

Welcome to Sora

The future of school is here



SORA

“Education is what survives
when what has been learnt has
been forgotten.”

– **B.F. Skinner**



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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.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Chris Wilson", enclosed in a light gray rectangular box.

Christopher Wilson
Head of Schools

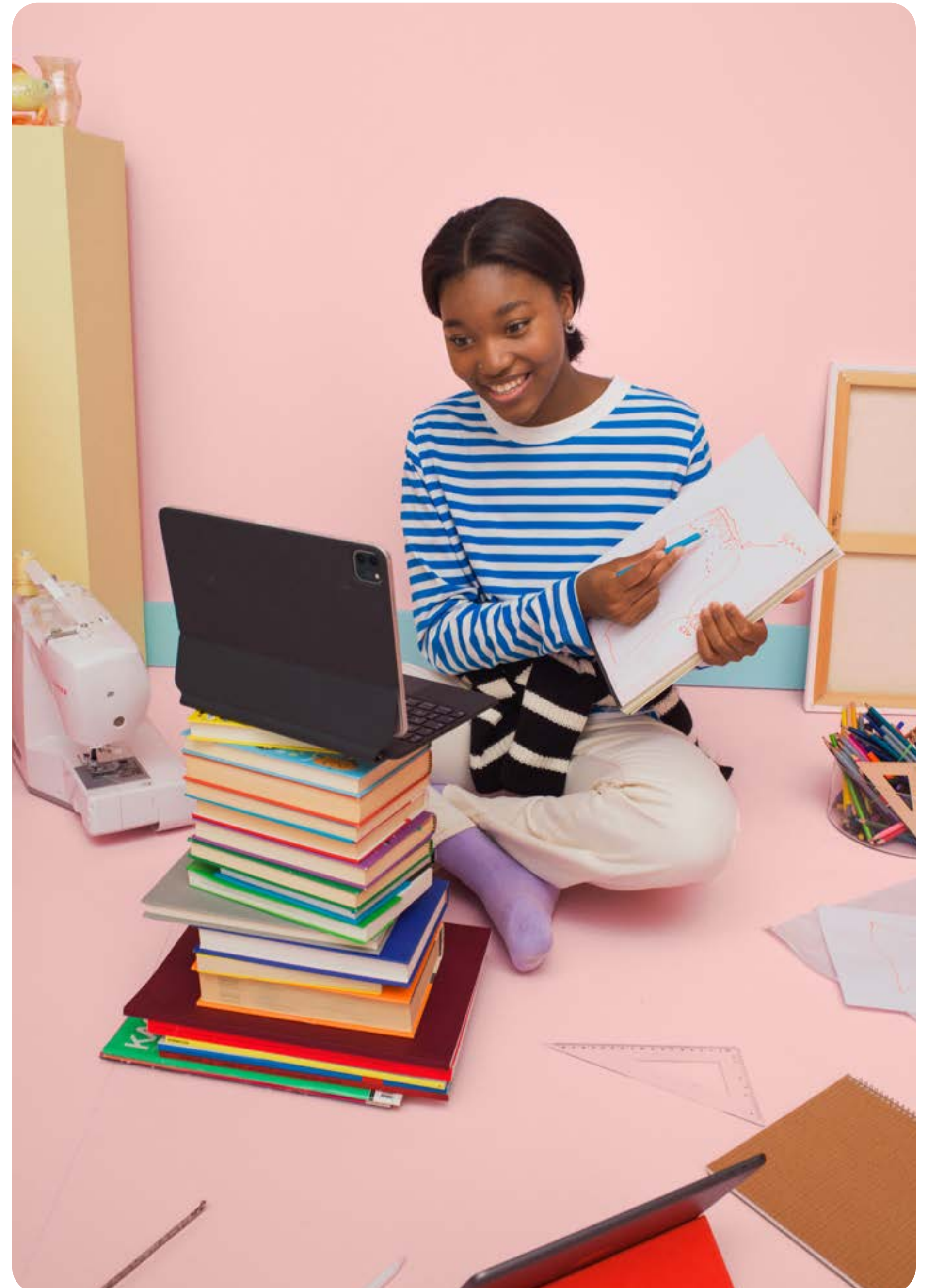
About Sora Schools

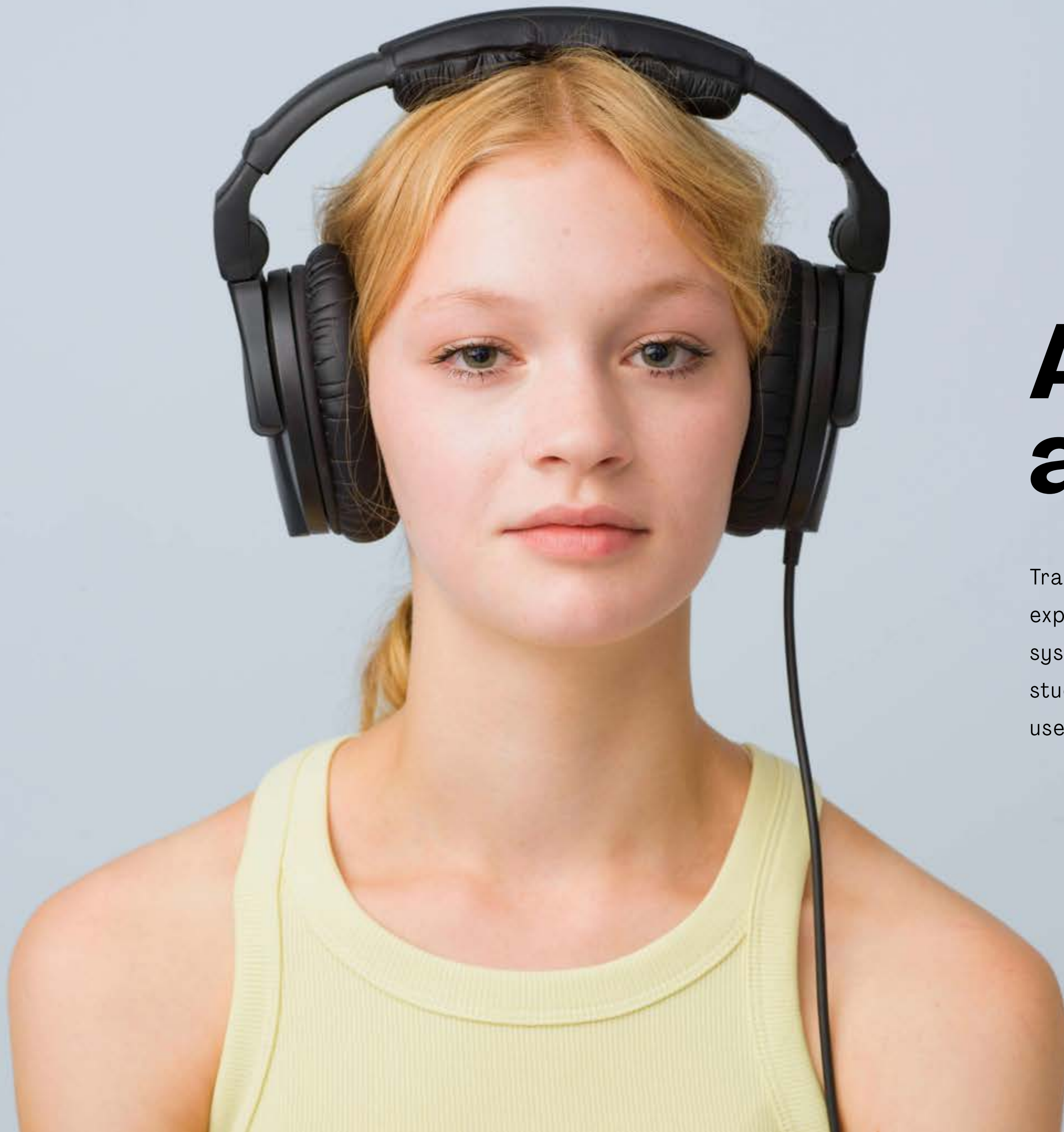
The traditional education system is one-size-fits-all, but the best way to learn is self-paced and personalized. The system is designed to teach facts above all, but 83% of Americans fail basic tests about the nation's founding, despite 89% believing they'd pass with flying colors. Even college-bound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





A school built around You

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.

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.

Students receive credit for these units and abilities through two primary methods: expeditions and independent study projects.

Expeditions

Expeditions are our group synchronous courses. Our faculty and curriculum development team create innovative courses like The Philosophy of Marvel, Engineering Rollercoasters, and Literature in Gaming.

Independent study projects

Independent study projects (ISPs) are for when students have a curiosity outside of our expeditions. Starting with the formulation of a guiding question from “What if Monet was a contemporary artist working with digital tools?” to “What are the economics behind building a tiny house community?” and beyond. They then partner with a faculty member who acts as their mentor during this course of study, explore and answer their question, then present their findings.



Life at Sora

Instead of semesters, trimesters, and quarters, we utilize **6-week long cycles**, and students go to school from mid-August to mid-June, while benefiting from over a month off in the summer for vacation. They also have regular breaks during the school year around the holidays in the fall, winter, and spring just like their friends in traditional schools.

Sora students have the power to choose expeditions that interest them.

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.

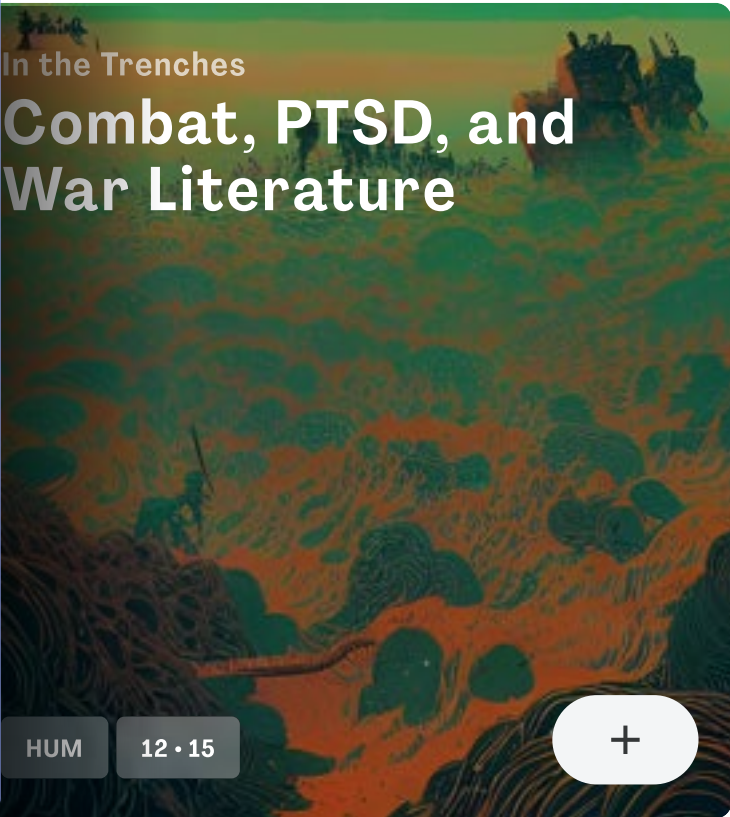
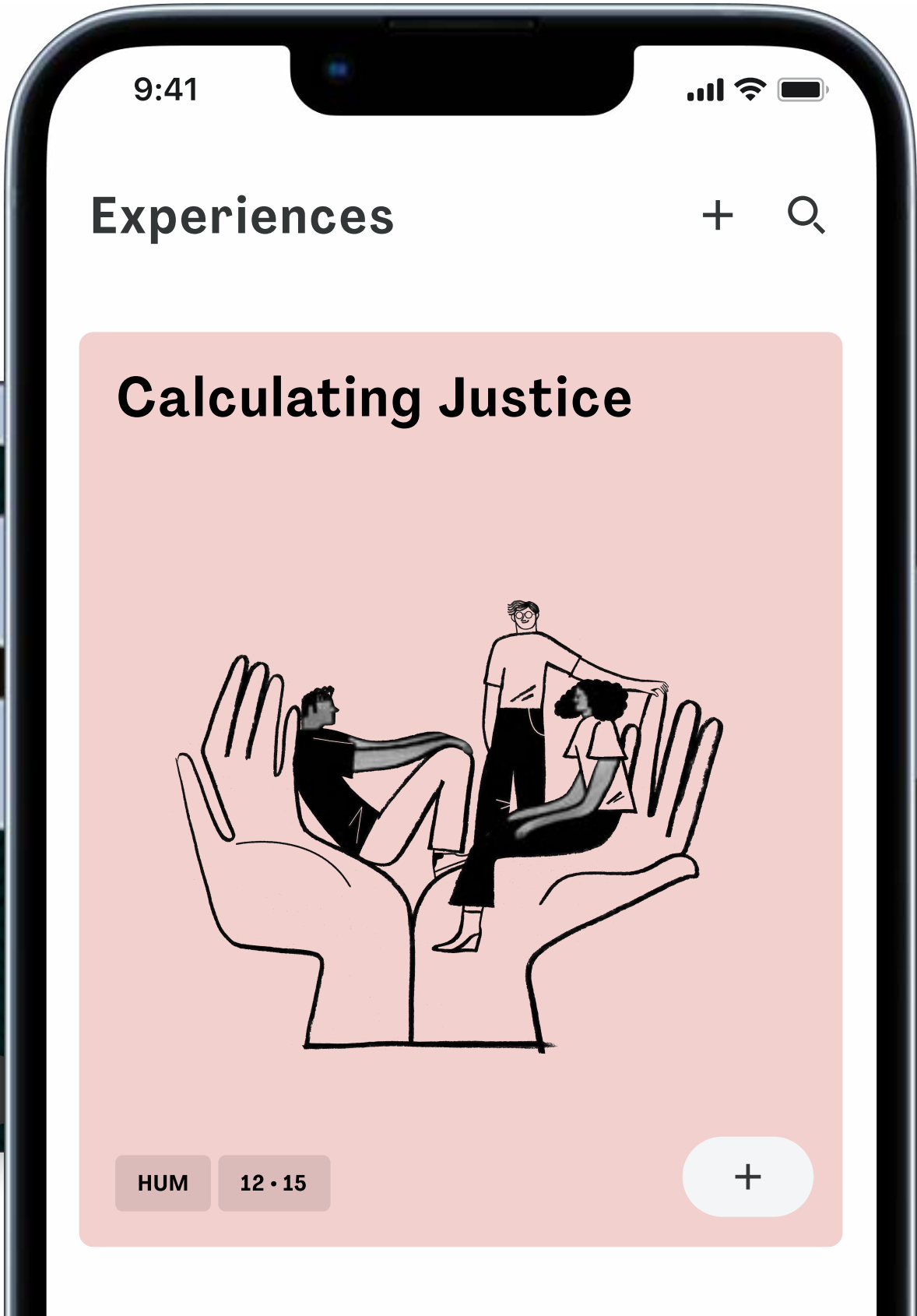
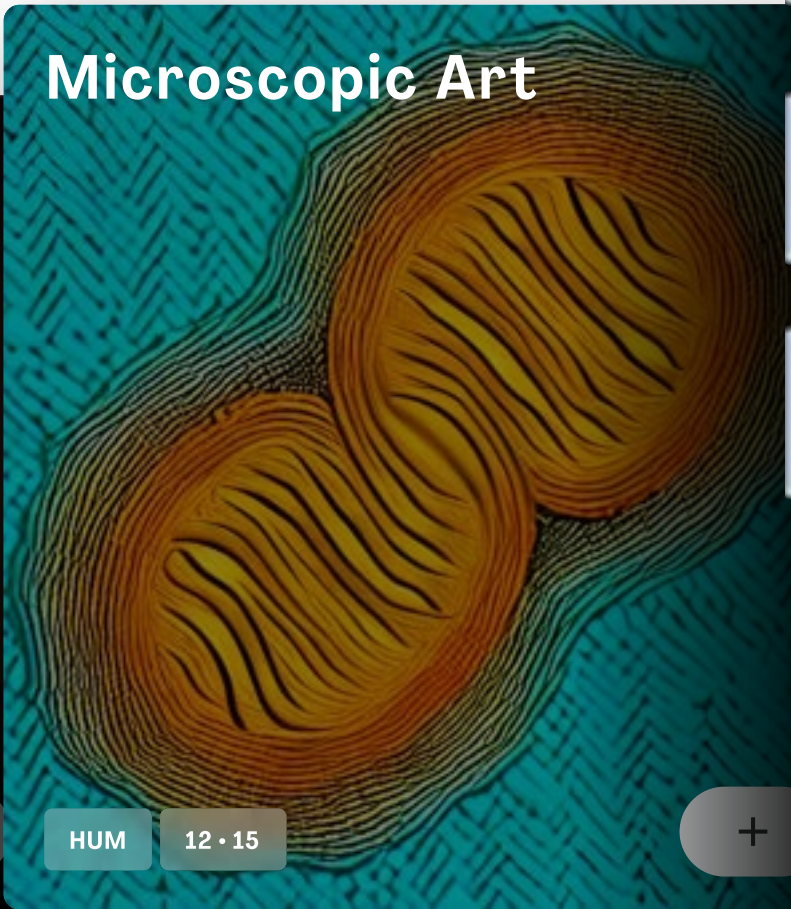
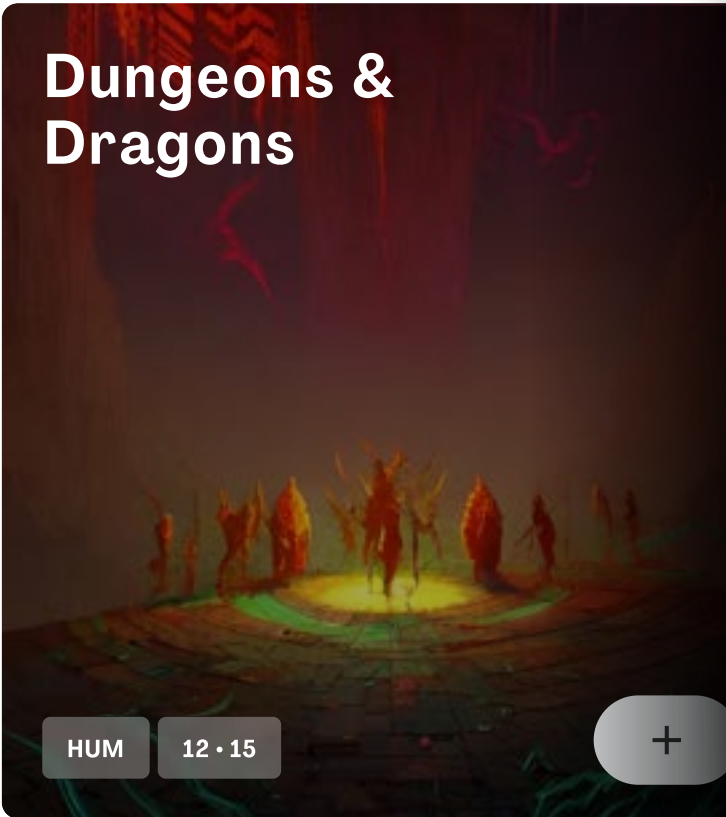
While there is no typical day at Sora, most are much more reflective of college, where students have some required meetings throughout the day, with breaks and gaps in between.

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.

Courses Students Crave

Our Learning Expeditions aren't like traditional classes, and they do not have a lecture-based format. Learning Expeditions are interdisciplinary, fun, and active explorations of topics where students meet to engage in Socratic-discussions and interactive activities. They have the freedom to explore through experiences like hands-on labs, and even games that actively engage students in their learning.

- 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
- ...and much, much more.



A Different Way to Evaluate Success

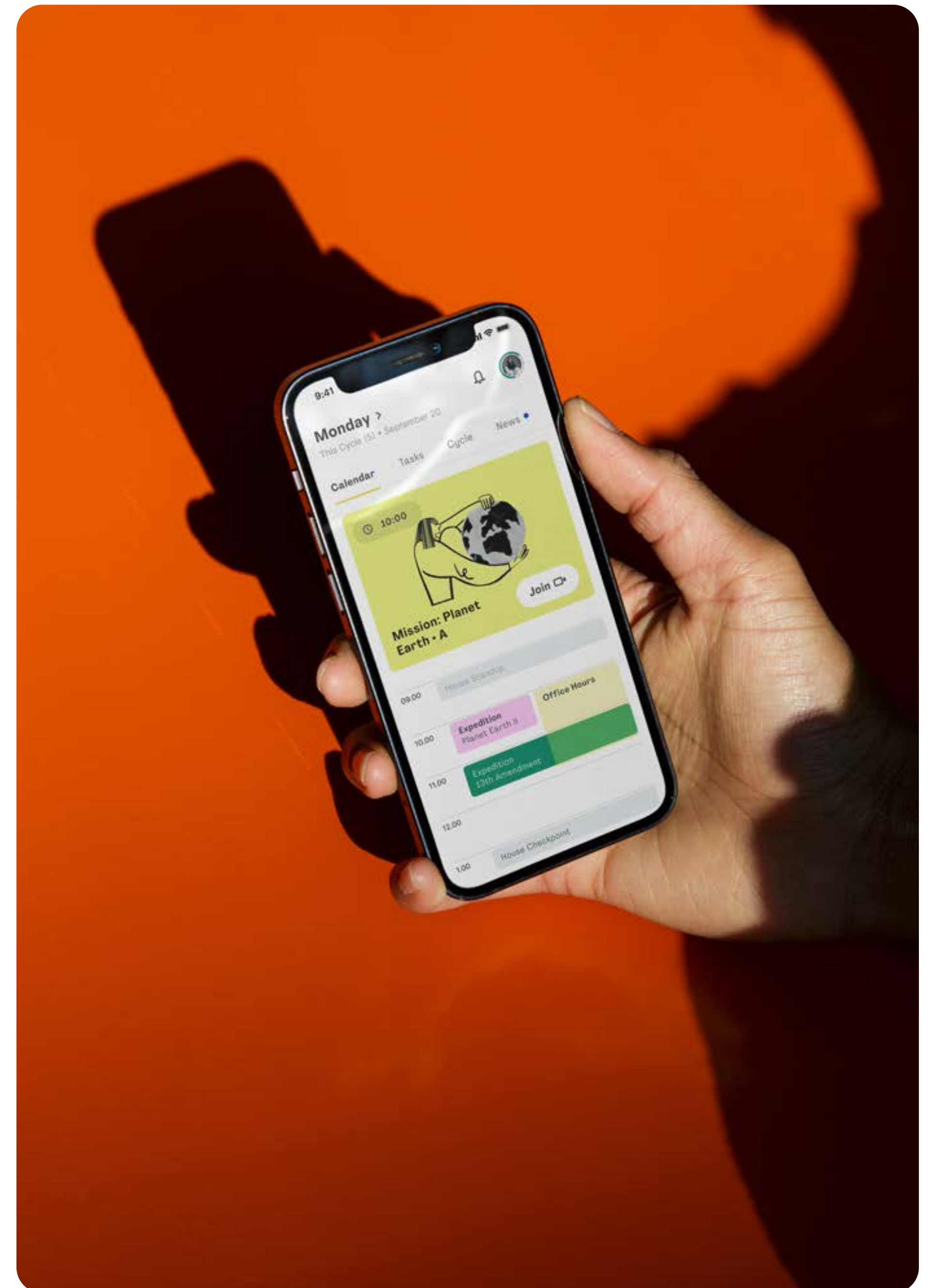
You won't find worksheets, tests, and lengthy high-stakes exams at Sora. Instead, we employ mastery-based assessment where students demonstrate competency through the application of content knowledge and skills. In a mastery school like Sora, students benefit from an acute understanding of their knowledge and skills, recognize the relevance of their learning, and are provided with opportunities to try again, go deeper, and engage in a learning process that is dynamic and individualized, not linear and standardized.



Stay On Track With Sora Home

Utilizing our smart registration system and their House Advisor, students complete registration for Learning Expeditions every six-week cycle via Sora Home, our own cutting-edge learning management system, built in-house by our designers and engineers. While students primarily select Learning Expeditions based on their interests, smart registration recommends the best expeditions based on what will advance a student towards their learning goals and graduation. This is unique to each student based on how they are progressing each cycle, and their overall pace towards graduation.

- **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.





The Best Academic Experience

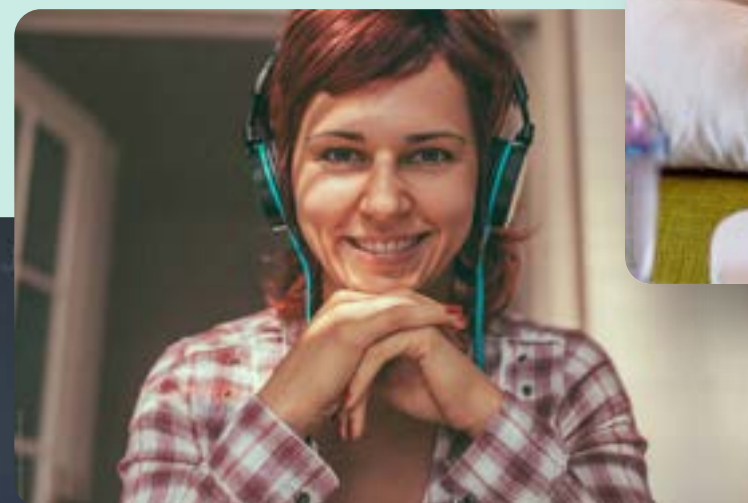
Sora's students are actively challenged and engaged by our remarkable faculty and a thoughtful curriculum. Our aim is to ensure students are wholly supported academically, emotionally, and socially.

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.

Middle School @ Sora

A feature of project-based learning in the middle school are the annual seminar extended projects. These projects are designed to give students the skills they need to be successful in the independent study program in Sora's high school.

In the first year, the focus is a self-portrait through an identity project where students explore answers to reflective questions such as:

- Who am I as an individual?
- What are my passions, interests, and skills?
- What makes me a global citizen?

Students design self-portraits reflecting their identities and their portraits take a variety of forms, including 2D artwork, 3D modeling and sculpture, poetry and song, essay, video, or performance.

An entrepreneurship project is also part of year one, where students design and operate a for-profit or nonprofit business, learning about money management, supply and demand, and project management. They create a product to sell, advertise the product, and balance a budget.

In the year two **capstone project**, students choose a topic or area of interest and develop a product that encourages them to grow in their understanding and skills related to this topic. Project management and study skills are applied to the project development, and students share their process, key learnings, and products at an exhibition at the entrepreneurship market fair to close out their middle school experience.

High School @ Sora

Individual Study Program

The individual study program allows for high schools to engage in a student-proposed project during a unique individual study expedition or via an autonomous experiential learning opportunity. ISP is an optional program that is available to all Sora high school students who complete the planning process and are approved to participate.

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 ISP 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

One way high school students can earn credit independently is through the activities library, an incredible catalog of asynchronous projects, experiments, books, interesting articles, and videos Sora's faculty and curriculum team curated from around the web for students to level up the credit they've earned their own time. All of the activities in the library are tagged to specific Sora units and abilities. In the library, students choose to complete engaging activities like making their own ice cream and understanding the chemistry involved, or recording a podcast about something that interests them.

Capstone

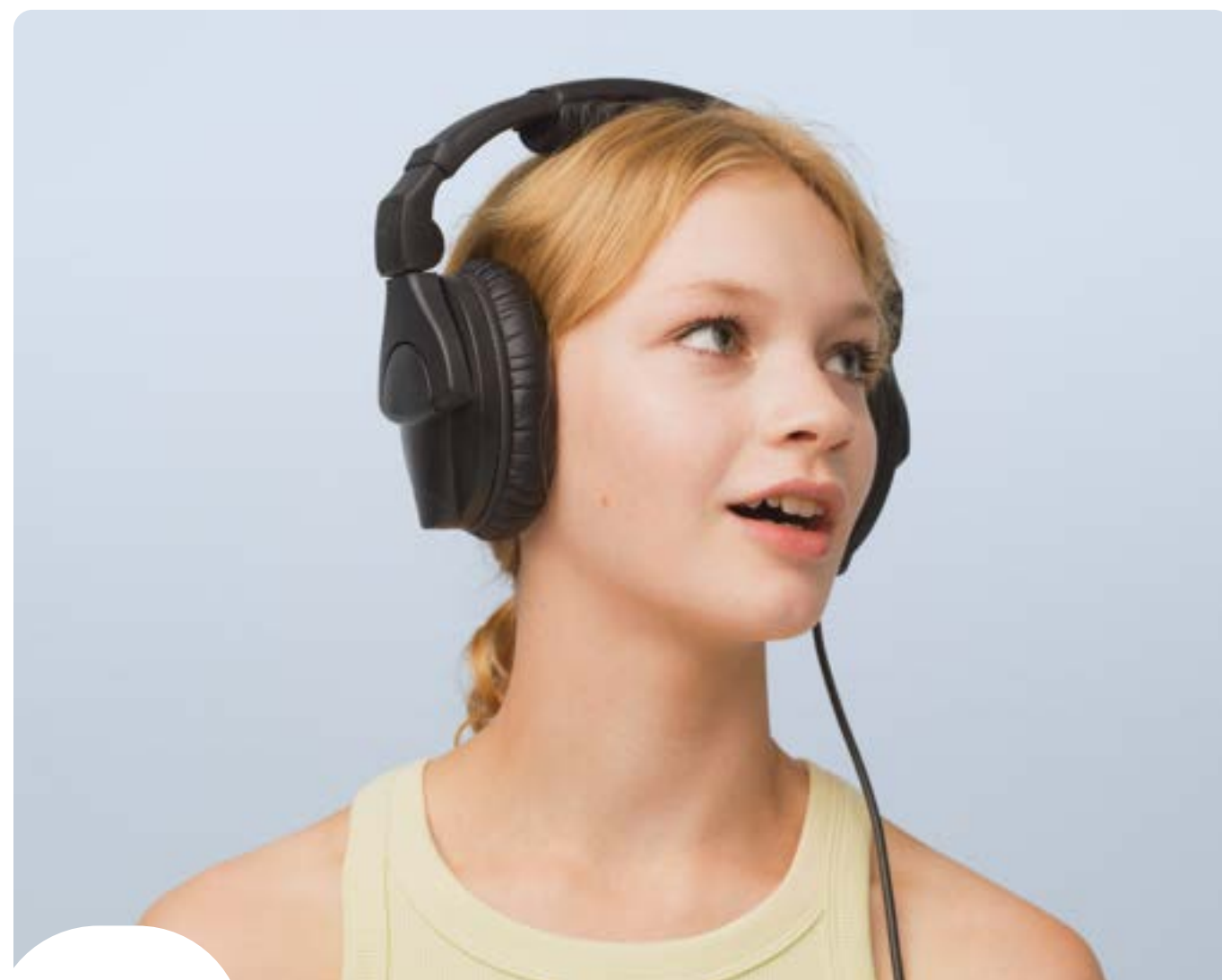
The capstone project is a multifaceted reflective project and is a mandatory graduation requirement for all fourth-year high school students attending Sora Schools. High school students in their fourth year curate a digital portfolio that showcases their specific career-related work, as well as their 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.



An 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 campus is capped to be around 150 students. 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 to attend school in 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 10-15 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.

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."





In-Person Opportunities

We believe that “online school” shouldn’t mean “sitting-behind-your-computer school.” Through real-world projects, creative courses, and meaningful relationships, students can easily spend more time doing and less time scrolling.

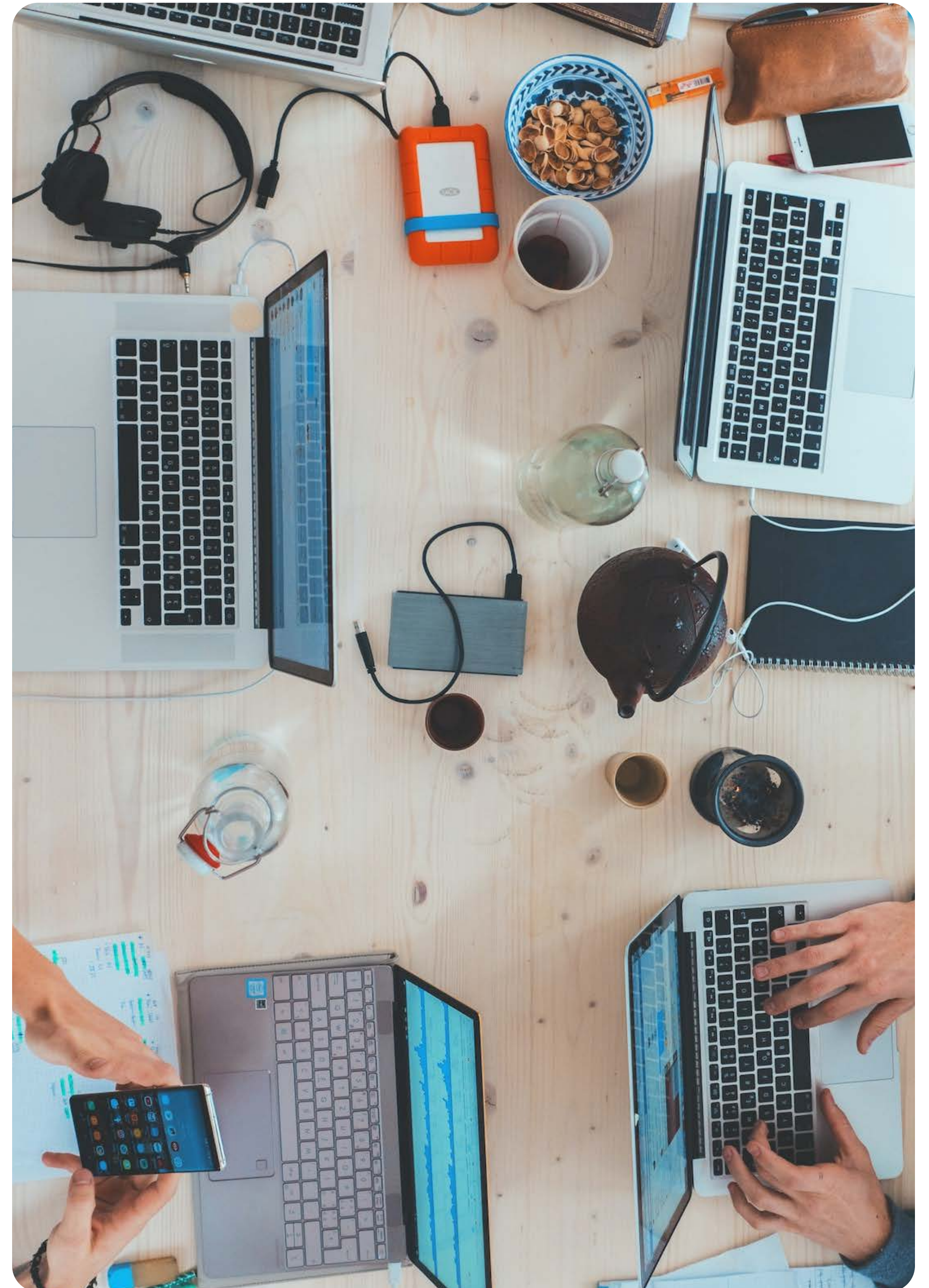
Additionally, Sora provides opportunities to connect with classmates face-to-face through partnerships with in-person learning hubs and experiences that will take them out into the world – together.

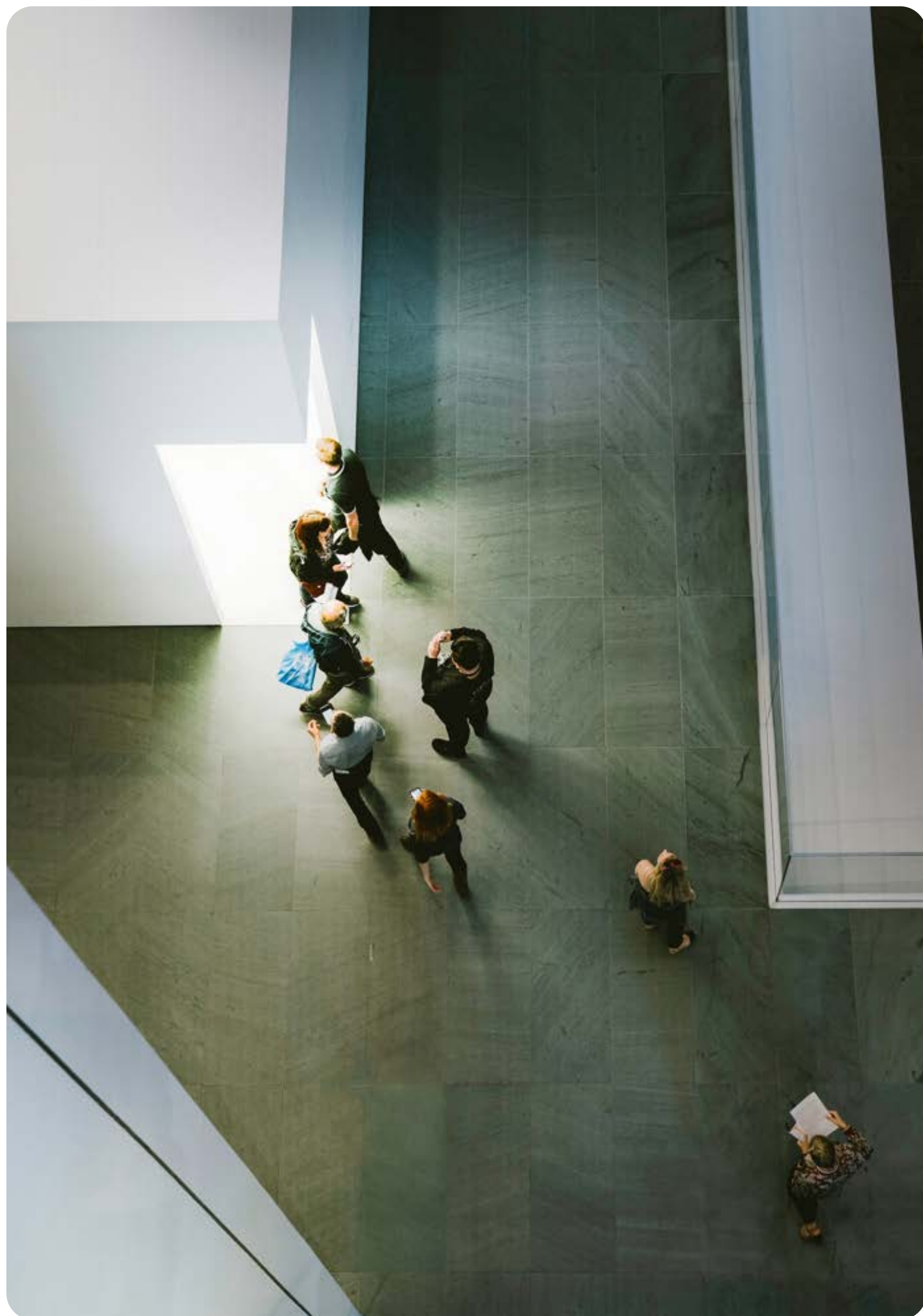
Group Learning Hubs

While Sora Schools does not have a physical building, you may have the opportunity to enroll with one of our partners who host classroom locations across the U.S. Here, students can meet and learn alongside other students – think of it like a co-working space for kids.

In these collaborative spaces, students attend their learning expeditions, work on projects, attend clubs, do their house activities, and otherwise fully participate in our online program. Students also benefit from in-person academic support from a learning coach and enrichment activities specific to that location.

We recognize a fully remote learning environment can be a big adjustment for some students, therefore these spaces offer a great opportunity to attend Sora in a physical location with flexible enrollment options.





Signature Experiences

As we look to provide opportunities for students to meet in-person and engage in experiential and place-based learning, we are developing our first ever signature experiences at Sora, set to launch in spring 2023. These are in-person, social, and immersive learning opportunities that enhance the Sora Schools experience for students and families beyond our remote culture!

Each signature experience will offer exploration, real-world experience, and social bonding. They will include interdisciplinary trips all over the country to museums, art galleries, national parks, and more! These trips will be facilitated by our wonderful Sora faculty and staff, with the possibility of parent involvement as well.



Life After Sora

We aim to prepare students for the next chapter in their lives, no matter what that might be. For some students, an apprenticeship or trade program may be the right choice; while diving right into the workforce, taking a gap year, or starting their own business might suit others better.

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:

1. **Creativity:** Playful, creative thinkers who possess an interdisciplinary approach to problem-solving
2. **Self-Awareness:** Effective personal and professional work habits to ensure they are college and career-ready
3. **Curiosity:** Naturally curious, inquisitive of multiple disciplines, and seek to make sense of the world
4. **Truth-Seeking:** Seek truth through thoughtful experimentation, civil discourse, critical reading, and debate
5. **Empathy:** Open-minded, celebrate diversity, and seek out new perspectives
6. **Agency:** Change-makers who are motivated to work on hard problems
7. **Effective Communication:** Strong communicators, storytellers, and collaborators

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.



Private School Made Affordable

Affordable & inclusive

Private school tuition can be expensive, but Sora is an affordable option and is up to **75% less expensive** than most private high schools.

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 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 community.

47%

of Sora families benefit from the Flexible Tuition Program

Average grant per student is approximately

\$6,000

Average annual household income for families receiving flexible tuition

\$85,000

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.



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soraschools.com