



# ***School Profile for Colleges 2023-2024***



# Philosophy & Community

Founded in 1962, Vail Mountain School (VMS) is a K-12, coeducational, college preparatory, independent school in Vail, Colorado, also home to a world-renowned ski resort. Vail is a mountain town of approx. 5,400 residents in rural Eagle County and is two hours from the nearest metropolitan area, Denver. VMS is situated in the Rocky Mountains at 8150' on the ancestral homelands of the Ute Peoples who originally stewarded the land, coined "shining mountains." VMS's special location is honored by integrating the outdoors into the academic and cultural fabric of the school. Accordingly, Upper School students participate in three-day outdoor leadership orientation courses at the beginning of each year where students create bonds, accept responsibilities, demonstrate good citizenship, and develop respect for the environment. The result: students who are excited to show up early, happy to stay late, and eager to learn more.

Our philosophy is to provide a demanding liberal arts education in an atmosphere of mutual trust between faculty and students, where nurturing a healthy self-concept and stimulating academic inquiry are parallel objectives. Operating on the principle that emotional stability is a requisite for academic success, VMS students start each day with Homebase, a unique advisory forum designed to build community, strengthen character, and encourage ethical decision making. In partnership with parents, teachers help students confront problems, and set positive, proactive examples, challenging students to be their best in the classroom, on the playing field, online, and outside the school. We pride ourselves on celebrating individual achievements and supporting each other's struggles. The result: a caring community of engaged learners that supports the greatness in one through the strength of many.

Our Upper School program ensures that students have the skills and confidence to thrive in the college environment, leveraging the breadth and depth of interests represented by our faculty. Abundant opportunities for interaction between students of all ages promote role modeling, responsibility, self confidence, and a sense of community. Students feel safe—socially, emotionally, and physically—and consequently, take the measured risks necessary to support high academic achievement, succeed in athletics, develop passion, and build character. The result: a quiet confidence that serves our graduates well in college—confidence to assert themselves in their first college level essays; to raise their hand in a class of hundreds; to live on their own for the first time, to meet with and engage their professors; and to lead among their peers.

## Accreditation & Memberships

- >> Colorado State Department of Education
- >> National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS)
- >> Association of Colorado Independent Schools (ACIS)
- >> National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC)
- >> Rocky Mountain Association for College Admission Counseling (RMACAC)
- >> Association of College Counselors in Independent Schools (ACCIS)
- >> Making Caring Common Project

## Inclusion & Belonging Statement

In order to develop character, seek knowledge, and build community, Vail Mountain School is dedicated to addressing institutional and individual inequities in order to holistically support the well-being and success of our community members. We are committed to approaching the topic of inclusivity as rigorously as we do our academics, learning side by side as a cross-age community. We aim to acknowledge the past societal failures of silence and passivity, especially prevalent in our educational institutions, as we strive to create a welcoming and supportive environment for every student.

## Vail Mountain School by the Numbers

Upper School Enrollment .....	138	Class of 2024 .....	40	5 yr. Avg. Applications Submitted Per Senior.....	7
Average Class Size .....	13	Upper School Tuition .....	\$36,000	5 yr. % of Graduates Taking a Gap Year.....	13%
Families on Scholarship .....	33%	Annual Tuition Assistance Budget.....	\$1.9 Million	Average Tuition Assistance Award .....	\$12,778
5 yr. % of Seniors Submitting ED App.....	30%	5 yr. % Matriculating Outside CO.....	78%	5 yr. % of Graduates Transferring After 1 <sup>st</sup> Year of College .....	7%
Racial/Ethnic Student Diversity.....	18%	5 yr. % First Generation College Students.....	11%	5 yr. % of Students Attending K-12 .....	29%
Students Participating in School/Team Sport.....	90%				

## Graduation Requirements

- >> Completion of a deeply introspective college search process resulting in acceptance to a four-year college
- >> 4 years English, history, science, math, and Intraterm
- >> 3 consecutive years of a world language or 2 years each of 2 languages or completion of AP level course
- >> Completion of Senior Project during the second semester of senior year
- >> Completion of annual Arts & Ethics requirements
- >> Participation in interscholastic sports or fitness each year (this requirement was waived in 2020-2021)

## Standardized Testing

- >> ACT 5 yr. average: middle 50% composite 25-30; mean 27 (not superscored)
- >> SAT 5 yr. average: middle 50% 1180-1350; mean 1270
- >> May 2023: 63 Upper School students in grades 10, 11 and 12 took 177 AP exams. 81% of the exam scores are 3 or higher.

## Honor Code & Reporting Policy

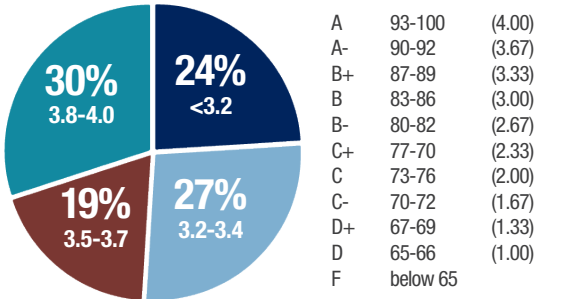
The VMS Honor Code is designed to support our educational mission as well as our community values of trust, rapport, and safety. A breach in honor results in a referral to the VMS Honor Council made up of faculty members and elected upper school students. While VMS does not report student disciplinary history, it is expected that any student asked about probation and/or suspension on a college application will exhibit integrity and answer truthfully. VMS supports student growth plans and reporting as VMS does not welcome nor retain any student if he/she/they could be detrimental to school culture or community well-being. VMS complies with the NACAC Guide to Ethical Practices in College Admission and will respond to a college's inquiry about a disciplinary breach.

## Academic Calendar & Course Load Balance

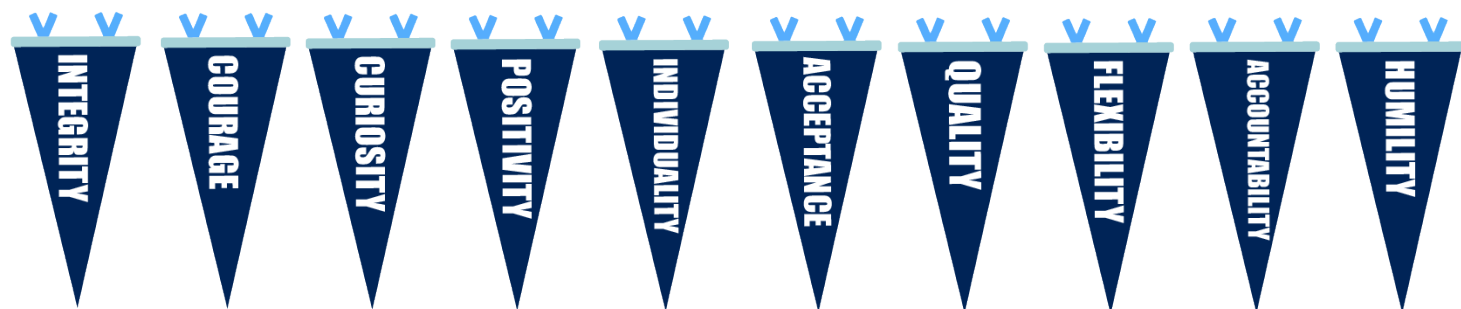
- >> Semester system. Grades are issued at the end of each term (late December, late May). A mid-semester progress/grade report for seniors can be available for college admission purposes.
- >> All courses are college preparatory. Only students in grades 11-12 may take AP courses, unless uniquely accelerated in STEM and/or world language.
- >> Students must gain AP course registration approval and are encouraged to consider interests and strengths over the sheer number of APs alone.
- >> The curriculum limits students to three AP courses in grade 11 and three in grade 12. Enrolling in two or three AP courses in one year is considered a "most demanding" program. In the rare event a student is accelerated and believes taking more than three APs in one year is appropriate, he/she/they must submit a petition.
- >> Students enrolled in AP course(s) are required to take the corresponding AP exams(s) in May.
- >> VMS's strong intellectual environment stretches well beyond testing success.
- >> Please note that due to the school's small size, some student course selections may be unavoidably impacted.

## Class of 2024 GPA & Grading Policy

- >> Vail Mountain School uses a 4.0 grading scale; students are not ranked.
- >> Advanced Placement classes are weighted .33 and the weight is only reflected in the grade point average.
- >> Courses in Art, Music, and Theatre (semester-long) are graded and included in the grade point average. Students earn a mark of Pass or Fail for ethics courses, Intraterm, and fitness.
- >> Non-VMS coursework is excluded from the GPA calculation.
- >> The class of 2024's unweighted/weighted mean GPA after completing grade 11 is 3.50/3.55 and the unweighted/weighted median GPA is 3.43/3.47.
- >> It is rare to have a cumulative unweighted GPA of 4.0 due to the demanding nature of VMS's coursework.
- >> The cumulative GPA is calculated once per year from the final grades listed on the transcript.



## Class of 2024 Collective Values Related to the College Search



### Upper School Course Offerings

#### ENGLISH

- Grade 9** English 9: Perspectives  
**Grade 10** English 10: Identity  
**Grade 11** English 11: Journeys  
 AP English Literature  
**Grade 12** In Love and War  
 Writing from Within: Creative Non-Fiction  
 Rage Against the Machine: Counter-Culture Literature  
 Senior Project & Humanities Capstone (2<sup>nd</sup> semester)

#### WORLD LANGUAGE

- Mandarin I, II, III, IV, V  
 Spanish I, II, III, IV  
 Cultural Spanish  
 AP Spanish Language

#### HISTORY & SOCIAL SCIENCE

- Grade 9** World History I: Power & Geopolitics  
**Grade 10** World History II: Conflict & Resolution  
**Grade 11** United States History  
 AP United States History  
**Grade 12** Border Studies  
 Women in United States History  
 Origin and Evolution of the Cold War  
 Sociology of Punishment in the United States  
 Senior Project & Humanities Capstone (2<sup>nd</sup> semester)

#### MATHEMATICS

- Algebra I, II  
 Geometry  
 Algebra II/Trigonometry  
 Trigonometry/Introduction to Pre-Calculus  
 Advanced Pre-Calculus  
 Statistics  
 AP Statistics  
 Calculus  
 AP Calculus AB  
 AP Calculus BC

#### LAB SCIENCE

- Grade 9** Foundations in Chemistry & Physics  
**Grade 10** Biology  
 Accelerated Chemistry/Cellular & Molecular Biology  
**Grades 11-12**  
 Advanced Chemistry  
 Environmental Chemistry (every other year)  
 Neurobiology & Psychology  
 AP Environmental Science  
 AP Chemistry (every other year)  
 AP Biology  
 AP Physics C: Mechanics (every other year)  
 AP Physics C: Electricity & Magnetism (every other year)

#### TECHNOLOGY

- AP Computer Science Principles (2021-2022)  
 Coding for Artists (2022-2023)  
 3D Modeling & Animation (2022-2023)  
 AP Computer Science A (2023-2024)

#### VISUAL ARTS

- Grade 9** Foundation Studio  
**Grades 10-12**  
 Ceramics I, II  
 Mixed Media  
 Drawing  
 Drawing & Painting  
 Handbuilding  
 Sculpture  
 Photography I, II  
 Printmaking  
 New Media: Storytelling  
 AP Studio Art (2022-2023)  
 Advanced Portfolio Development

#### PERFORMING ARTS

- Performing Arts Appreciation  
 Instrumental Ensemble  
 Theatre Dance  
 Standard Theatre Performance  
 Musical Theatre Performance  
 Backstage Theatre  
 AP Music Theory

#### ETHICS

- Grade 9** Ethics in the Digital World  
 Ethics of Healthy Relationships & Sexuality  
**Grade 10** Ethics & Identity Development  
 Living Ethically in Society  
**Grade 11** Ethics of Diversity & Equity  
 Ethics of the Mindful Individual  
**Grade 12** Living Ethically After Graduation

### Curricular Highlights

#### SENIOR PROJECT

All seniors complete a graded, one-credit capstone project replacing their history and English classes during the second semester of senior year. An experience in true project based learning, seniors work with small cohorts to ideate, research, create, exhibit, write, and present. Following their interests, studying a topic of choice, and doing extensive research which is demonstrated in a research paper, guides their real-world learning experience. Students must defend their research to their faculty leader, cohort, and outside advisor, as well as present their authentic research and product to the community of parents, students, teachers, and external community constituents at Academic Symposium in May.

#### HOMEBASE/ADVISORY

Homebase is a daily meeting between students and an advising teacher which serves as a time to reflect, plan, prioritize and support each other in a familial environment.

#### SERVICE LEARNING

Students and faculty regularly volunteer at Loaves & Fishes soup kitchen and Habitat for Humanity, along with other various and timely initiatives. In addition, students lead Philanthropy Service Group to encourage leadership through service to others.

#### INTRATERM

Intraterm is a week-long program led by faculty and staff during which students choose a course of study designed to enrich the traditional curriculum and the student's intellectual curiosity.

#### LEADERSHIP & CLUBS

Students take pride and ownership in offering formal and informal ethical leadership training and modeling through the Student Leadership Board. They also explore and commit themselves to areas of interest through clubs.

#### SENIOR SEMINAR: LIVING ETHICALLY AFTER GRADUATION

All seniors participate in a year-long seminar designed to help students transition to the independence of life in college and beyond.

#### CROSS-AGE EXPERIENCE

Our building, program and traditions are all designed to foster organic relationships and cross-age learning opportunities. We know that a kindergartner can teach a senior just as much as a senior can teach the kindergartner student.

#### OUTDOOR EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION

Though many students actively pursue recreational interests outside of school, structured trips provide opportunities to explore new locations or activities and serve as a means to build community in the upper school.

#### HEALTH & WELLNESS

We provide a wide variety of support, programming, and resources to help students find balance and develop self-confidence, sound judgment, and resiliency, both inside and outside the classroom.

## Portrait of a VMS Graduate

### DEVELOP CHARACTER

#### VMS Graduates:

- >> speak articulately, respectfully, and confidently to all members of the community
- >> understand and employ empathy, recognize different perspectives, and see the value of diversity in the world
- >> are guided by an ethical framework and a strong ethical code, providing them with integrity in the face of challenges and injustices
- >> possess strong self-advocacy skills and have the courage to ask for help, not for the answer
- >> take responsibility for the consequences of their actions and behaviors both in and out of school
- >> approach life's challenges with perseverance and grit

### SEEK KNOWLEDGE

#### VMS Graduates:

- >> find joy in learning, in thinking open-mindedly, and in exploring areas that are important to them
- >> respect knowledge; however, they also question doctrine in order to find their own answers to life's questions
- >> work well both independently and collaboratively in order to achieve personal and group success
- >> utilize strong executive functioning skills
- >> are curious and willing to engage in courageous and often uncomfortable discussions about issues of power, privilege, and inequality

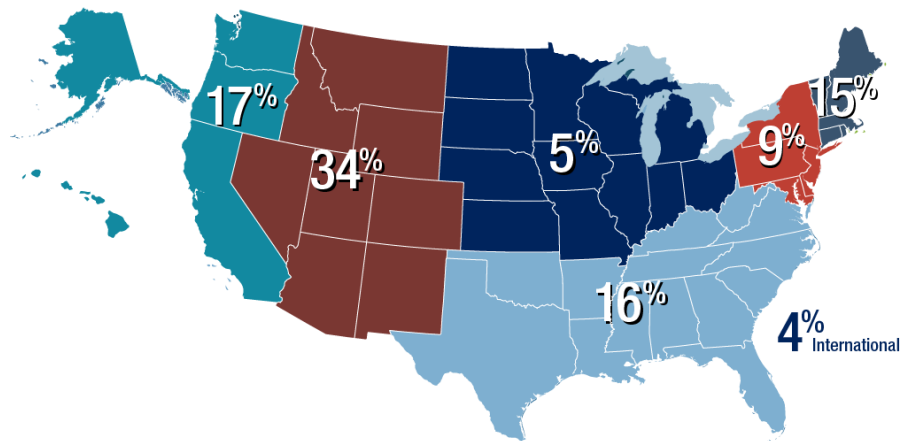
### BUILD COMMUNITY

#### VMS Graduates:

- >> appreciate the natural world around them as they thrive in the surrounding mountain environment
- >> are kind and considerate to people of all ages, exemplified by relationships with their younger peers
- >> recognize that their education provides them the opportunity and skills to serve a public purpose both locally and globally

## College Choices 2019-2023

VMS is proud to share this list as a compelling testament to the wide variety of students who are the heart of our extraordinary community. It is a celebration of each student's journey, the excellent colleges to which our students are admitted, and their choice college—a fit that will nurture their academic and personal goals. The list is also presented with the understanding that the decision of where to enroll is a very personal one made for a number of reasons, and is as varied as the students' life stories in their applications.



American University  
Arizona State University - Tempe\*  
Bard College  
Bates College\*  
Baylor University\*  
Boston College  
Boston University\*  
Bowdoin College  
Bucknell University\*  
Butler University  
Cal Poly - San Luis Obispo\*  
Chapman University\*  
Colby College\*  
Colgate University  
College of Charleston  
Colorado College\*  
Colorado Mesa University  
Colorado School of Mines\*  
Colorado State University\*  
Dartmouth College\*  
Denison University  
Duke University\*  
Emory University

Endicott College  
FIDM - Los Angeles  
Flagler College  
George Washington University\*  
Gustavus Adolphus College  
Harvard University  
IE University - Spain  
Indiana University - Bloomington  
Ithaca College  
Lafayette College  
Loyola Marymount University  
McGill University  
Middlebury College\*  
Montana State University - Bozeman\*  
New York University\*  
Northeastern University\*  
Regent's University London  
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute  
Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology  
San Diego State University  
Santa Barbara City College  
Santa Clara University  
Savannah College of Art and Design

School of the Art Institute of Chicago  
Skidmore College  
Southern Methodist University\*  
St. Lawrence University  
Stanford University  
Swarthmore College  
Syracuse University  
Texas Christian University\*  
The New School\*  
United States Naval Academy  
University of Arizona\*  
University of California - Berkeley  
University of California - Santa Cruz  
University of Colorado - Boulder\*  
University of Denver\*  
University of Edinburgh  
University of Georgia  
University of Miami  
University of Michigan  
University of Minnesota - Twin Cities  
University of Montana  
University of Nevada - Las Vegas  
University of New Hampshire

University of North Carolina - Wilmington  
University of Oregon\*  
University of Pennsylvania  
University of Rochester  
University of San Diego\*  
University of San Francisco  
University of Southern California\*  
University of Texas - Austin\*  
University of Utah\*  
University of Vermont\*  
University of Virginia\*  
University of the Arts London\*  
Vanderbilt University  
Verto - Spain  
Wake Forest University\*  
Western Washington University  
Williams College  
Worcester Polytechnic Institute  
Xavier University

\*Denotes more than 1 enrollment



## VAIL MOUNTAIN SCHOOL

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