




WINOOSKI SCHOOL DISTRICT PRESS KIT



WINOOSKI SCHOOL DISTRICT

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 60 Normand Street Winooki,
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WSD PROMISE TO THE COMMUNITY

All students will graduate from the Winooski School District (WSD) college and career-ready at a cost supported by a majority of the Winooski community. WSD students will lead healthy, productive, and successful lives and engage with their local and global community.



WELCOME TO THE WINOOSKI SCHOOL DISTRICT

Welcome to the Winooski School District (WSD) Press Kit, your comprehensive resource for information about our vibrant educational community. Our district serves a diverse population, embracing the richness of cultural backgrounds and perspectives that contribute to our collective tapestry. With a dedication to equity and inclusivity, we strive to ensure that every student feels valued, supported, and inspired to achieve their fullest potential.

In this press kit, you will find a wealth of information about our schools, programs, initiatives, and achievements. From innovative curriculum offerings to extracurricular opportunities, community partnerships, and success stories, we invite you to explore the breadth and depth of what the Winooski School District has to offer.

Whether you are a journalist seeking insights into our educational practices, a community member interested in learning more about our impact, or a prospective family considering joining our district, we hope this press kit serves as a valuable resource. Thank you for your interest in the Winooski School District, where every student's journey toward excellence is nurtured and celebrated.





DISTRICT OVERVIEW

The Winooski School District is nestled within a little over one square mile, making it the smallest geographical school district in Vermont. Despite its compact size, Winooski is a place of immense significance for learning. Our schools, from PreK through 12th grade, are all housed under one roof, fostering a close-knit community where every student's success is paramount.

Within our walls, we offer a comprehensive array of academic studies and extracurricular activities, setting high standards for instruction, curriculum, and assessment excellence. Our commitment to personalized learning and student-centered approaches ensures that each student can thrive in an environment tailored to their needs and aspirations.

Diversity is at the heart of the Winooski School District. We embrace our status as one of Vermont's most diverse school districts, recognizing that our differences enrich our educational experience. With a steadfast dedication to equity and inclusion, we ensure that all students have equitable access to resources and support, both academically and socially.

Collaboration is vital to our success. We forge partnerships with families, community organizations, and local businesses to enhance the educational experience and provide opportunities for students to engage with the world around them. Together, we work to empower every student to reach their full potential and become successful contributing members of society.



WINOOSKI SCHOOLS
We are the future.



STRATEGIC STATEMENTS

- 01** The Winooski School District (WSD) is dedicated to a culture of continuous improvement, striving to enhance its curriculum, instructional design, assessments, and support systems to meet the diverse needs of all learners. Through ongoing evaluation and adaptation, we ensure that every student receives a high-quality education that prepares them for college, career, and life success.
- 02** Equity and anti-racism are foundational principles of the Winooski School District. We are committed to creating an inclusive and affirming learning environment where every student feels valued, respected, and supported. We strive to empower all students to thrive academically and socially by actively addressing systemic inequities and dismantling barriers to success.
- 03** The Winooski School District community is dedicated to collaborative support and nurturing growth. We prioritize the well-being and personal empowerment of our students, staff, and families, fostering a proactive and caring environment where everyone can flourish. We cultivate a culture of resilience, empathy, and lifelong learning through open communication, mutual respect, and shared responsibility.





OUR STUDENTS

The Winooski School District serves a diverse student population, reflecting the community's rich cultural tapestry. Its student body comprises individuals from various ethnic, racial, and socio-economic backgrounds, including many immigrant and refugee families. This diversity adds a unique dimension to the district, fostering an environment where students learn from one another's experiences and perspectives. The district is dedicated to embracing and celebrating this diversity, recognizing it as a strength that enriches the educational experience for all students. Teachers and staff in the Winooski School District are committed to providing culturally responsive instruction that honors students' backgrounds and identities. This ensures that every student feels valued, respected, and supported in their learning journey.

- 762 Total Students
 - 198 HS
 - 146 MHS
 - 316 K5
 - 102 PK
- 33% receive Multilingual services
- 57% identify as BIPOC
- 213 students qualify for Special Education





2023-2024 DISTRICT HIGHLIGHTS

- Winooski High School Seniors Nadja Douoning and Apolina Mbeleci were named Vermont Presidential Scholars. Both young women were honored at a recognition ceremony on January 22nd at the State House.
- The Varsity Boys Soccer team won its second straight state championship.
- Winooski Middle School students, Aili Olson and Ankita Dhungana won first place in an MLK inspired art and essay competition run by the VT Bar Association. Their work was displayed at the Vermont Supreme Court Building.
- The Winooski Middle School Wild Onions won the Junior Iron Chef Crowd Pleaser Award for the second year
- The Winooski Boys Basketball Team reached the semifinals of the Vermont State Championship.
- Senior Passy Matendo was selected and participated in the prestigious Vermont All-State Music Festival.
- Senior Sam Parris was recognized as a Scholar Athlete by the National Football Foundation Hall of Fame Vermont Chapter.
- Senior Apolina Mbeleci's Photography Portfolio won Gold at Vermont Scholastic Art Awards





2023-2024 DISTRICT HIGHLIGHTS

- Wellness Coordinator Patrice Lumumba and the Winooski School District received a 2023 Worksite Wellness Gold Award from the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports and the State Department of Health
- WMHS Co-Principal Kate Grodin was honored with a prestigious Fulbright Leaders for Global Schools Program award.
- Winooski High School Teachers Courtney Poquette and Lindsey Cox were finalists for Vermont Teacher of the Year.
- Winooski High School Teacher Lindsey Cox Receives Prestigious Scholarship for Educational Leadership and Advocacy
- WMHS Co-Principal Jean Berthiaume Named Vermont High School Principal of the Year
- Winooski High School teacher Caitlin MacLeod Bluver and JFK Elementary School Kari Bohlen teacher received UVM (University of Vermont) Outstanding Educator Awards.
- The Vermont Department of Health's Asthma Friendly Task Force recognized the WSD as an Asthma Friendly School at the Gold Level. The task force also recognized Cheyne Racine, director of facilities, as an asthma champion.





FACT SHEET

- Location: Winooski, Vermont
- District Size: Approximately one square mile, making it the smallest geographical school district in Vermont
- Grades Served: Pre-Kindergarten through 12th Grade
- School Configuration: All grades are housed within a single educational center
- Diversity: Winooski School District is recognized as one of the most diverse school districts in Vermont, reflecting a rich tapestry of cultural backgrounds and identities among its student population
- Commitment to Equity: The district is dedicated to providing an equitable and inclusive learning environment, ensuring that all students have access to resources and support to thrive academically and socially
- Academic Offerings: Winooski School District offers a comprehensive range of academic studies, extracurricular activities, and support services to meet the needs and interests of its diverse student body.
- Focus on Personalized Learning: The district prioritizes personalized learning and student-centered approaches to education, fostering an environment where every student can reach their full potential.
- Collaborative Community Partnerships: Winooski School District works collaboratively with families, community organizations, and local businesses to enrich the educational experience and provide opportunities for students to engage with their community
- Commitment to Continuous Improvement: The district is dedicated to continuous improvement, regularly evaluating and adapting its curriculum, instructional practices, and support systems to benefit all learners
- Values: The Winooski School District values diversity, equity, inclusion, collaboration, and personal empowerment, striving to create a nurturing and supportive learning environment for all students, staff, and families.





MEET WILMER CHAVARRIA WINOOSKI SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT

On the evening of Tuesday, May 2, 2023, the Winooski School Board announced the selection of Wilmer Chavarria as the Superintendent of Schools for the Winooski School District (WSD). He assumed responsibilities on July 1, 2023.

Previously, Chavarria served as the Director of Equity and Education Support Systems for the Milton Town School District, where he led efforts to enhance student support structures and establish comprehensive equity frameworks across schools. His leadership journey also includes tenures as a school principal in New Mexico, where he spearheaded innovative programs such as Dual Language Immersion and district-wide art initiatives while significantly improving academic performance and student support systems.

Chavarria's dedication to academic excellence began as a National Board-certified teacher with expertise in English Language Arts, Spanish Language Arts, Bilingual Education, and English as a Second Language. His outstanding contributions earned him recognition as an "Exemplary Teacher" by the New Mexico Public Education Department.

His formative years were marked by a global pursuit of learning. Chavarria's educational odyssey began in Ocotol, Nicaragua, where he attended school in a settlement for refugees following the Nicaraguan Sandinista-Contra conflict. Continuing his studies in Nicaraguan public schools, he graduated from high school before receiving a scholarship to the United World College of the Pacific in British Columbia.

Following his time in Canada, Chavarria ventured to the U.S. to pursue his undergraduate studies at Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana. He holds graduate degrees in Education Leadership from the University of New Mexico and Education Policy and Management from Harvard University.



DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TEAM

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HIGH SCHOOL

ACCREDITATION

Winooski High School is accredited by the New England Associations of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) and the Vermont Agency of Education.

CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

For over 10 years, Winooski has been developing and refining a proficiency based learning model. Through community-wide collaboration, WHS developed a set of graduate expectations in 6 mastery skill areas: Communication, Critical Thinking, Culture and Community, Persistence, Creativity and Wellbeing. Students demonstrate their proficiency through traditional WHS classes, through capstone projects and via multiple diverse learning opportunities.

SCHEDULE

Currently Winooski High School runs an adapted four by four schedule. With four blocks a day, one of which is sometimes split, students can complete a traditional full year course in one semester. This allows for students to focus on fewer courses at a time and engage in a more immersive learning experience with the material.



GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

To meet Graduation Requirements, students demonstrate proficiency in both the skills and dispositions needed to be college and career ready. The required Graduation Proficiencies are:

- Civic Reasoning
- Critical Reading
- Critical Writing
- Financial Literacy
- Historical Inquiry
- Mathematical Reasoning
- Non-Native Language*
- Physical Health
- Scientific Reasoning
- Social-Emotional Health
- Speaking & Listening
- Performing or Visual Arts

*Students whose native language differs from English have the opportunity to demonstrate proficiency in their native language. Those students who are successful will then use English to demonstrate their non-native language proficiency.

The Graduation Proficiencies are assessed in the classroom through Performance Indicators derived from the national standards of each content area. Graduation Proficiencies may also be met through participation in a variety of Flexible Pathways in which these skills are taught and applied.

The Graduation Expectations are assessed through a Capstone format. Students may complete a Capstone in various years throughout their high school career. A Communication Capstone is required of all students. Two additional Capstones must be completed based on student choice and interest in the remaining five areas of Creativity, Critical Thinking, Culture & Community, Persistence, and Wellbeing.



ADDITIONAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

In part due to the relatively small size of our student body and the diverse array of learning backgrounds and styles, WHS seeks to offer a broad range of learning opportunities beyond those of a traditional comprehensive high school both inside and outside of the building. These include opportunities to enhance English language, math and literacy skills within the curriculum, as well as co-enrollment at two local technical centers (Center for Technology Essex and the Burlington Technical Center).

iLab

iLab offers students the opportunity to explore interests outside of the mainstream curriculum with scheduled support from a staff member.

Work-Based Learning

Work-based learning includes job shadows, service learning, apprenticeships, and internships. This can also be used to demonstrate proficiency through iLab, or integrated into a Capstone project.

Onion River Schoolhouse

This integrated yearlong half-day program incorporates real world projects partnering with community members and experts. Students work on multiple projects over the course of the year allowing them to demonstrate proficiency in multiple disciplines.

VTVLC & VHS

Online courses offered through the Vermont Virtual Learning Cooperative and Virtual High School expand Winooski HS course options including AP and honors courses.

Dual Enrollment/Early College

The state of Vermont funds two college courses for all VT high school students between the end of their sophomore year and prior to graduation. In addition, the state funds a year of college classes at many of the state's colleges to complete a senior's high school experience.



POST-SECONDARY OUTCOMES

LIST OF COLLEGE ACCEPTANCES - CLASS OF 2022 AND 2023

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| American University | Plymouth State University |
| Ball State University | Regis College |
| Brandeis University | Rochester Institute of Technology |
| Case Western University | Saint Michael's College |
| Castleton University | Southern Maine CC |
| Champlain College | St. Lawrence University |
| Colgate University | SUNY Binghamton |
| Community College of Vermont | SUNY Oneonta |
| Fitchburg State University | Trine University |
| Indiana University | University of Kentucky |
| IUPUI | University of Maine Augusta |
| Keene State College | University of Utah |
| Loyola Chicago | University of Vermont |
| Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts | University of Virginia |
| Middlebury College | Vassar College |
| Niagara County Community College | Vermont State University |
| Norwich University | Worcester State University |
| Paul Smith's College | |

POST-SECONDARY DATA - CLASS OF 2023

Attending 4-year College	15.6%
Attending 2-year College	15.6%
Other	68.8%



MIDDLE SCHOOL

Our Community: Winooski Middle School is a caring, committed, and inclusive community that ignites curiosity and fosters joy in learning. We are proud to nurture students who are not only academically capable but also compassionate and engaged citizens.

Continuity in Learning: At Winooski Middle School, we emphasize the continuity of English Language Arts (ELA) instruction from elementary school, ensuring a smooth transition and consistent development of literacy skills. Our 6th Grade Academy brings students together for core, academic instruction, creating a foundation of shared learning experiences.

6th Grade Academy: The 6th Grade Academy provides a cohesive educational experience, where sixth graders are taught together to best support the transition from elementary school. This structure helps students build strong academic and social-emotional skills, preparing them for future academic challenges.

Mixed Grade Levels: Students in the 7th and 8th grades are mixed for most classes, fostering a diverse and collaborative learning environment. However, math classes remain grade-specific to address varying levels of mathematical understanding.



MIDDLE SCHOOL

Interdisciplinary Expeditions: 2-3 times a year, students in grades 6-8 engage in Expeditions—deep, interdisciplinary learning opportunities where they take on authentic roles. These experiences encourage students to tackle engaging questions and problems, collaborating with teachers, peers, and professionals. Expeditions culminate in a final event showcasing their learning. Examples include the 6th-grade Circus Expedition, which incorporates a 3-week residency with Circus Smirkus and focuses on teamwork and social-emotional learning, and the International Dumpling Expedition, integrating math, cooking, science, and more

Advisories and Student Council: Our multi-age advisories cultivate a strong student culture, providing a supportive environment for personal and academic growth. Activities include engineering challenges and Spartan Games. Small groups of students meet daily with an advisor for their three years of middle school. Student Council initiatives, such as Culture Day, celebrate diversity and community spirit.

Building Foundations for Success: We recognize the social nature of early adolescence and are dedicated to fostering a school climate of belonging to support students in acquiring the skills necessary for high school success. Through advisory, expeditions and collaborative learning experiences, we lay the groundwork for our students' future achievements.





JFK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

JFK will support the WSD ends statement by being a proactive, calm and nurturing space that values the wellness of students and staff

It is our collective responsibility to dig into the persistent conditions of inequity and oppression that impact experiences and relationships in our schools and community.

We will hold ourselves accountable through ongoing reflection and action using an equity lens.

We will regularly review and implement the resources needed to build a social justice school system that supports the well being and success of students, families, colleagues, and broader community members – especially those who are Black, Brown, Indigenous, and People of Color.

It is our belief that by fostering whole student well being, our student's academic successes will empower them to achieve WSD's graduation expectations.



JFK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Curriculum

WSD uses math and literacy programs that are aligned to the Common Core Standards. In both math and ELA we use programs developed by nationally respected organizations and have received the highest ratings for alignment to standards, engaging materials and usability.

English Language Arts is the core knowledge program we use to teach reading and writing to all of our students. We are entering year three with Expeditionary Learning ELA and are seeing measurable growth in our students' reading, writing, and speaking skills. This year, we have upgraded our structured early literacy (K-2) curriculum to "EL Skills Block."

Illustrative Mathematics 360 is our math program. In addition, our teachers use Math Best Practices with Habits of Mind and Interactions as vehicles to teach math to students.

In science, social studies, physical education, art, music, and health we use teacher-developed materials that are aligned to national standards.

Winooski is...

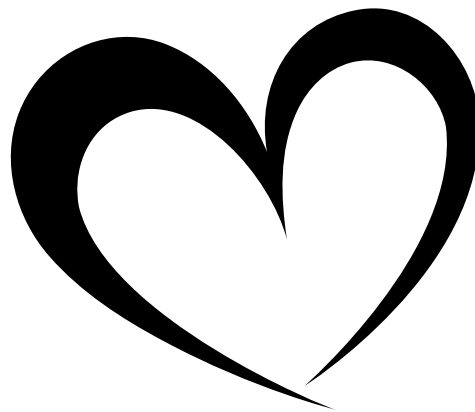
Honest

Engaged

Appropriate

Responsible

Timely





WINOOSKI EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM

Winooski Early Childhood Program believes investing in early childhood education can positively shape a child's future success.

Our preschool classrooms are taught by licensed early education teachers who create a developmentally appropriate curriculum to ensure the meaningful participation of all learners in our diverse community. Our philosophy is to create a rich learning environment and activities that allow children the opportunity to experience social, emotional, physical, and intellectual growth. Our classrooms value diversity and honor the importance of family and culture as integral parts of each child. We strive to create a strong sense of community for our children, where they can learn, grow, and thrive together. We welcome their individuality that creates a rich classroom environment. Our goal is to provide safe and exceptional care and education for each child. We recognize that every child has different needs and responds to different interactions. We strive to work with families to provide the best experience possible for all children in the program.

In the fall of 2024, Winooski School District Pre-Kindergarten services were expanded, including opening two new classrooms and making Pre-K available to all eligible 4-year-olds in Winooski.



PROGRAMS AND DEPARTMENTS

WINOOSKI WELLNESS

Our district believes that students are only ready to learn after health and wellness needs are met. It is critical that we integrate well-being into learning so our students are empowered to identify their physical, social, and emotional challenges and take steps to grow and improve their wellness.

Veggie VanGo: Winooski School District is partnering with Vermont Foodbank to offer the Veggie VanGo program. Through the program, the Vermont Foodbank distributes produce twice a month on school grounds, thereby providing a more accessible source of fresh food to students and their families throughout the year. Veggies are available to students, staff, families, and community members.

Necessities Store: The store, at no cost to shoppers, contains: Fresh produce, culturally appropriate non- perishable goods, and winter clothing/gear for students. These low-barrier Necessities are available to any WSD student in the district and their families (no proof of income eligibility will be required). Community members can also access the store during VVG distribution days and, upon request, during school hours.





PROGRAMS AND DEPARTMENTS

HEALTH OFFICE

School-Based Health Center (SBHC):

The Winooski School District serves over 700 Pre-K to high school students with diverse linguistic backgrounds encompassing 20 languages. A majority, 98%, qualify for Free and Reduced Lunch. Families encounter barriers to accessing healthcare despite having primary care providers. Inspired by neighboring SBHC models, the idea of a part-time SBHC was born. The SBHC aims to enhance students' access to quality physical and mental healthcare services, mitigating healthcare.

Tooth Tutor Program:

Vermont's Tooth Tutor Program ensures every student can access dental care. This includes preventative, restorative, and continuous care in a dental office at the WSD. All children who are Winooski School District students or siblings of students are welcome.

SUPPORT SERVICES

The Winooski School District is committed to meeting the needs of all children. Under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or IDEA, we are required to identify and evaluate students who have disabilities and to offer them individualized education programs (IEP) for special education and related services.

An IEP team using a process specified in the law makes decisions regarding the services that are included in an IEP. The IEP team includes a student's classroom teacher, special educator, parent(s) and a representative of the school district who is empowered to commit resources such as staff time or funding. By law, we are required to carry out provisions outlined in a student's IEP.





CAPITAL PROJECT

The Winooski School District (WSD) held a ribbon-cutting ceremony on April 4, 2023 in the WSD main lobby to celebrate the completion of the district's capital project.

Construction on the project began in June 2020, and ended in December 2022 creating approximately 70,000 square ft of new space including a new gymnasium, middle school, and elementary school wing, as well as renovating nearly 125,000 square ft of space.

The new building reflects a commitment to the modern advancement of the educational sector with state-of-the-art instruction and collaboration spaces, an environmentally conscious design, and impeccable safety standards and represents a bright future for education in the community, signaling a commitment to excellence and innovation that will benefit generations of students to come.





PRESS INQUIRIES

Contact:

To request an interview, or make any other media inquiries, please contact the Winooski School District Director of Communications.

Miriam Greenfield

mgreenfield@wsdvt.org

Mobile: 860-491-5842





PRESS COVERAGE 2024

Burlington Free Press, June 15. ["Winooski High School celebrates class of 2024 with commencement exercises"](#)

The Winooski News, May 9. ["Winooski reaps rewards of Vermont school spending upheaval"](#)

Seven Days, May 1. ['We're Leaving': Winooski's Bargain Real Estate Attracted a Diverse Group of Residents for Years. Now They're Being Squeezed Out.'](#)

WCAX, April 12 ["Area students explore research careers during UVM Cancer Center visit."](#)

Vermont Public and But Why, April 5. ["Build your own solar viewer to see the eclipse safely."](#)

Vermont Public, March 25. ["Holi celebration in Winooski marks a colorful \(if snowy\) start to spring"](#)

ABC22 and FOX44, March 26, ["Your Best Life: Learning Finances Early"](#)

WCAX, March 14th. ["Winooski students attend Financial Reality Fair."](#)

The Winooski News, February 28th, ["Black History event continues community collaboration on Winooski school murals"](#)

NBC5, February 21. ["Winooski rides late surge to eliminate Bellows Falls boys basketball"](#)

Burlington Free Press, February 5th. ["Outstanding high school students from the area are nominated for Student of the Week."](#)



PRESS COVERAGE 2023

My NBC5, December 27th, 2023, [Winooski High School unveils banners to celebrate recent athletic accomplishments \(mynbc5.com\)](#).

VT Digger, December 5, 2023, ['It used to feel safe': 4 Muslim students share fears after shooting injured 3 Palestinian Americans - VTDigger](#)

The Winooski News, November 18, 2023, [Seeing double: Winooski boys' soccer goes back-to-back — The Winooski News](#)

Vermont Public, November 16th, 2023 [Vermont Literacy Rates Have Fallen - How Educators are Helping Kids - Conversation with WSD Teacher](#)

My NBC5, October 13, 2023 [Winooski high school students teach their younger peers the basics of financial literacy \(mynbc5.com\)](#).

My NBC5, October 9, 2023, [Winooski superintendent shares story growing up in refugee camp, hopes to inspire students to succeed](#)

The Winooski News, September 26th, 2023 ["We really feel like we're building something now culturally within the building" — Winooski's renovated school is ready to shine — The Winooski News](#)

[Seven Days, October 4th, 2023 Too Many Vermont Kids Struggle to Read. What Went Wrong — and Can Educators Reverse a Yearslong Slide in Literacy?](#)

[Seven Days, May 4th, 2023 Winooski School District Hires New Superintendent](#)

[CNBC April 24, 2023 More states offer personal finance courses, but most students don't have to take the class](#)

[WCAX, April 9th, 2023 Winooski School opens 'Necessity Store' for students and community](#)



SOCIAL

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/winooskilearns>

Instagram: [@winooskilearns](https://www.instagram.com/winooskilearns)

Website: www.wsdvt.org

District Photos are available for use. Please courtesy Winooski School District.





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