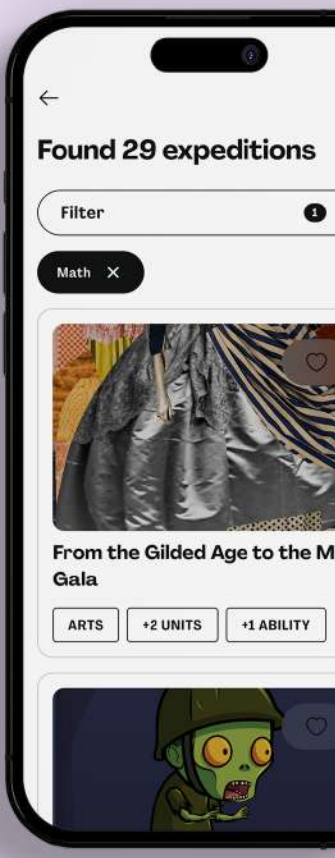
Every Sora student works with their advisor to visualize their whole Sora journey and how their learning choices map to their future life goals. With hundreds of new learning options starting every six weeks, there are literally millions of ways for Sora students to customize their experience.

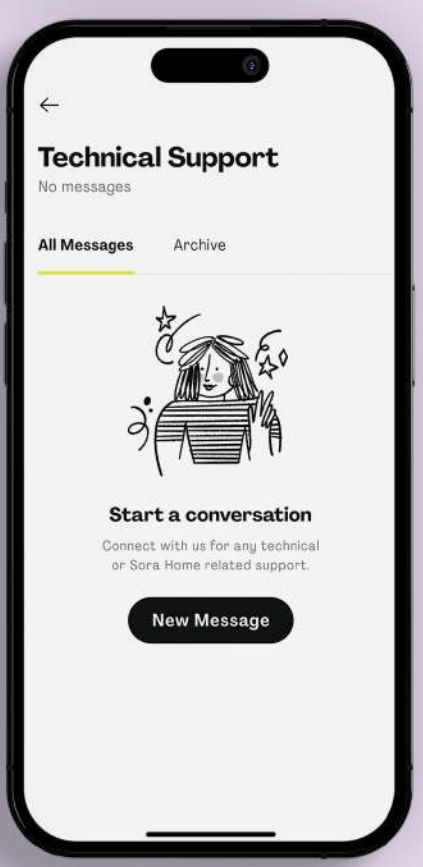
While students are primarily making choices based on their interests, our custom software ensures their plan keeps them on track for graduation and academic success.

- **Stay in touch with faculty:** Sora Home is the one-stop shop for connecting with faculty. If you or your student have questions about an expedition or assignment, reaching out to the expert is a breeze.
- **Understand your student's progress:** Easily see and understand how your student is moving through the curriculum and whether they're on track to their graduation goals.
- **Empower students to review their work:** We believe in putting students in the driver's seat, and they can review their collection of work to compile into a portfolio for college or job applications.

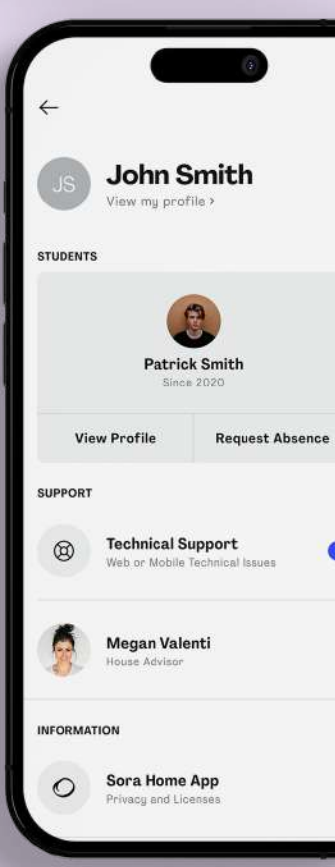
Tasks
Todo (20)
Submitted
Closed
All
Math (5)
Humanities (5)
Language
Monday
May, 8
Task 4 - Write first draft of interview Questions
Due 11am
Activity The Sora Star: Be an Investigative Journalist (Cat)
Tuesday
May, 9
Task 1 - Research MS13
Due 11am
Expedition Spanish 2A
Project - Submit Task 2
Due 11am
Expedition Vectors (Precalculus)
Home
Tasks
Journey
Progress
More


Welcome, John
Cycle 1 (August 11 - October 21, 2022)
8am
Dungeon & Dragons
Join
Tasks
Take a look on what's coming next and get ahead of timing
Task 1 - Research MS13
Due Today • 10am
Expedition Spanish 2A
Task 4 - Write first draft of interview Questions
Due Today • 11am
Activity The Sora Star: Be...
Task 5: Functions Review
Due Today • 2pm
Activity Vectors (Precalculus)
Home
Tasks
Journey
Progress
More


Found 29 expeditions
Filter
1
Math
From the Gilded Age to the M
Gala
ARTS
+2 UNITS
+1 ABILITY


Technical Support
No messages
All Messages
Archive
Start a conversation
Connect with us for any technical or Sora Home related support.
New Message

Absence request
Select one or more days
Patrick Smith will be absent
January
2023
MON
TUE
WED
THU
FRI
1
2
3
6
7
8
9
10
13
14
15
16
17
20
21
22
23
24
27
28
29
30
31
Cycle 5
Cycle 6
No class
Continue


JS
John Smith
View my profile
STUDENTS
Patrick Smith
Since 2020
View Profile
Request Absence
SUPPORT
Technical Support
Web or Mobile Technical Issues
Megan Valenti
House Advisor
INFORMATION
Sora Home App
Privacy and Licenses

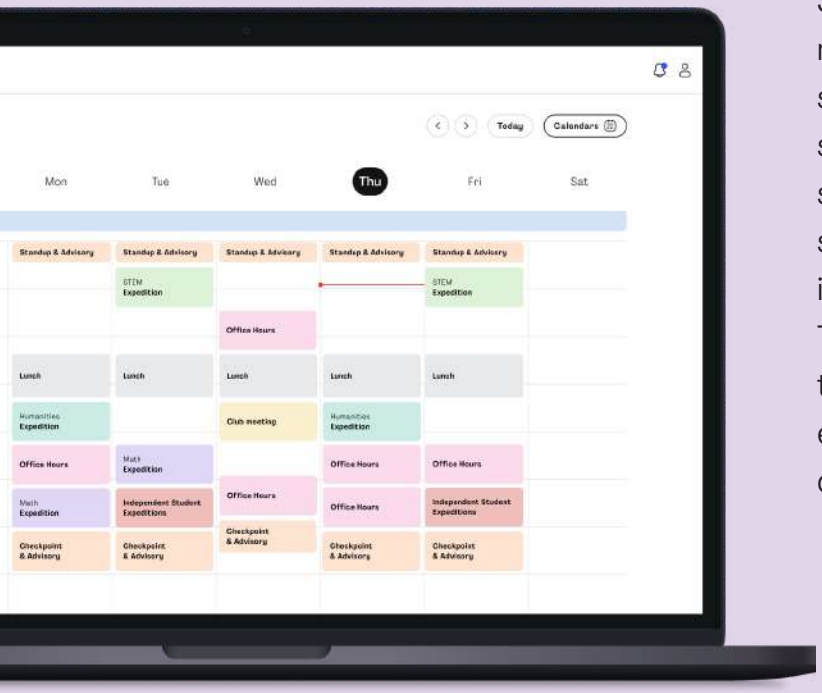
Life at Sora

Instead of semesters, trimesters, and quarters, we utilize **6-week long cycles**, and students are in school from mid-August to mid-June. They also enjoy regular breaks during the school year around the holidays in the fall, winter, and spring just like their friends in traditional schools.

Some days are busier than others, and schedules can change from cycle to cycle. They also have the flexibility to learn from anywhere, whether at home or on the road.

The daily school schedule isn't block period schedules where students sit in class for several hours back-to-back. Our program balances synchronous or live meetings such as learning expeditions and student activities with asynchronous or independent working time.

While there is no typical day at Sora, most are much more reflective of college, where students have some required meetings throughout the day, with breaks and gaps in between.



Students have required meetings in the morning and afternoon, which we call stand-up and checkpoint. These are similar to a "homeroom" or advisory where students discuss their projects, what they seek to accomplish that day, and engage in fun games and friendly competitions. These daily meetings help students hold themselves accountable to their plans, and ensure they get the support they need that day to be successful.

THE BEST ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

Sora's students are actively challenged and engaged by our remarkable faculty and a thoughtful curriculum. Our aim is to ensure students are wholly supported academically, emotionally, and socially.

World-Class Faculty

When it comes to your student's education, you want to know that their future is in competent, capable, and caring hands. Sora has some of the best faculty in the country. There are so many educators that want to teach at Sora, that only 1% of applicants to our teaching positions are offered employment.

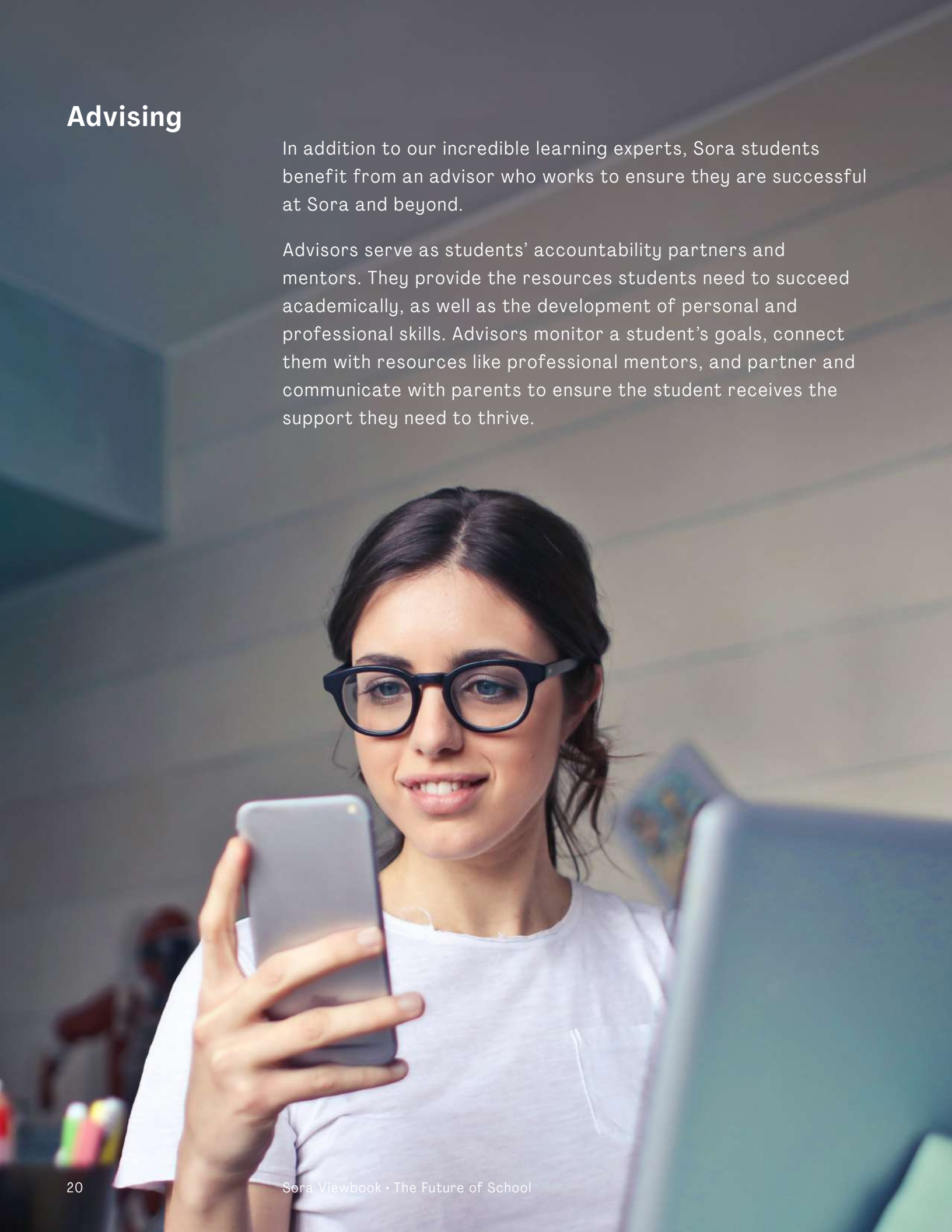
When we select faculty, we look for educators who excel in non-traditional learning communities.

Our world-class faculty possess interdisciplinary and project-based teaching experience and go through an in-depth and thorough onboarding and training process so they can provide the most innovative, relevant, and student-centered learning experience. They also benefit from ongoing professional learning opportunities, and a remarkable curriculum team that works with them regularly to develop new and exciting learning expeditions each cycle.

Advising

In addition to our incredible learning experts, Sora students benefit from an advisor who works to ensure they are successful at Sora and beyond.

Advisors serve as students' accountability partners and mentors. They provide the resources students need to succeed academically, as well as the development of personal and professional skills. Advisors monitor a student's goals, connect them with resources like professional mentors, and partner and communicate with parents to ensure the student receives the support they need to thrive.



AWESOME SOCIAL EXPERIENCE

At Sora, we don't let students feel like a faceless number. We build our schools to be close-knit communities that reflect student personalities and interests, with tons of ways to connect. From small student Houses to intimate expeditions, our students are seen and heard.

Global School, Local Feel

Connection and community are at the heart of our school culture. Our remote learning environment feels human and authentic, not distant and isolated - a place where students can connect, support and inspire one another, dream big, and forge meaningful friendships.

Each virtual campus is capped to be around 150 students. In this small school environment individual students are seen, heard, and supported with small class sizes and one-to-one attention from faculty.

One of the benefits of a Sora education is the opportunity for students to be a part of an incredible and diverse peer community in a transformational and unique learning environment with young people from all over the world. We know that with so many backgrounds, perspectives, and beliefs present at Sora, learning is enhanced and enriched for everyone because of the lived experiences and identities of our student body.

Student Houses

Much like what you'd find in the world of Harry Potter, every student at Sora is a member of a house, and new students are sorted and welcomed into a house through a lively sorting ceremony at the beginning of their time at Sora. House sorting is largely based on geographic location and students' shared interests. Each has about 15-20 students and is guided by a student house leader and a faculty house advisor.

Houses are primarily led by a student-elected house leader, a meaningful student leadership opportunity that defines the house culture and fosters connection and community within each house. These student leaders also benefit from the support and collaboration of a faculty member who serves as the house advisor and provides guidance to house leadership while building authentic and supportive relationships with each house member.

The houses within a school take part in school spirit competitions and are invited to connect with one another in the school chat rooms.

Student-Led Clubs

The possibilities for student clubs at Sora are nearly endless. All clubs are student-generated, student-led, and based on student interests ranging from art, to gaming, to the LGBTQ+ community, and beyond. They have the support of a club champion, who is an adult from the Sora community who shares that interest. Because clubs are driven by student interest, the offerings vary widely from one campus to another. Throughout the year, we host “Organization Kick-Off Days” where students chat with club leaders, learn about each club, and join!

One unique and popular club is Roadmap Club where students collaborate with school leaders and the product team to offer feedback and observations on various aspects of their school experience ranging from ideas for future learning expeditions to school policy changes. This is a great example of how Sora is a student-centered school that prioritizes student voice and choice, so that they have a say in shaping their school experience.

Literature Magazine

Sora Senate

LGBTQ+ Club

Art Club

Automotive Club

Chess Club

Movie Club

Creative Writing Club

E-Sports Success

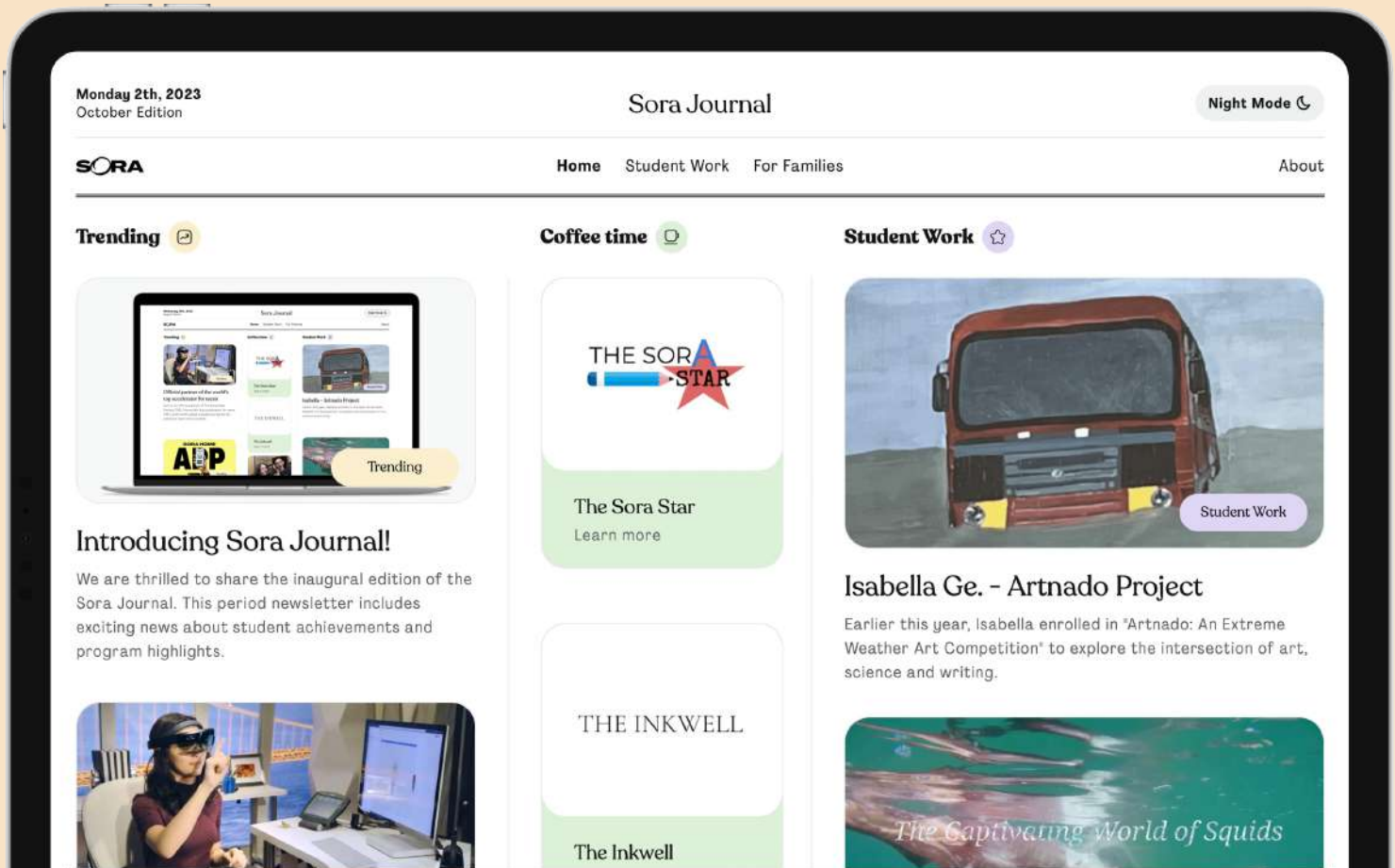
We take pride in being passionate - whether that's academic achievement or in competition like our high school e-sports school team! Our e-sports team is currently available to students on our high school campuses and consists of organized multiplayer video game competitions. In fact, our team is currently the reigning amateur champions in League of Legends, taking home the national title in Stillwater, Oklahoma in 2022.

In the words of one of our incredible e-sports athletes, they compete in e-sports for self-improvement. In their words, "Being a great player requires tons of hard to learn skills. It's been great utilizing them in other areas of my life."

Sora Journal

Sora Journal is our student-driven newsletter that includes exciting news about student achievements and program highlights, links to our students newspaper (The Sora Star) and literary magazine (the Inkwell), news and notes about our curriculum, and even a few Sora company announcements.

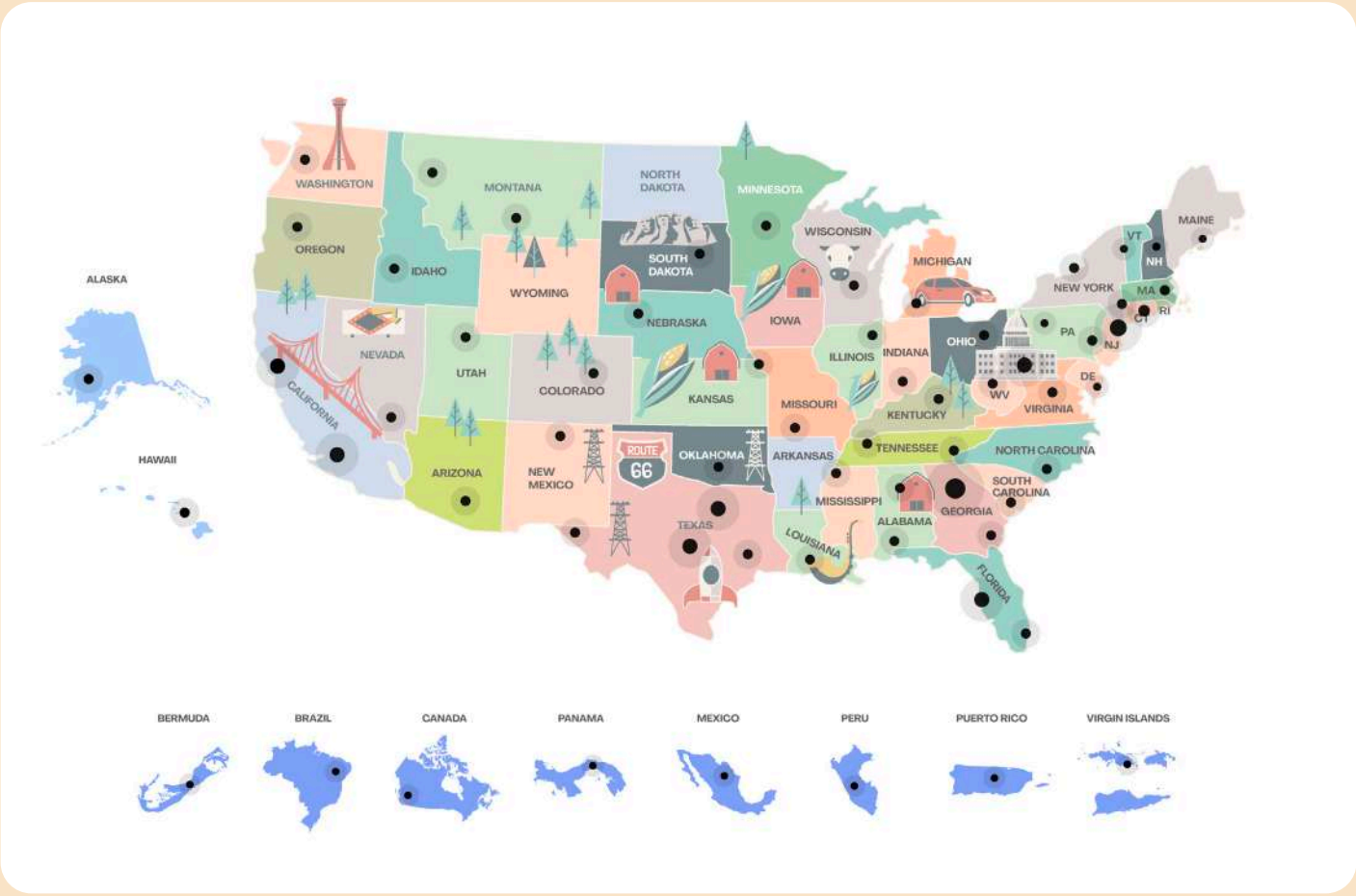
The Sora Journal is an inspirational resource for learning more about what our students are doing, how we are living and growing our mission, and the incredible ways the Sora program grows and changes with students as they build toward high school, into their mentorship and capstone programs, and beyond.



A Diverse, International Community

At Sora, we believe that school is about community. Sora students and parents benefit from membership in an expansive and diverse school community. Our middle and high school families represent over 45 states and 7 countries (and counting!) and students come from a variety of schooling backgrounds, including public, private, home school, and charter schools.

Through our parent community platform, we connect families in the same geographic areas for local meet ups like scheduled dinners, co-learning sessions, group projects, field trips, and more. Additionally, many of our students connect in-person with one another during their travels across the country–and the world!



We aim to prepare students for the next chapter in their lives, no matter what that might be.

For many students, a four-year university is the right choice. For others, an apprenticeship or trade program may be a great fit. And for some others yet, they may take a gap year, start their own business, or directly join the workforce.

We create changemakers, no matter the pathway.

Portrait of a Graduate

To fulfill our mission of empowering students to flourish and thrive through an education as meaningful and unique as they are, we aim for graduates to enter life after Sora possessing seven traits, which we call our portrait of a graduate:

Growth Mindsest: The belief that all skills and knowledge can be improved through hard work.

Meaning Making: Constructing our narrative and cognitively grounding our actions in the impact we wish to have in the world.

Metacognition: Recognizing our own thought patterns and blasting through them to achieve our goals and make hard things easier in the future.

Agency: You are in control of your own life. Author your narratives to focus on the things you can control.

Curiosity: Discover things that excite you, and then give them the space, time, and resources to explore those things, like a child discovering something for the first time.

Postive Sum: Instead of competing, we should be helping each other thrive. We are equally dedicated to seeing these habits flourish in our peers as we are ourselves.

Connection Seeking: The human brain is a relevance-finding machine. To produce new knowledge, we connect what we already know to new experiences and information.

These traits are ones we prioritize when looking for prospective students as well as ones we aim to nurture in their time at Sora.

College Counseling

Sora families benefit from a personalized and individualized college counseling process. This includes: access to college preparatory information sessions and workshops on topics such as; essay writing, portfolio building, financial aid and scholarships, applications, and how to transition to college. Students work directly with a college counselor to create a list of potential schools, draft essays and other application materials, and acquire stellar letters of recommendation.

Transcript & Accreditation

When it's time for seniors to submit transcripts to institutions of higher education, Sora packages all of the individual areas of mastery back into their traditional academic subjects and produces a reliable and clear transcript with credits earned and a GPA. Our transcript showcases not only what students learned at Sora, but highlights their unique strengths, abilities, and notable project work. This format is informed by the Mastery Transcript Consortium, is used by hundreds of other innovative schools across the world, and is received positively by college and university admissions offices. Sora Schools high school program is also fully-accredited by both WASC and Cognia, and recognized by the NCAA.

ASU Post-Graduate Program Included

Through an exciting dual enrollment partnership with Arizona State University, Sora's high school students can register for free college courses through the ASU Universal Learner courses and earn college credit while enrolled at Sora. The ASU UL program offers a wide range of business, engineering, and liberal arts and sciences courses, and can be completed in both synchronous and asynchronous formats.

The ASU partnership also allows Sora to offer a Postgraduate and Gap Year program for high school graduates. During the postgraduate year, students at Sora will explore career areas of interest, while simultaneously earning up to 32 credit hours (over one full year of college) towards their college transcript.

While undertaking studies through Sora's ASU partnership, postgraduate students will participate in a unique capstone project experience, drawing together advanced academic studies and professional exploration under the guidance of Sora faculty and a mentor in the student's chosen field.

One of the most unique features of the partnership is that students who participate in Sora's postgraduate program can simultaneously qualify for automatic admission to ASU through ASU's earned admission program.

AFFORDABLE PRIVATE SCHOOL MADE
AFFORDABLE PRIVATE SCHOOL MADE
AFFORDABLE

Affordable & inclusive

50% of high school parents say they would choose a different school for their child if location and price were not a factor. We believe a quality private school education shouldn't be out of reach for admissible students.

To prepare students to explore the world, our school community should reflect the real world with a diverse student body that is representative of all socio-economic backgrounds. To achieve this goal, Sora seeks to enroll families who understand and embrace the mission of Sora regardless of socio-economic background through our Flexible Tuition Program.

Flexible Tuition is a need-based tuition assistance program. This program allows both Middle School and High School families to apply for reduced tuition, taking their financial circumstances into account and making a Sora education affordable to qualified students who could not otherwise join our school.

48%

of Sora families benefit from the Flexible Tuition Program

$4,000

Average grant per student

$92,000

Average annual household income for families receiving Flexible Tuition

Provide a World of Possibilities

Ready to join a learning community unlike any other?

Attend an info session to meet an admissions counselor and hear more about how Sora might be the best option for your student.

SORA

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Web
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SORA