



ABOUT VERMONT COMMONS SCHOOL

Founded in 1997, Vermont Commons School is an independent, college-preparatory school, located in South Burlington, Vermont, for students in grades 7-12. Noted for offering a rigorous academic program taught by a dedicated faculty, Vermont Commons is proud to educate students who are academically motivated and intellectually curious. The average class size is 12 students. The school primarily serves students from the greater Chittenden County area, although some students travel from as far away as Middlebury, Montpelier, towns along the Canadian border and Plattsburgh, New York. Approximately 27% of the student body receives need-based financial aid to attend the school. Courses are offered on a semester and yearlong basis.

ACCREDITATION

Vermont Commons School has been awarded independent school approval and is accredited by the state of Vermont.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- I. We are all part of, responsible for, and have a direct impact upon our world. Productive citizenship requires that students thoroughly understand how their local and global communities work and how individuals and communities affect each other.
- II. Understanding the relationships between humans and the world they share is the primary goal of education. For students to appreciate their place and role in their environment – and respond with wonder and confidence – their learning experiences must be embedded in multiple human and natural contexts.
- III. To thrive in an age in which complexity and opportunity are created at an ever-accelerating pace, students must become skilled in a balanced mix of the language arts, mathematics, and physical, natural and social sciences, as well as artistic, musical and athletic expression.
- IV. Technological understanding and competence are increasingly essential for communication, competitiveness, and success in the information age.
- V. Students must interact directly with their environment in order to experience and appreciate the real-world value of their skills and knowledge. With the world as classroom, lab and shop, lessons are forever linked to vivid personal learning experiences.
- VI. Respect for self and others, enjoyment of diversity, personal commitment to equality, devotion to stewardship, and acceptance of responsibility are essential pillars of the Vermont Commons education and values system.
- VII. Recognizing that the relationships between students and adults form the fabric of the Vermont Commons experience, daily life in our school is organized to promote healthy, positive, mutually enjoyable interactions among students, teachers and staff members.

MISSION STATEMENT

Vermont Commons School students experience a unique blend of academics and global immersion, master fundamental academic disciplines, grasp the profound interdependence of the natural and human systems they inhabit, and graduate with the values, knowledge, skills and commitment necessary to become ethical and engaged ecological citizens.



ACADEMIC PHILOSOPHY

The academic program at Vermont Commons School incorporates the Guiding Principles and genuine life experiences with challenging academic offerings taught by a dynamic faculty, most of whom have degrees in their field of study. In other words, the central purpose of all academic activities is to provide students with the skills, knowledge, and experience to understand the interconnection of their local and global ecosystems and communities, their role in it, and to formulate a personal and spiritual investment in their natural and social worlds. Classes at Vermont Commons School are writing intensive, hands-on, and focus on critical thinking skills across the curriculum. Students move from acquiring skills and understanding systems, to analyzing and communicating solutions.

REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION

Vermont Commons School presents a challenging college preparatory curriculum for students in grades 7-12. The curriculum increases in depth and complexity throughout a student's career. In grades 11 and 12, capstone course work and AP courses afford upper level students with the opportunity to experience the rigor of college level courses while still having the mentoring relationship with their faculty as they prepare for the transition to college. Each year students are expected to enroll in and successfully complete a full year of courses in each discipline at the Vermont Commons School. These courses include science, mathematics, Language Arts, Spanish or Mandarin Chinese and social studies. They also are expected to complete at least a semester of Research and Service and art. Further, students must complete Level V in each discipline with the exception of Spanish or Mandarin Chinese, where Level II is the minimum requirement. All state requirements apply to a Vermont Commons education. If a senior elects to participate in a Senior Project program, he or she must pass this coursework in order to graduate. Other courses, including courses completed at other institutions, may be substituted or added to a student's transcript with faculty approval. In addition, students must successfully complete the Vermont Commons School physical education program, unless medically excused.

RESEARCH AND SERVICE

The mission of the Research and Service program is to provide students the opportunity to draw upon interdisciplinary connection to effect real change in their community. The Research and Service program also combines in-depth study with community service applications in a multi-aged setting that encourages leadership and fosters group skills. In this course, the faculty identifies a topic and need in the community, works with students to define a solution, and implements the service. Students are given a choice of classes that range from heavily environmentally based projects (e.g., the construction of an artificial wetland) to more community-oriented projects (e.g., the recording of histories of people in a retirement home). Research and Service is a semester-long course that meets for four blocks each week. Students must enroll in at least one semester of Research and Service per academic year.

SENIOR PROJECTS

At the end of the spring semester, each Vermont Commons senior is given the opportunity to design and implement his or her own Senior Project. These internship style projects are six-weeks long and replace regular classes. Students are able to pursue a career or skill interest and gain a sense of the professional setting surrounding this interest outside of the classroom. The goal is to provide seniors with time to both reflect on their experiences at the Vermont Commons School and to pursue intensive study on a topic of their choosing. The Senior Project marks a transition point for the seniors; the program allows them to creatively tie together their personal interests and academic experiences as they make the transition from high school to college and other future pursuits.



ADVANCED CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

Vermont Commons honors students who have completed specific course requirements in science and in visual arts are eligible to apply to the Advanced Certificate programs in both of these disciplines. The goal of the Advanced Certificate programs is to provide the opportunity for further study at a master level, which is demonstrated to the community at a special student showing or student-led class. Students who successfully complete the Advanced Certificate Program are honored at graduation. Additional information about these two programs can be found on the school’s website.

ENCOUNTER WEEKS

Throughout the fall, winter, and spring, each student participates in three Encounter Weeks. During these weeks, students explore the wilderness and community by participating in intensive field-based programs. The Encounter Week program allows students to “expand their reach” beyond the daily classroom and field activities, reflect on their progress, and serve as community volunteers and wilderness travelers. Encounter weeks have included backpacking trips to the Adirondacks, the White and Green Mountains, a naturalist’s exploration of Acadia National Park, a tour of art museums in New York City, a study of Vermont’s winter ecology, a bike tour around Lake Champlain, snowshoeing, fly fishing, a study of aviation, and typography.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT COURSES

Vermont Commons has offered Advanced Placement courses in English Language, US History, Spanish Literature, Spanish Language, Calculus AB, Statistics, Physics B, World History, Biology, and Environmental Science. Each year, a few of these courses are made available to students.

A member of the Vermont Commons class of 2006 was named the State of Vermont’s AP Scholar for having received the highest scores on the most AP exams in the state during the 2005-06 academic year. A member of the Vermont Commons class of 2009 was recognized as a national merit finalist and two members of the same class were designated as AP Scholars for having received three or higher on three Advanced Placement tests.

GRADING SYSTEM AT VCS

A 4.0	B+ 3.5	C+ 2.5	D+ 1.5	F 0.0
A- 3.75	B 3.0	C 2.0	D 1.0	
	B- 2.75	C- 1.75	D- 0.75	

AVERAGE STANDARDIZED TEST SCORES: VERMONT COMMONS & STATE OF VERMONT					
SAT TEST SCORES	VCS Class of 2006	VCS Class of 2007	VCS Class of 2008	VCS Class of 2009	State of VT Class of 2009*
CRITICAL READING	655	652	577	631	518
MATHEMATICS	585	560	512	592	518
WRITING	630	642	575	604	506
ESSAY	9	9	9	9	—
ACT TEST SCORES	27	28	26	26	23

*source: www.collegeboard.com

COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES ADMITTING VERMONT COMMONS GRADUATES, CLASSES 2004-2009



Acadia University, NS
Bard College, NY
Barnard College, NY
Bates College, ME
Bennington College, VT
Birmingham Southern College, AL
Brandeis University, MA
Burlington College, VT
Carleton College, MN
Carnegie Mellon University, PA
Castleton State College, VT
Champlain College, VT
Clark University, MA
College of the Atlantic, ME
College of Charleston, SC
College of Wooster, OH
Colorado College, CO
Concordia University, PQ
Connecticut College, CT
Cornell University, NY
Dartmouth College, NH
Dickinson College, PA
Drexel University, PA
Drew University, NJ
Elon University, NC
Evergreen State University, WA
Fort Lewis College, CO
Franklin and Marshall College, PA
Franklin Pierce College, NH
Furman University, SC
Goucher College, MD
Guilford College, NC
Hamilton College, NY
Hampshire College, MA

Harvard University, MA
Hobart William Smith College, NY
Ithaca College, NY
Johns Hopkins University, MD
Juniata College, PA
Kenyon College, OH
Lehigh University, PA
Lewis and Clark College, OR
Marist College, NY
Maryland Institute College of Art, MD
McGill University, PQ
Middlebury College, VT
Mills College, CA
Montana State University, MT
Mt. Holyoke College, MA
New York University, NY
Occidental College, CA
Parsons School of Design, NY
Pitzer College, CA
Pratt Institute, NY
Prescott College, AZ
Queens University, ON
Rhode Island School of Design, RI
Rhodes College, TN
Roger Williams College, RI
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, NY
Sarah Lawrence College, NY
School of the Museum of Fine Arts, MA
School of the Visual Arts, NY
School of the Art Institute of Chicago, IL
Scripps College, CA
Skidmore College, NY
Smith College, MA
St. Lawrence University, NY

St. Michael's College, VT
Swarthmore College, PA
Syracuse University, NY
Temple University, PA
Trinity College, CT
Trinity University, TX
Union College, NY
University of Alabama
University of Colorado at Boulder, CO
University of Connecticut, CT
University of Delaware, DE
University of Denver, CO
University of Mary Washington, VA
University of Montana, MT
University of New England, ME
University of Puget Sound, WA
University of Redlands, CA
University of Rhode Island, RI
University of Richmond, VA
University of Texas at Austin, TX
University of Vermont, VT
University of Virginia, VA
Ursinus College, PA
Vassar College, NY
Warren Wilson College, NC
Washington University, MO
Wells College, NY
Wellesley College, MA
Wesleyan University, CT
Wheaton College, MA
Whitman College, WA
Williams College, MA
Willamette University, OR
Worcester Polytechnic Institute, MA

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