



# POLARIS

LEARNING LABS





## HOW WE SUPPORT ALL STUDENTS

The commitment to honoring and developing each person's gifts is at the core of our mission at New Garden Friends School. The concept of Polaris Learning Labs was conceived to ensure that each student in our inclusive community is provided with the intellectual, social, and emotional skills they need to take their next steps with confidence and compassion.

At NGFS, our concern for students' social and emotional wellness and growth does not take a back seat to academic endeavors. We are committed to healthy, balanced, and developmentally appropriate levels of support and challenge.

Polaris Learning Labs are staffed by our Learning Specialist Team. The Labs encompass executive functioning skills, support, and enrichment.

**LEVEL 1 SERVICES ARE INCLUDED IN OUR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM.**

## LEVEL 1

**All NGFS students have access to Level 1 services:**

- Faculty members implement strategies to support students' executive functioning and study skills throughout the year.
- Intervention or enrichment support from faculty and/or Learning Specialists in small group settings, as needed
- Plans for student support and extension based on strengths and/or challenges; these will be created by faculty members in collaboration with the Learning Specialists, as needed.
- Access to recommended providers for privately paid tutoring when further support is suggested
- Accommodations for students with demonstrated need or ability with or without up-to-date psychoeducational testing



# LEVEL 2

The intentional cultivation of critical executive functioning skills

- Planning
- Organization
- Attention
- Time Management
- Task Initiation
- Metacognition
- Self-regulation
- Chunking long-term assignments into manageable steps
- Perseverance
- Flexibility/Resiliency
- Reading Strategies
- Note-Taking Strategies
- Test Prep
- Synthesizing Information
- Responsive Writing
- Making Connections
- Self-advocacy



# MIDDLE SCHOOL

## Skills for Academic Success

This course is customized to fit the learning needs of the participants. For some students, success in Middle School will depend on dedicated instruction and oversight in the areas of planning, organizing, making decisions, paying attention, regulating behavior, solving problems, evaluating choices, and completing tasks. With regular guidance, they can develop these skills and move toward greater independence. Learning to navigate anxiety and/or the social and organizational challenges of Middle School builds resilience and paves the way for educational success.

## Math Lab

Addressing gaps in students' foundational math skills is critical to their academic advancement. When students haven't mastered foundational skills, they do not have what they need to move on to more challenging concepts. This course focuses on building the competencies students need to grasp introductory algebraic and geometric concepts. Students regularly practice applying concepts and formulas to solve a variety of problems, deepening their mathematical reasoning and decoding skills. This is a semester course.

## Reading Lab

This course focuses on building fluency skills students need to master the more lengthy and complex texts they will encounter in Middle School and beyond. Reading fluency strongly correlates with deeper understanding, serving as a bridge between word recognition and comprehension. Reading Lab will also include vocabulary development and reading comprehension strategies that are necessary for critical reading, reasoning, and writing.



# MIDDLE & UPPER SCHOOL

## **Guided Study Hall**

Guided Study Hall is a small setting designed to provide students with additional organizational and academic support during independent work time. Parents or guardians of students enrolled in Guided Study Hall will receive weekly progress reports from the Learning Specialist. Students will focus on the following: the completion of homework and assignments, preparing for tests and quizzes, and reviewing weekly progress reports. When necessary, this will provide a time and place for students to complete make-up tests and quizzes after absences.

Middle School and Upper School Guided Study Halls are held separately.



**LEVEL 2 CONT.**

# UPPER SCHOOL

## **Academic Coaching Seminar**

This class is organized and customized to fit the learning needs of its participants. Executive functioning plays an enormous role in academic success; as students take on Upper school work, they need the skills to plan, prioritize, and organize their time and work. In this class, students will build those competencies and also learn to address procrastination, behavioral choices, and time management challenges. Increasing their competence in these areas can contribute to greater engagement in both academic and extracurricular activities.

## **Math Lab**

This course builds students' foundational math skills and addresses gaps in understanding of algebraic and geometric concepts. Students regularly practice applying formulas to solve problems, deepening their mathematical reasoning and decoding skills. This is a semester course.

**CONTACT THE DIVISION HEAD FOR INFORMATION ABOUT LEVEL 2 FEES;  
FEES CAN ALSO BE FOUND ON THE NGFS WEBSITE.**



# LEVEL 3

Families of students who are already receiving accommodations and individual instruction and are experiencing acute challenges in their educational journey may request participation in the one-on-one learning options available with Level 3 support.

Level 3 support is designed to be short-term interventions, not lasting more than a school year, to aid students in either integrating into the full NGFS program or to ensure that students continue to progress as families consider educational opportunities for the future. The individualized nature of this level allows for one-on-one teaching and support as identified by the Learning Specialist Team and approved by the Head of Middle and Upper School and Upper School Academic Dean.

Due to the resource commitment necessary for Level 3 support, enrollment is extremely limited.



Tanisha Jones  
Head of Middle and  
Upper School



Allie Blosser  
Upper School  
Academic Dean

## LEARNING SPECIALIST TEAM



Beth DeFilippis  
Middle School  
Learning  
Specialist



Lauren Dean  
Upper School  
Learning  
Specialist



Lindsey Gear  
Upper School  
Learning  
Specialist

GUIDED BY QUAKER VALUES, NEW GARDEN FRIENDS SCHOOL  
IS COMMITTED TO BEING AN INCLUSIVE EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITY  
THAT HONORS AND DEVELOPS EACH PERSON'S GIFTS.



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