

Georgetown Day School

Washington, D.C., United States



Born in 1945 as the capital's first racially integrated school, its progressive ethos still defines a Tenleytown campus

RANKING DIMENSIONS

Overall	75/100
Academic outcomes	77/100
University placement	76/100
Prestige & heritage	74/100
Alumni network	74/100
Facilities	73/100
Transparency	71/100

EDITOR'S VERDICT

Georgetown Day School still trades on a fact that matters: it opened in 1945 as Washington’s first racially integrated school, and that founding act still shapes the institution more than any glossy promise about “community”. This is a non-religious day school in Tenleytown for ages 3 to 18, teaching in English and running an American high school diploma with AP. Its public philosophy is explicit: inquiry, self-reliance, strength of character, concern for others, and a “democratic learning community” built by teachers who challenge intellectual, creative and physical capacities alike. That gives parents a clear read on what GDS is selling. Not polish, tradition for tradition’s sake, or narrow exam-drill, but a **progressive** education with moral and civic intent.

The practical proposition is strong. An **8:1 student-teacher ratio** points to real adult attention, and the school’s own account places equal weight on academic study, the arts, physical education, extracurricular life and community service. That breadth will appeal to families who want serious academics without a monoculture of grades and resume-building. At an average annual day fee of **\$55,048**, GDS sits in the expensive top tier of the Washington market, so parents are entitled to expect depth of teaching and a campus culture with substance. On the evidence available publicly, the school does offer a *coherent* ethos rather than a bundle of fashionable slogans. NAIS accreditation adds a baseline of institutional credibility, though accreditation alone never distinguishes a school at this price.

What is special here is the combination of political history, progressive pedagogy and a capital-city setting. GDS has an alumni footprint that reaches into public life, scholarship, journalism, the arts and music, with **42 notable alumni** catalogued in Wikidata and **16 writers/journalists** among them. That does not prove outcomes for every child, but it does fit the school’s long-standing emphasis on articulate, questioning, culturally literate students. The child who will thrive here is bright, verbal, socially aware and happy in classrooms that ask for participation rather than obedience. Children who want *lively argument*, broad exposure and adults who take ideas seriously will find a natural home. Families seeking a more traditional, hierarchical or overtly conservative school culture should look elsewhere; GDS is *distinctive*, *values-driven* and *not built for deference*.

STRENGTHS

- Founded in 1945 as the first racially integrated school in Washington, D.C., a heritage that still shapes its curriculum and community ethos.
- Small classes and a low student-teacher ratio of 6:1 across a preK-12 enrollment of roughly 1,075 students.
- Sizeable financial aid program: \$9.6 million awarded to 24% of students in 2024-25, with an average grant of \$36,400.
- College placement record includes matriculation to Harvard, Princeton, Columbia, Brown and the University of Pennsylvania in recent classes, with 100% of graduates going on to college.
- Single unified campus in Tenleytown completed in 2021 after a fundraising drive that exceeded \$52 million from over 2,000 donors.

TRADE - OFFS

- Tuition is among the highest in the DC private-school market, reported at \$56,217 for 2025-26.
- Admissions are selective and competitive, with one source citing a 24% acceptance rate; the school itself does not publish official admissions statistics.
- Day-only school with a single NW Washington campus, meaning no boarding option and a practical requirement to live within commuting distance.
- The school's outspoken social-justice and DEI mission has drawn political and media scrutiny, which may not suit families seeking a more neutral or traditional institutional tone.

ADMISSIONS

Georgetown Day School enrolls preK through grade 12 on one Tenleytown campus, with preK and kindergarten as the primary entry points and limited openings in other grades depending on attrition. Applications typically require transcripts, recommendations, an essay, and an interview, submitted through the Ravenna platform ahead of a January deadline. Reported acceptance figures suggest a competitive process, though GDS does not officially publish admissions statistics. Financial aid is handled separately via the Clarity system and requires tax documentation.

NOTABLE ALUMNI (42)

SPORT: Schuyler Bailar

MUSIC: Shari Belafonte, Guy Picciotto, Judy Kuhn, Alice Randall, Ethan Slater, Jake Blount

DRAMA: Olivia Wilde, Melissa Sagemiller, Ruben Fleischer, Shari Belafonte, Judy Kuhn, Gina Gionfriddo, Kelly AuCoin, Sam Means

LETTERS: Jonathan Safran Foer, Andrew Sean Greer, Alice Randall, Ben Mankiewicz, Franklin Foer, Gina Gionfriddo, Judith Martin, Matthew Kaminski

POLITICS: Jamie Raskin, Sophia Yilma, Kevin Sheekey

SCIENCE: Jonathan Safran Foer, Jamie Raskin, Ali al-Tamimi, Judith Martin, Andrew Joseph Lazarus

BUSINESS: Olivia Wilde, Schuyler Bailar

WTS RATING 

This profile summarises editorial research by World's Top Schools. Verify all admissions dates directly with the school before submitting. Sources are cited in the full online profile at WorldsTopSchools.com/schools/sch_eff85b08bb.