



Profile for Colleges 2025-2026

Setting & 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."

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)

Vail Mountain School by the Numbers

Class of 2026	20
Upper School Enrollment	120
Average Class Size	13
5 yr. % of Students Attending K-12	26%
Racial/Ethnic Student Diversity	15%
Upper School Tuition	\$38,900
Families on Scholarship	31%
Annual Tuition Assistance Budget	\$2 Million
Average Tuition Assistance Award	\$18,240
Students Participating in School/Team Sport	90%

Graduation Requirements

- > Completion of a deeply introspective college search resulting in acceptance to a four-year college
- > 4 years English, history, science, math, and Intraterm
- > 3 consecutive years of a world language or completion of AP level course
- > Completion of Senior Project and Humanities Capstone during the second semester of senior year
- > Completion of annual Arts & Ethics requirements
- > Participation in interscholastic sports or fitness each year

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 peer-nominated 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 self-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.

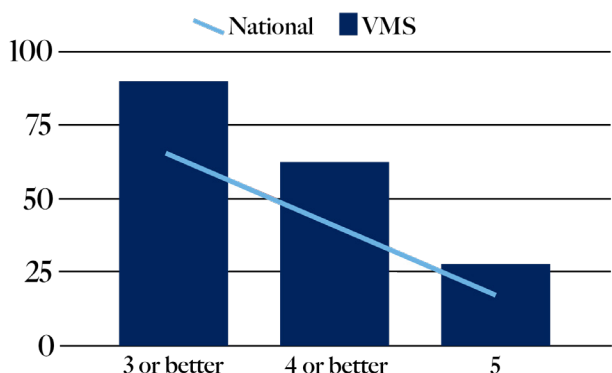
Class of 2026 GPA & Grading Policy

- > Vail Mountain School uses a 4.0 grading scale; students are not ranked.
- > Advanced Placement classes, along with other select advanced courses, are weighted 1.0. 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 2026's unweighted/weighted mean GPA after completing grade 11 is **3.45/3.63** and the unweighted/weighted median GPA is **3.62/3.84**.
- > 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, except for grade 12, when a GPA will be recalculated at mid-year for college admissions purposes.

Standardized Testing

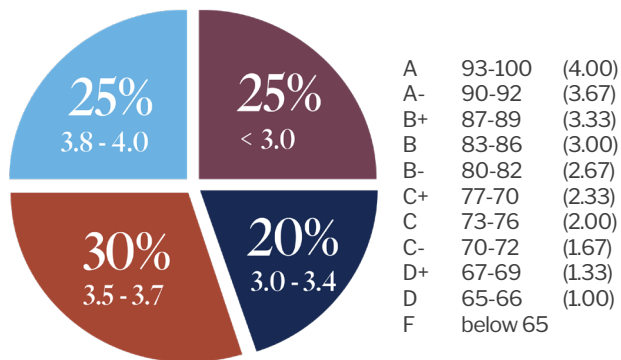
- > ACT 3 yr. average: middle 50% composite 24-30; mean 26 (*not superscored*)
- > SAT 3 yr. average: middle 50% 1140-1248; mean 1252
- > May 2025: 47 Upper School students in grades 10, 11 and 12 took 88 AP exams. 90% of the exam scores are 3 or higher.
- > VMS students score 20% higher than national averages.

Advanced Placement Score Comparison

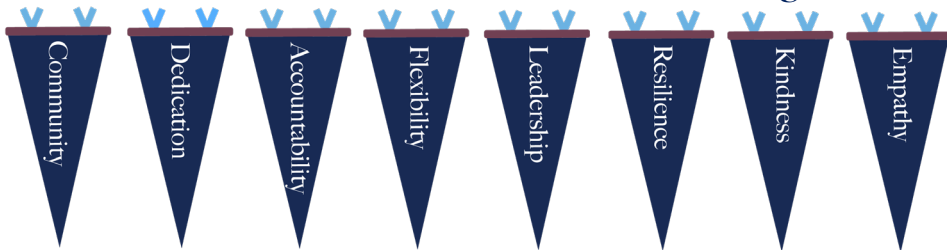


A Note About Grade Inflation

We realize that grade inflation is rampant throughout the United States, and COVID only intensified the problem. Vail Mountain School has long believed that the purpose of a college preparatory institution is to prepare its students for the demands of collegiate classrooms in both the discussions and its assessments. VMS has not caved to the pressures of falsely advancing our students to secure a spot at a selective college. We ask you to value our position and support our students who will flourish in college both academically and socially. Our grade distribution chart above speaks to this lack of grade uniformity.



Class of 2026 Collective Values Related to the College Search



Academic Calendar & Course Load Balance

- > Semester system.
 - > All students engage in a college preparatory course of study.
 - > 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 exam(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.

College Trends: Five-Year Overview

5 yr. % of Seniors Submitting ED App.	32%
5 yr. % Matriculating Outside CO	80%
5 yr. % First Generation College Students	10%
5 yr. Avg. Applications Submitted Per Senior	8
5 yr. % of Graduates Taking a Gap Year	10%
5 yr. % of Graduates Transferring After 1st Year of College	8%
5 yr. Avg. Admit Rate	66%

Curricular Highlights

Senior Project: All seniors complete a graded, one-credit Senior Project and humanities capstone 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.

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.

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.

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 kindergarten student.

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.

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.

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.

Health & Wellness

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

Upper School Course Offerings

All courses are college-preparatory unless indicated in the course title as the following: Advanced, Accelerated, Advanced Placement.
* denotes weighted courses

English

- Grade 9** English 9: Perspectives
- Grade 10** English 10: Identity
- Grade 11** English 11: Journeys
AP English Literature*
- Grade 12** Rivers & Literature (1st semester)
Senior Project & Humanities Capstone (2nd semester)

World Language

- Mandarin I, II, III, IV, V
- AP** Chinese Language*
- Spanish I, II, III, IV
- AP** Spanish Language*
- Advanced** Spanish Through Service Learning*

History & Social Science

- Grade 9** World History
- Grade 10** United States History
- Grade 11** **AP** Human Geography*
Ancient and Contemporary Society Collapse
Sociology of Sport
Applied Ethics
- Grade 12** Border Studies (1st semester)
Vietnam: A Cultural & Political Legacy (1st semester)
Senior Project & Humanities Capstone (2nd semester)

Ethics

- Grade 9** Ethics in the Digital World
Ethics of 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

Mathematics

- Algebra I, II
- Geometry
- Algebra II/Trigonometry
- Trigonometry/Introduction to Pre-Calculus
- Advanced** Pre-Calculus*
- 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
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 A (2023-2024)*
- AP** Computer Science Principles (2024-2025)*
- 3D Modeling & Animation (2025-2026)
- Design, Engineering & Coding (2025-2026)

Visual Arts

- Grade 9** Foundation Studio
- Grades 9-12**
Ceramics I, II
Drawing
Handbuilding
Photography I, II
Printmaking
Sculpture
Fiber Arts
Advanced Ceramics
Advanced Portfolio Development
AP Art and Design*

Performing Arts

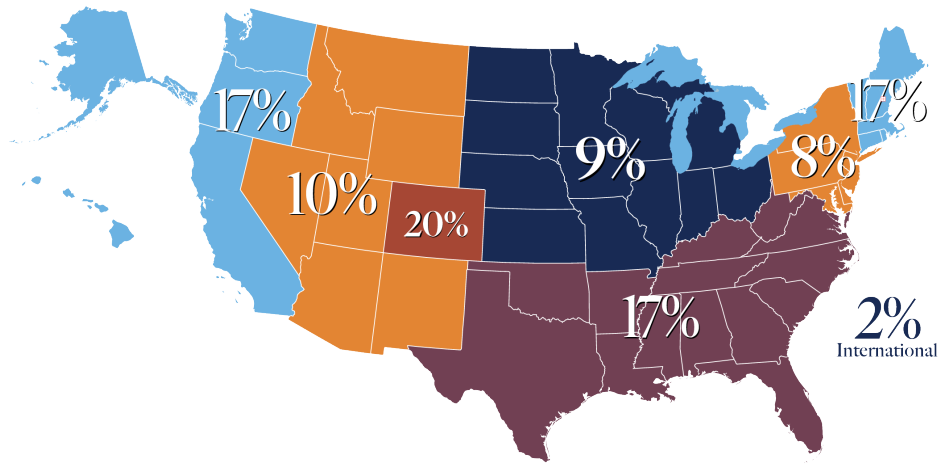
- Music Appreciation
- Instrumental Music/Ensemble
- Performing Arts Appreciation
- Theatre Dance
- Theatre Appreciation
- Standard Theatre Performance
- Musical Theatre Performance
- Backstage Theatre I, II
- Music Theory

Mission

We inspire tomorrow's ethical leaders by developing character, seeking knowledge, and building a community of lifelong learners from the heart of the Colorado mountains to the world beyond.

College Choices 2021-2025

VMS is proud to share this matriculation 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*
Bates College
Baylor University*
Beacon College
Boston College*
Boston University
Bucknell University
Butler University
Cal Poly - San Luis Obispo*
Chapman University*
Clemson University*
Colby College*
College of Charleston
Colorado College*
Colorado Mesa University
Colorado School of Mines*
Colorado State University*
Dartmouth College*
Dean College
Denison University*
Dickinson College
Duke University*
Endicott College
Flagler College

George Washington University
Harvard University*
High Point University
Kansas City Art Institute
Lafayette College
Loyola Marymount University*
Miami University-Oxford
Middlebury College*
Montana State University - Bozeman*
New York University*
Northeastern University
Pepperdine University
Regent's University London
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology
San Diego State University*
Skidmore College*
Southern Methodist University*
Stanford University
Syracuse University
Texas Christian University*
Trinity University
Tufts University*

United States Naval Academy
University of Alabama
University of Arizona*
University of California - San Diego
University of California - Santa Cruz
University of Colorado - Boulder*
University of Colorado - Colorado Springs
University of Colorado - Denver
University of Connecticut
University of Denver*
University of Florida
University of Georgia
University of Miami
University of Michigan*
University of Mississippi
University of Missouri*
University of Nevada - Las Vegas
University of New Hampshire
University of North Carolina - Wilmington
University of Oregon*
University of Pennsylvania

University of Richmond*
University of Rochester
University of San Diego*
University of San Francisco
University of Southern California*
University of St. Andrews
University of Tampa
University of Utah*
University of Vermont*
University of Virginia*
University of Washington - Seattle
University of Wisconsin - Madison*
University of the Arts London
Verto - Spain
Wake Forest University*
Wesleyan University*
Williams College*
Worcester Polytechnic Institute
Xavier University

*Denotes more than 1 enrollment

Vail Mountain School

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