



ABOUT VERMONT COMMONS SCHOOL

Founded in 1997, Vermont Commons School is celebrating 21 years as an independent, college-preparatory day school for students in grades 6-12 located in the greater Burlington, Vermont area. With a curriculum that balances academic rigor with innovation, Vermont Commons educates students who are academically motivated and intellectually curious. From its inception, Vermont Commons School has cultivated an ethic of environmental awareness and responsibility, as well as a focus on local and global community.

ACCREDITATION

Vermont Commons is accredited by the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), and the Vermont State Board of Education.

VERMONT COMMONS SCHOOL AT A GLANCE

- **Average class size:** 12 students
- **Geographic Distribution:** Vermont Commons School students generally live in the greater Chittenden County area, although some students travel from as far away as Middlebury, Waitsfield, towns along the Canadian border, and towns on Lake Champlain in New York.
- **Financial Aid:** Approximately 25% of the student body receives need-based financial aid.
- **2018-2019 Enrollment:** There are 112 students enrolled in grades six through twelve. There are 17 students in the class of 2019.
- **Teaching Faculty holding advanced degrees:** 13 of 17

Vermont Commons School's Mission:

SCHOLARSHIP.
COMMUNITY.
GLOBAL RESPONSIBILITY.

ACADEMIC PHILOSOPHY

Vermont Commons School presents a challenging college preparatory curriculum for students in grades 6-12. The academic program offers courses and presents material in ever increasing depth and complexity throughout a student's career. Classes at Vermont Commons 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. The curriculum includes honors and advanced coursework, affording students the opportunity to experience the expectations of college-level courses while still having a strong mentoring relationship with their faculty as they transition to higher education.



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NOTES ON COURSES AND PROGRAMS:

CONTRACT HONORS

Vermont Commons School offers Contract Honors, an exciting alternative to Advanced Placement courses. The Contract Honors program provides students with greater challenge, complexity, and coursework in grades 10-12. Students “contract” for additional studies and earn an Honors designation for that course on their transcript. Participating teachers make the option to participate in Contract Honors available to students who meet each department’s prerequisites, but may not be offered in all courses. In order to take more than two Contract Honors courses, students must gain approval from the Department Chairs Committee. Honors grades are not weighted when computing a student’s GPA. All honors work is graded and included in calculated course grades.

SCIENCE SEQUENCE

Vermont Commons School Biology, Chemistry, and Physics courses are divided into two semesters that occur over multiple years. This curriculum allows students to see how each of the science disciplines intersects with the others.

ELECTIVES

Beginning in the 2018-19 school year, students in both middle and high school will be able to select a semester-long elective class. These courses allow students to explore a topic outside of the traditional disciplines, and dig deeply into new content with multi-age peers. High school students choose their electives in the fall and middle school students have elective options in the spring.

ADVISORY SERVICE

Beginning in the 2018-19 school year, during one Wednesday morning per month, student advisory groups will leave campus to engage in service with the broader community. Faculty advisors will coordinate with community representatives to establish regular monthly service activities.

ENCOUNTER WEEK PROGRAMS

Each student participates in three Encounter Weeks per year, one in late September, one in early February, and one in late May. Encounter Weeks allow students to learn new skills in a variety of settings, from the summit of Mount Mansfield to the streets of Rome to Mayan villages in Belize. During these weeks, students explore the wilderness, the arts, and community-based projects. Encounter Weeks give students and faculty alike a new platform for connection and understanding. Students engage in these challenging but rewarding journeys as fully as they do any other aspect of school.

SENIOR PROJECTS

At the end of the spring semester, each Vermont Commons School senior is provided the opportunity to design and implement his/her own Senior Project. These internship-style projects are five weeks long and replace regular classes. The students are able to pursue a career or skill interest and gain a sense of the professional setting outside of the classroom. This program allows seniors to creatively tie together their personal interests and academic experiences as they make the transition from high school to higher education. Students who choose to complete the senior project work with a community mentor for 30-35 hours/week, research an issue in their field of study, and present their experience to the school community.



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REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION

Each year, students are expected to successfully complete a full complement of courses. The available disciplines include Science, Mathematics, English, World Language, Social Studies, Visual Arts, Physical Education and Electives. Students must meet both the Vermont State requirements and the additional requirements as prescribed by the school. Vermont Commons offers both Spanish and Mandarin Chinese.

Vermont Department of Education requirements for graduation including:

- 4 years of English
- 3 years of Science
- 3 years of Mathematics
- 3 years of History and the Social Sciences
- 1 year of the Arts
- 1½ years of Physical Education

Vermont Commons School requirements for high school graduation, including:

- 4 years of English
- 4 years of Science
- 4 years of Mathematics
- 4 years of History and the Social Sciences
- 4 years of World Language
- 4 semesters of the Arts
- 4 years of Physical Education
- 4 semesters of Electives coursework
- Participate in 11 Encounter Weeks
- Participate in Health classes
- Successfully complete the requirements of the Senior Project Program, if student chooses to participate

GRADING

Vermont Commons School grades on a 100-point numeric scale, and courses are offered on either a semester or yearlong basis.

| GRADE | PERCENTAGE | GRADE | PERCENTAGE |
|-------|------------|-------|---------------|
| A+ | 97%-100% | C | 73%-76% |
| A | 93%-96% | C- | 70%-72% |
| A- | 90%-92% | D+ | 67%-69% |
| B+ | 87%-89% | D | 63%-66% |
| B | 83%-86% | D- | 60%-62% |
| B- | 80%-82% | F | 59% and below |
| C+ | 77%-79% | | |

Students receive a final grade at the end of a semester-long class. This grade is recorded as a final grade on the transcript. In yearlong classes, the final grade is determined by the average of the two semester grades. Students receive a pass/fail grade for physical education.



VERMONT COMMONS SCHOOL

STANDARDIZED TEST SCORES – (SOURCE: WWW.COLLEGEBOARD.COM)

| | VCS Class of 2018 | Nationwide Class of 2018 |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| EVIDENCED-BASED READING AND WRITING | 637 | 533 |
| MATHEMATICS | 622 | 527 |
| TOTAL | 1278 | 1060 |

VERMONT COMMONS SCHOOL COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY MATRICULATION RECORD (2009-2018)

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| University of Alabama, AL | Cornell College, IA | Middlebury College, VT |
| American University, DC | Cornell University, NY | New York University, NY |
| University of Arizona, AZ | University of Denver, CO | Northeastern University, MA |
| Bard College, NY | Dartmouth College, NH | Oregon State University, OR |
| Bates College, ME | DePaul University, IL | University of Oregon, OR |
| Beloit College, WI | Drexel University, PA | Pepperdine University, CA |
| Bishop's University, PQ, Canada | Duke University, NC | Reed College, OR |
| Boston University, MA | Earlham College, IN | Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, NY |
| Bowdoin College, ME | Eckerd College, FL | University of Rhode Island, RI |
| Brandeis University, MA | Elon University, NC | Rochester Institute of Technology, NY |
| University of British Columbia, BC, Canada | Emerson College, MA | St. Lawrence University, NY |
| Carleton College, MN | George Washington University, DC | St. Michael's College, VT |
| Carnegie Mellon University, PA | Goucher College, MD | Skidmore College, NY |
| Castleton University, VT | Grinnell College, IA | University of Southern California, CA |
| Center for Cartoon Studies, VT | Hampshire College, MA | University of St. Andrew's, Scotland |
| Champlain College, VT | Hobart and William Smith Colleges, NY | Susquehanna University, PA |
| University of Chicago, IL | University of Houston, TX | Swarthmore College, PA |
| Clark University, MA | Johns Hopkins University, MD | Tulane University, LA |
| Colby College, ME | Kenyon College, OH | Vassar College, NY |
| Colgate University, NY | Maryland Institute College of Art, MD | College of Wooster, OH |
| University of California/San Diego, CA | Massachusetts College of Art and Design, MA | Washington University in St. Louis, MO |
| University of Colorado/Boulder, CO | University of Massachusetts, MA | Willamette University, OR |
| University of Colorado/Denver, CO | Miami University, OH | Worcester Polytechnic Institute, MA |
| Colorado College, CO | University of Miami, FL | University of Vermont, VT |
| Columbia University, NY | Mount Allison University, NB, Canada | Yeshiva University, NY |
| | Mount Holyoke College, MA | |

VERMONT COMMONS SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

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