

# Program of Studies | 2023 – 2024



*Pathways to Possibilities*

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## Office of the Head of School

March 2023

Dear Learners:

This Program of Studies describes the various learning opportunities available to you as an Expeditionary School at Black River student. Some of these learning opportunities require you to be physically present in the traditional brick and mortar school, others take you out into the natural world, some invite you to be immersed in the community, while some classes may be entirely self-directed. Your charge is to explore a variety of coursework in different settings. This helps you reflect upon when, where and how you learn most effectively. It also helps polish the skills you need to navigate an always changing world. These learning experiences are designed to challenge you academically, interpersonally, physically, and at times emotionally.

This process of self-reflection will enhance your capabilities, develop your self-confidence, and expand your perspective. By building on your strengths, the multiple pathways are also designed to help nurture the areas where you need to grow. When you are choosing which courses to take, keep in mind what motivates you, and ask yourself how might this learning opportunity help me achieve my goals?

At ESBR, the terms “courses” and “learning opportunities” are used interchangeably because we want to create a culture of learning where the skills you can develop anytime, anywhere are as important as the academic knowledge acquired in the traditional classroom setting. In order to help coach your development as a resilient individual, an interrelated curriculum design and flexible pathways are key features of making sure the skills you acquire anytime, anywhere are captured on your transcript. In other words, nothing is “extracurricular.”

We offer a year-round academic program, so that your family can tailor the schedule to meet yours as well as your parents & guardians needs both at home and in the workplace.

We encourage you to embrace learning opportunities that challenge you to think critically as well as propose solutions to the societal issues that concern you most. Everyone at ESBR is committed to illuminating your path forward. Many opportunities await you, and it is in your hands to reach all that is possible. We believe in your potential to do so.

Sincerely,



Kendra Rickerby, Ph.D.

## ***Introduction***

The Program of Studies is intended to assist students and their families. The Program of Studies is a tool for helping to map out students' learning trajectory when attending the Expeditionary School at Black River. With coaching provided by school counselors, instructional leaders, and family members, students are encouraged to choose learning opportunities that serve as building blocks for attaining their desired professional goals and personal aspirations.

The menu of courses presented in this catalog intentionally invites students and their families to explore a variety of modalities. Throughout 7<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade, assigned projects are designed to illuminate where learners are at in the process of becoming competent readers, writers, researchers, and mathematicians. For example, students who are passionate about music are encouraged to build their own string instrument. Although at first glance building a string instrument fits into music, this activity also teaches learners about the ratios and frequency in sound waves. These kinds of interrelated curricular opportunities also provide for career exploration as well as a historical study of what it means to be a monochord practitioner.

Learning opportunities are available 12-months out of the year. It is up to the student and their family to schedule courses in a manner that meets their lifestyle. Some of the learning opportunities are seasonal, making it so that individuals who are not enrolled in the Expeditionary School at Black River (ESBR) are welcome to enroll in just that course. Through a partnership with Okemo Valley TV, ESBR has access to interactive distance learning technologies, enabling our programming to be delivered asynchronously via virtual platforms as well as in-person, on-site of the school building at 43 Main Street, Ludlow. Ultimately, if a homeschool family would like to enroll in academic specific courses, such as Algebra I, they can do this through the asynchronous course offerings.

ESBR's mission is to educate students to be intellectually curious, resourceful, and confident in themselves for a life of personal fulfillment and civic engagement.

## ***Non-Discrimination***

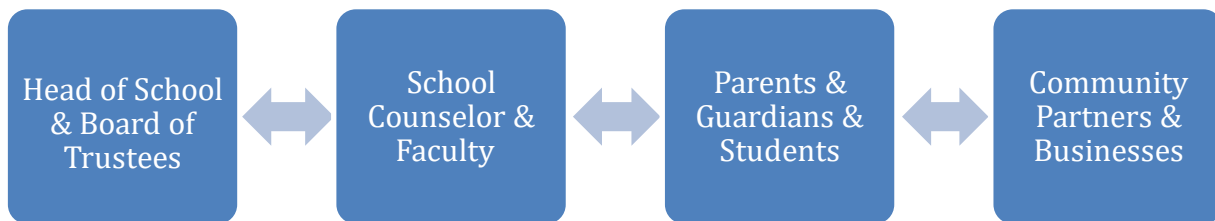
The Expeditionary School at Black River recognizes its obligation to respect the legal rights of all students, parents, employees, applicants for admission and employment. The Board complies with all applicable federal and state non-discrimination laws. The Board does not, and will not, unlawfully discriminate against any person or group based on race, religion, national or ethnic origin, place of birth, sex, sexual orientation, gender id., disability, age, color, creed, or marital status.

ESBR’s philosophy and framework is anchored in EL Education’s vision for school transformation, as it is depicted by the following graphic:



Berger, R. Vilen, A, and Woodfin, L. (2020) *We Are Crew: a teamwork approach to school culture*. New York, NY: EL Education.

With effective learners at the center of all planning, our crew culture refers to the Board of Trustees, the Head of School, the School Counselor, the faculty, parents & guardians as well as community partners. The cyclical nature of this organizational chart aims to enable learner-centered, community-oriented communication processes. The following flow chart depicts the process for engaging input. The Head of School, in collaboration with Faculty and the Board of Trustees, makes decisions and determines what is the content of ESBR’s continuous improvement plan.



Toward the goal of cultivating effective learning and ethical people equipped with the skills necessary for contributing to a better world, all students are expected to co-facilitate a morning meeting.

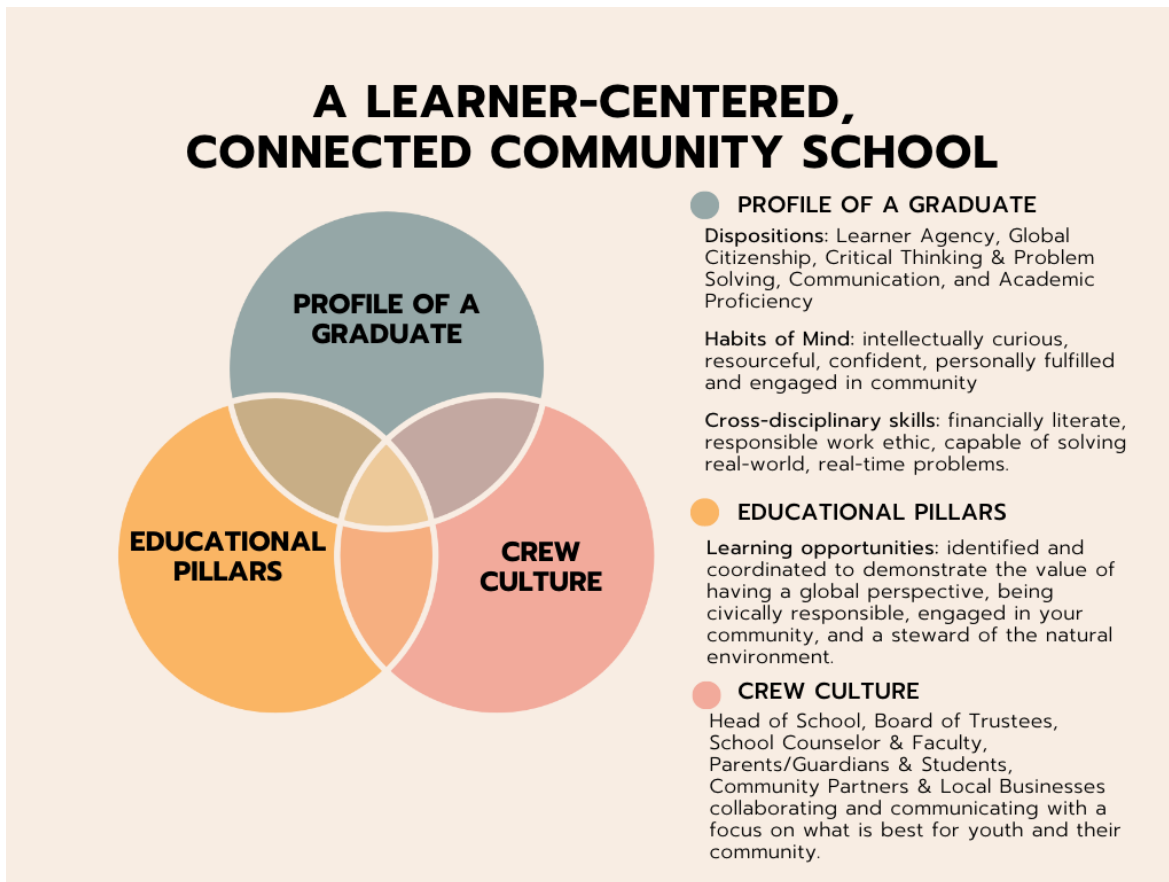
### ***Mission Statement***

ESBR’s mission is to educate student to be intellectually curious, resourceful, and confident in themselves for a life of personal fulfillment and civic engagement. We are committed to graduating young adults who are financially literate, embody strong habits of work, and are capable of solving real-world problems.

### ***Educational Pillars***

Global perspective, civic responsibility, community engagement, and environmental stewardship are ESBR’s educational pillars. The educational pillars serve as cornerstones from which the school’s strategic plans have been crafted. Similar to the term organizational values, these education pillars are the components for coordinating learning opportunities. Pillars, however, refer to infrastructure and since we are building a more humane culture of learning, ESBR’s organizational values are interchangeable with educational pillars.

From its inception, the school’s educational pillars were established to cultivate the dispositions articulated in the Profile of Graduate. For instance, the Senior Capstone project is the culmination of and the moment where students are expected to showcase when and how the educational pillars informed their learning process.



## ***Profile of a Graduate***

A learner's sequence of courses are designed to move them toward the dispositions expected of ESBR's Profile of Graduate. These include Learner Agency, Global Citizenship, Well-Being, Global Citizenship, Critical Thinking & Problem-Solving, Communication, as well as Academic Proficiency.



Students are expected to produce 8 to 10 pieces of evidence-of-learning that illustrate their proficiency in each of the above dispositions. Students must complete the assignments outlined in the learning management system. These modules are aligned with the Academic Proficiency bucket.

Traditionally, credit hours indicate when a student “understands essential concepts in academic domains” (as stated in the first bullet in the Academic Proficiency bucket). Credits are time-based references for measuring educational attainment. Calculating credits derives from the

Carnegie Unit, which is a metric used to determine “seat time” in a minimum-course-of-study. The Academic Proficiency component of the Profile of a Graduate is where credit hours build a bridge between communicating a student’s knowledge base with the transferable skills needed to be self-sufficient in any work setting or classroom. Credits obtained in the Academic Proficiency bucket are 1 out of the 8 to 10 pieces evidence-of-learning expected of students to graduate. The purpose of the Profile of Graduate is to ensure ESBR communicates and assesses the characteristics of the whole learner.

In accordance with 16 V.S.A. § 942, at ESBR credits earned for the Academic Proficiency graduation requirement are measured by Carnegie Units, which by definition “means 125 hours of class or contact time with a teacher over the course of one year at the secondary level.” (2013 & amended 2017). <https://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/16/023/00942>

### ***Graduation Requirements***

At ESBR projects and courses are used interchangeably. We are culture of personalized learning, utilizing a proficiency-based grading system. Therefore, the skills developed during traditional “middle” school years are a springboard toward the coursework completed when students are the age of high schoolers. Over the course of their 7<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade experience, students are expected to curate evidence that they are developing the dispositions outlined in the Profile of the Graduate, including the credit hours required demonstrating Academic Proficiency.

Personalized Learning Maps (PLM) are viewed as a tool for communicating when, where, and how students are demonstrating the transferable skills required for graduation. In order to ensure students, develop a solid foundation of academic knowledge and a repertoire of skills, ESBR offers an interdisciplinary 7<sup>th</sup> through 9<sup>th</sup> grade program. With decreasing common requirements to follow when students are the chronological age of a 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grader. During 10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade, learning opportunities are designed to invite all students to explore personalized areas of interest in more depth.

While ESBR’s minimum graduation requirement is 20 credits across 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grades, the vast majority of ESBR’s students graduate with considerably more exposure to applied learning opportunities and expeditions.

ESBR’s required credits for the Academic Proficiency disposition are as follows:



<b>GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS</b>	
<b>COURSE</b>	<b>CREDITS</b>
English	4 credits
Math	3 credits
Science	4 credits
Social Studies	3 credits
Health	1 credit
Physical Education	1 ½ credits
Electives	9 ½ credits
Senior Capstone	1 credit

***Assessment and Evaluation Criteria***

ESBR’s grading system occurs on a semester basis. A 4.0 to 1.0 scale is used to communicate where a student is at on their progress report cards and final transcripts. That scale is as follows:

Advanced (4.0)	Proficient (3.0)	Developing (2.0)	Beginning (1.0)	Not Started (NS)
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On all formative and summative assessments, Habits of Work and Academic Proficiency grades are reported as separate grades and weighted equally. This feature is designed to illuminate when a student does well in the Academic Proficiency column but does not necessarily have the Habits of Work needed to be efficient in their post-secondary pursuits. Grading Habits of Work is a key feature of what it means to be a proficiency-based system. Throughout each semester tests and quizzes use a 0 to 100 grade point scale, yet the above 1.0 to 4.0 grading system remains intact.

Grade Numerical Equivalent Points		
A	93 - 100	4.0
A-	90 - 92	3.67
B+	87 - 89	3.33
B	83 - 86	3.0
B-	80 - 82	2.67
C+	77 - 79	2.33
C	73 - 76	2.0
C-	70 - 73	1.67
D+	67 - 70	1.33
D	63 - 66	1.0
D-	60 - 63	1.0

ESBR's grade numerical equivalent points is consistent with how universities and colleges across the U.S. communicate individual grades.

In 2016, Harvard Graduate School of Education published *Turning the Tide: Inspiring Concern for Others and the Common Good through College Admissions*. This report was a notable step in reshaping the college admissions process. The report's concrete recommendations are:

- 1) Promoting more meaningful contributions to others, community service and engagement with the public good.
- 2) Assessing students' ethical engagement and contributions to others in ways that reflect varying types of family and community contributions across race, culture and class.
- 3) Redefining achievement in ways that both level the playing field for economically diverse students and refuse excessive achievement pressure.

Building upon this vision for a more holistic approach, over the course of a learner's 7th - 12th grade experience, students are expected to capture their skill development and personal growth in a portfolio. This portfolio is directly linked to the Personalized Learning Map.

### ***Personalized Learning Map***

During a collaborative on-going planning process, students develop their goals, discover what motivates them, and identify relevant learning opportunities. When developing a PLM, a balance between building upon a student's strengths, while also improving the skills in an area of needed growth, are central to the decision-making process. The emphasis being placed on self-direction distinguishes ESBR's pedagogy from other schools. This is because a self-directed planning process enables the maturation of learner agency.

By design the school culture holds students accountable for their attitude and work ethic, key features of learner agency. The outcomes of learner agency are multi-faceted. First, when learner agency is in effect, students take ownership of their actions, both in the classroom and in the community. Students are then more likely to develop their voice as well as possess the confidence to use this voice in a variety of settings. In doing so, these young adults are intrinsically motivated and are on a path to becoming life-long learners. Learner agency is the cornerstone to ensuring ESBR's mission continuously evolves with the changing times. During the Senior Capstone exhibition, and throughout its process, the degree to which students are developing a growth mindset and adaptability is provided through a sequence of formative assessments.

NOTE: the Senior Capstone as well as the formative assessment system plans to be implemented in 2023-2024. An \* indicates which learning opportunities are not yet taking place, but will be once student enrollment increases and staff capacity is strengthened.

### ***Senior Capstone***

All seniors are required to complete a Senior Capstone investigation. ESBR views the Capstone course as the pinnacle for showcasing a student's capacity for Learner Agency, Communication, Global Citizenship as well as Critical Thinking & Problem Solving. The degree to which these dispositions are evident in the capstone topic is part of the evaluation criteria. By design, capstone projects are the culmination of the student's passion and interests as they moved through their learning trajectory. The Capstone services as an opportunity for students to showcase their mastery of our standards. As students prepare to embark upon their personal and professional lives, capstone projects are presented to the student's peers, faculty members, trustees, family members and select members of the community in December and May of the student's senior year. The support system identified in the Personalized Learning Map works with ESBR's faculty to guide this process.

### ***Supports for College and Career Placement***

A specialist and/or mentor is assigned to each student to ensure that the goals defined in their Personalized Learning Map align with their desired next steps after graduation. When relevant to the learner's post-secondary path, test preparation for the standardized examinations required by the student's desired colleges and employers are made available on as needed basis.

As needed, the following courses are offered. Periodically new courses and varied learning opportunities may be added to a learner's experience, those are identified during the Personalized Learning mapping process and are not articulated in this Program of Studies. What follows is an illustrative list of the courses ESBR's leadership team is committed to making available to all students.

### ***FOUNDATIONAL COURSEWORK (7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> grade)***

Placement in courses is determined by a combination of prior knowledge assessments, grades from sending schools, scores on standardized tests, and mindset. Participating in the Youth Participatory Action Research cycle is expected to instill a growth mindset in each student. Regardless of the starting point, students have access to a multitude of courses.

During a student's 7th - 9th grade experience, each year students are expected to complete coursework in the following content areas:

- Humanities, including Civics Education & U.S. History, Nonfiction & Historical Fiction
- Writing

- Mathematics
- Financial Literacy
- Science
- World Languages
- Unified Arts
- Personal Health & Well-being
- Technology

Literacy and Humanities courses serve as the nexus for ensuring Black River's interrelated curriculum design supports and is tailored to students' interests, strengths, and needs. Students are expected to complete community reads that touch upon each of these subjects. For instance, Laurie Halse Anderson's *Seeds of America* trilogy tells the story of The Revolutionary War from the perspective of slaves who fought alongside the Patriot cause. All students are required to read historical fiction like this as well as other assigned nonfiction, including films and documentaries

***HUMANITIES, including Civics Education, World & U.S. History***

All 7th, 8th and 9th graders are expected to complete the National History Day\* project each year. Upon completion of three years in this project, students are expected to reflect upon the choices they made in their research design and articulate the ways in which those choices influence their desired coursework in 10th -12th grade. Nonfiction and fictional literature is read in concert with research and writing endeavors.

Building upon student's interests, community service opportunities are coordinated, and those projects intend to elicit demonstrations of students developing the dispositions of global citizenship, problem solving, and communication.

***Writing***

Prior learning assessments are administered to glean a student's understanding of the Mechanics of Writing. When necessary, students are required to complete a Mechanics of Writing course, during which they focus on becoming proficient in their application of grammar and usage. This course entails studying sentence structure, punctuation, and frequently confused words. This course is designed to feel more like a tutorial, and it requires a weekly check-in with the Writing Specialist.

All of the other aspects of writing instruction are integrated into the assessments for the different content areas. Descriptive, expository, persuasive, narrative and creative writing are interspersed throughout the culminating assignments for Social Studies, Science, Math and Youth Participatory Action Research. When discussing current events, students focus on the technique journalist's use to convey their message. Students may also choose to collect evidence of their

improv skit writing skills during their participation in Performing Arts learning opportunities. Written communication is uploaded to and stored in a learning management system. Each year, written work in each content area earns students an ELA credit.

### ***Financial Literacy***

All students complete a Financial Literacy course taught by the local branch of People’s United Bank. Financial literacy skills are a requirement for graduation from The Expeditionary School at Black River. Students are expected to set goals for their post-secondary pursuits and explain their financing plan for achieving those goals. This financial plan is the final examination for financial literacy, a real-world application of their knowledge and skills.

## ***SCIENCE***

### ***Integrated Science***

This course spans each year of a student’s 7th, 8th, and 9th grade experience. These studies intend to advance students’ understanding of physics, chemistry, and earth-space science. This multi-year coursework is crafted to prepare students for subsequent science courses.

In this multi-year course students participate in hands-on lab experiments (indoors and outdoors), projects, problem solving and collaborative group work. Project topics overlap with the research and exploration occurring in Social Studies and Mathematics. When students utilize mathematical concepts and tools, such as data tables, graphs and equations in this science course, that demonstration of learning can also be applied to the evidence that mathematical measurement topics are being acquired. The content of these studies focuses on key ideas from biology, chemistry, earth science, and physics.

Upon completing this course, students will be able to explain Newton’s Laws of motion as well as be able to predict and explain situations involving forces and motions. Students will be able to articulate what is kinetic energy, potential energy, or energy contained by a field. Students will understand the history of atomic theory. They will demonstrate their understanding by being able to model and explain the structure of an atom. Building upon these core competencies, students will be able to differentiate between the structures of solids, liquids, and gases. They will trace the development of the theory of plate tectonics. Additionally, students will be able to connect all this to how the Solar System formed from a giant cloud of gas and debris about 5 billion years ago.

Demonstrations of skill development during this course may be simultaneously used as evidence that ELA, Social Studies, Mathematics and/or Visual Arts measurement topics (see above sample of competency-based transcript) are being met as well.

### ***Environmental Science & Ecology***

Students are expected to participate in a variety of learning opportunities led by community partners, such as Lake Champlain Maritime Museum and Vermont Institute for Natural Sciences. These field trips address a range of topics, including but not limited to water rowing ecology, land-based metalworking, archeology, forestry management, and the ecological needs of raptors. Learning outcomes gained during these field trips are integrated into the projects students have chosen for Integrated Science and Social Studies coursework. Journal writing and reflection on each of these experiences is expected. Students are required to submit these written reflections as evidence of their learning.

## **MATHEMATICS**

### ***Pre-Algebra***

This course is designed to build learner's confidence and fluency with basic math operations. Students are taught mathematical modeling and develop mental math skills in order to be able to apply concepts to tangible and relevant projects in other content areas. During this year-long math class, the pace is reflective of student comprehension, and the activities are tailored to develop the areas of growth in the current mathematical understanding. Students who excel at strengthening their math fluency during the first semester are encouraged to transition to Algebra I the second semester. Placement in this class is determined by math specialists, in consultation with the student's Personalized Learning support team.

### ***Algebra I***

This course builds on computational experiences with different numbers sets. Students develop an understanding of how to manipulate mathematical expressions. Various representations of linear equations and inequalities help students develop connections and deepen their application of mathematical students. These activities include some work with polynomials. Students utilize appropriate tools (mental math, pencil and paper, and technology as they work with real-world problems, in addition to grappling with concepts from geometry, statistics, and probability. Algebra I's culminating assessments are integrated into the problem-centered approach determined by the topics students are researching in their Humanities courses. Students at the age of a 7th grader are eligible to enroll in this course.

### ***Conceptual Geometry***

This course includes applications of geometry in everyday life. Math construction tools (compass and straightedge), measurement tools (ruler and protractor, and interactive geometry software are key features of students' application and exploration of geometric concepts. Many assessments are project-based, and invite students to make connections to computer modeling engineering concepts as well as art.

\*\*\* For learners who have expressed a primary interest in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) career pathways, the following courses are available through online learning and / or in-person structure when possible. \*\*\*

### ***Calculus \****

This course focuses on the structure of math and the relationships between numerical, graphical, and algebraic forms. An in-depth analysis of trigonometry and logarithmic functions allows students to extend their knowledge and understanding of the concepts of functions and their inverses. Activities included extensive study of graphs, equations, identities, and applications. Students also learn about conic sections and rational functions. Graphing utilities are used extensively to support analytical methods and to give students visual representations that nurture an intuitive understanding.

### ***Computer Science: An Introduction to Algorithms \****

Supported by the school's partnership with Black River Innovation Campus, developing skills in the art of problem solving, using multiple techniques, and programming languages is the goal of this course. Students learn to think through problems and construct systems, analyze, critique, and build solutions. Students are expected to explore several different programming languages, specifically Pencilcode, Python, Java, and R. These languages establish foundational knowledge in computer science and illuminate connections to a variety of career possibilities. The culminating assessment is a self-directed project that focuses on crafting a comprehensive solution to achieving a personal goal and/or societal issue that the learner has expressed interest in solving. A prerequisite to this course is the completion of algebra I & II. Demonstrations of learning collected during this course can be tagged as evidence of acquiring the relevant academic standards in tech, mathematics, and analytical thinking.

### ***Data Analysis & Interpretation \****

In this course students are introduced to basic data science tools, including data management and visualization, modeling, and machine learning. Students utilize Tableau, SAS and Python software programs, including pandas and Scikit learn. Students identify a societal challenge, develop research questions, and analyze the data in a manner that answer those questions. This two-semester course is recommended for 11th and 12th graders. Students may decide to complete the certification process for Tableau, SAS and/or Python.

### ***Statistics \****

Upon completing this course, student will be able to do the following:

- Describe and analyze univariate data in populations and samples taken from sampling distributions
- Describe and analyze bivariate data sets

- Collect data using randomization techniques in surveys and experiments
- Calculate and model the probability of random events using probability rules
- Choose and construct an appropriate confidence interval for a given situation
- Choose and perform appropriate hypothesis tests

During this course, students develop knowledge in how to use a histogram, bar graph, dot plot, scatter plot, stem-and-leaf plot, mosaic plot, and box-and-whisker. Students also examine sources of bias. This course is recommended for 11th and 12th graders, and it may be a dual enrollment course with a local university. Culminating projects are aligned to the societal challenges students' express interest in solving. Demonstrations of learning throughout this course may also be used as evidence of students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

## **LANGUAGE ACQUISITION**

All students in 7th & 8th grade are expected to participate in Cultural Competency workshops as well as experiment with pronouncing words in languages other than English. Demonstrations of Learning in these courses offer evidence that students are working toward proficiency in the Communication & Global Citizenship disposition, as outlined in the above Profile of a Graduate.

### ***Spanish I***

This course is designed for students who have no previous formal experience learning or listening to Spanish speakers. Completion of this course teaches them to communicate with people who speak Spanish in daily activities. Activities include live online discussion, creating presentations, learning from videos as well as interactive tasks. There are also some traditional activities such as impromptu speeches and writing exercises.

### ***French I \****

This course is recommended for students who have little to no experience speaking or listening to French language speakers. Students develop their receptive, productive and interactive skills; converse with students and teachers from around the world, and function in a French speaking environment.

### ***Mandarin \****

This innovative course invites students with no previous experience or familiarity with the Mandarin language. This course introduces students to cultural practices of Mandarin speaking cultures. Mandarin is a vital skill to have for students interested in doing business intentionally and with a focus on technological inventions. This course also introduces students to the fundamentals of Chinese grammar and pronunciation.



## **ELECTIVES**

### ***Introduction to Theatre***

This course shows students the journey that performing artists travel as they create live theatre. By observing performing artists' creative processes, students have the opportunity to reflect on, and understand how creativity is an important aspect of all people. The course also requires that the student critically read plays for plot, structure, character and theme. Finally, this course assists students in developing effective writing skills. Students are required to see three live performances and to write a critical review of each performance that they attend.

### ***Theater***

Building on skills learned in the introductory course, students develop, rehearse and present scenes and monologues for one another, learning to give constructive feedback. They continue to learn to be comfortable creating and portraying characters other than themselves. Students develop an original presentation of their work by the end of the course. Essential skills: speaking and listening, initiative, creative problem solving, empathy, confidence, teamwork.

### ***Visual Arts***

During this course, students reflect upon the creative process in their own work and analyze how other artists and cultures have used art to communicate their ideas and values. Activities offer an introduction into the concepts and skills essential to creating and appreciating visual art as a mode of expression. Projects are crafted to help students develop creative thinking skills and deliver those thoughts in a medium that best aligns with the expression of those ideas. Upon completion of this course, students will be able to apply the elements and principles of design to produce creative art projects, articulate their understanding of these concepts, as well as demonstrate a mindset for arts exploration and appreciation. For students who are interested in deepening their art appreciation, subsequent coursework will be made available to them.

### ***Voice lessons***

Private lessons are available to students who express an interest in developing a strong speaking and singing voice. By learning a variety of breathing, physical and vocal exercises, students uncover their unique voice. A variety of songs and musical styles are explored, with the option for a vocal recital. Essential skills: analysis, synthesis, coordination and balance.

### ***Media Arts \****

In this course students explore the visual language of two and three- dimensional design using both analog (traditional) and digital tools and processes. A series of problem-solving exercises and projects is designed to develop students' basic understanding of the elements and principles of design, the design process, and techniques of visualization. The skills acquired in this course establish a foundation for additional studies in a multitude of art and design related career paths.

Students will be expected to research one or more of the following career paths: graphic design, product design, photography, architecture, interior design, animation, game design, film and any other relevant opportunities the student identifies. This course's curriculum is primarily self-directed, yet an advisor is available to assist with research and guide the design process.

### ***Applied Music \****

Passionate musicians, regardless of ability, instrument, or voice, are welcome to enroll in this course. Students learn strategies to efficiently improve their musical capabilities. Students will then apply their techniques to other learning opportunities. Personalized plans of study are tailored to the individual interests of each member of this course. With the support of a mentor who specializes in the student's area of interest, guided practice and performance techniques are explored. Students who wish to deepen their exploration of music are welcome to design and plan out the next phases of their studies. This course's curriculum is intentionally designed to adapt to the learner's particular skill set and interests.

### ***Electronic Music Production \****

Through the use of Digital Audio Workstations, students examine and learn aspects of music production. Activities involve the study of synthesis, musical form, structure including how all these factors into algorithms. Projects entail a study of audio production recording techniques, mastering skills, advanced synthesis, and continued examination of virtual synthesis tools. Students of all abilities explore and create the latest forms of electronic music. This course's curriculum is intentionally designed to adapt to the learner's particular skill set and interests.

### ***Music Theory \****

Music Theory is one of the most essential courses for aspiring musicians. By way of exploring clefs, scales, key signatures, intervals, chords, progressions, cadences, for-part writing, non-harmonic tones, transposition, modulation, phrase structures, textures, and song forms. Students develop reading skills and learn the process of composing and analyzing music. This course elicits evidence that arts and communication measurement topics are underway.

### ***Chorus \****

In this course, students learn the basic elements of ear training and music theory through the rehearsal and performance of various choral works. An audition is required to participate.

### ***Theater History \****

By examining Theater practices, plays and performances from the Ancient Greeks through present day, students analyze and gain a deeper understanding of the human experience. Students are exposed to dramatic literature and productions from around the world and across many time periods and ethnic cultures. In this course, students critically read plays to understand plot,

structure, character and theme as well as write critical reviews of any performances they see. Essential skills: Critical Thinking, Effective Writing, Critical Reading.

### ***Acting in Film \****

In this course, students expand on skills learned in Introduction to Theater as they apply to acting for the camera. Students work on existing scripts and original material and practice setting up the shot, acting for the camera, shooting the scene, and post production/editing. The focus is on process and not product, this course culminates into an original student film. Essential skills: speaking and listening, initiative, creative problem solving, empathy, confidence, teamwork.

### ***Intro to Dance \****

Introduction to various styles of popular dance, including jazz, hip-hop, social dancing, ballet, and tap. Students also learn how to move to various musical styles and create original movement and choreography. Essential skills: teamwork, spatial awareness, balance and coordination.

### ***Introduction to Stagecraft and Design \****

In this course, students learn exactly what it takes to develop and mount a theatrical production from the ground up. By studying areas of Theater production such as lighting, set design, sound design, costume design, directing, marketing, budget and casting, students will hopefully leave this course with a deeper understanding of the intricacies of producing a play or musical. Final projects involve presenting a fully realized Producer pitch of an original idea for a play. Essential Skills: critical Thinking/problem solving, organization and time management, creative thinking.

## **WELLBEING**

### ***Nutrition***

This learning experience is designed to develop student understanding of the fundamental concepts of human nutrition, including digestion, absorption, metabolism, and the function of nutrients as they relate to human health and disease. Activities include monitoring water intake and the impacts too much sugar can have on one's ability to focus as well as their overall energy levels. All students are required to take this course during the first year enrolled at ESBR.

### ***Personal Fitness***

During this course, students learn to identify muscle groups and relate them to movements, create individualized strength and conditioning programs, understand the importance of nutrition, research and analyze fitness related topics. Assessments are based on active participation, fitness logs, individual and group projects, creating and leading workouts / programs, quizzes, and reflection.

### ***Yoga\****

This learning opportunity focuses on connecting the mind and body through the physical presence of yoga. Students are introduced to a variety of practices, such as slow flow, power flow, Ashtanga, restorative, and Yin yoga. Students learn about alignment, and practice key poses in each asana category. Breath is a key component to each class. Ultimately, students learn a variety of yoga sequences, which incorporate meditation and mindfulness. Assessment is based on participation, self-reflection, and journaling.

### **TECHNOLOGY**

Google Suite is utilized each and every year of a learner's experience at ESBR. Student's daily plans are communicated via a shared Google calendar and emails. Other technology courses, such as Coding and Computer Sciences, are tailored to develop the strengths and meet the needs of interested students. If necessary, students in need of strengthening keyboarding skills are required to complete an online course in typing.

### **EXPEDITIONARY SCHOLARSHIP**

#### ***Place Based History***

Small groups of students are led on field trips that teach them to both appreciate Vermont's natural environment and also develop an understanding for its history. For instance, the huts along Vermont's iconic Long Trail were built after World War II by the Conservation Corps, a program funded by President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal. Similarly, some of Vermont's most popular tourist attractions are steeped in history. During these learning opportunities, small groups of students participate in field trips that require them to write about and explain the ways in which the content of the field trip enhances their knowledge of the Civics Education measurement topics. The overarching focus of these topics is on US History with Vermont's History a point of relevance for students. This is taught with a lens for how Vermont's history is interconnected with US History.

#### ***Rope Courses & Adventure Learning***

Exposure to outdoor activities that develop physical agility and self-confidence are coordinated for groups of students periodically throughout the school year. Adventure Learning includes canoeing and wilderness survival training.

#### ***Targeted Career Exploration (7-8 or 9)***

Targeted career exploration in 7<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> grade is designed to be a stepping stone toward navigating flexible pathways in high school.

## **LEARNING PATHWAYS (9-12 or 10-12)**

In order to move into 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade Learning Pathways, upon completion of 10<sup>th</sup> grade, all students will be required to demonstrate proficiency in financial literacy as well as civics education. In the culminating years of a learner's experience at Black River, the following career academies are made available to students. In addition to courses below, a student may choose to enroll in a non-career specific pathway, yet every student will be required to survey specific career credentialing courses that are relevant to their professional aspirations.

- Agriculture and Food Systems
- Hospitality and Resort Management
- Information Technology
- Dual Enrollment

### ***Agriculture and Food Systems \****

In this pathway, students will survey the history of agriculture as well as study industrial agriculture, community-supported agriculture, environmental science, genetics and advanced technologies in food production. Students will also examine Vermont's heritage industries, such as maple sugaring, cheese, and locally farmed meat. Applied learning will be demonstrated through students' maintenance of a community garden.

### ***Hospitality and Resort Management \****

Courses in this pathway entail a survey of all aspects of the hospitality industry. This includes a history of tourism and the impact of environmental changes on the hospitality industry. Students enrolled in this pathway will be expected to complete courses relevant to the topics of business management, financial planning, event planning, customer service & engagement, and property management. Applied learning will be demonstrated through a market analysis of industry trends, which will culminate into the writing of a business plan for solving the challenges this industry has faced during and post-COVID. Internships at local area resorts will be arranged.

### ***Information Technology \****

Recognizing that IT specialists are essential to a multitude of industries, this learning pathway begins with an in-depth student of the history of technology and how it has influenced changes to the global economy. Students will be introduced to a variety of coding languages as well as the basics of building computer networking (LANs and WANs). Students will be expected to build and update a website that showcases their portfolio of skills. Additional courses in Game Development, C++ coding Advanced, Robotics, Cyber Security will be made available to students on an as needed basis.

Students who are interested in learning more about Business Management, Carpentry, Health Sciences, Human Services, Industrial Trades and/or Culinary Arts are able to be simultaneously enrolled in River Valley Technical Center in Springfield, Vermont. Some of RVTC's programs



are fully remote, yet students enrolled in those programs are welcome to attend the Expeditionary School at Black River every day, all day. Black River aims to create a culture that is much like a shared working space, the difference being that students are earning academic credit and not a paycheck.

On behalf of interested student’s dual enrollment opportunities will be coordinated by the Head of School. In its first three years of operation, ESBR is a proud partner of Castleton University. Once Vermont State Universities are officially an entity, ESBR intends to renew its MOU with Castleton under their new brand.

**COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS**

ESBR’s vision for economic vitality offers an emerging model for how to redesign the relationship between local schools, the business community, and taxpayers. Toward this end, in the first three years of operation, the School Committee and the Head of School set out to establish community partnerships who are equipped to assist and sustain our school with focus on being fiscally efficient.

Currently, we have formalized agreements with the following organizations:

	<b>Benefit of Partnership</b>
 <p><u>New Hampshire Academy of Science</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provides ESBR with access to approximately a million dollars of advanced scientific research grade equipment.</li> <li>● Facilitates educator training focused on Science, Technology, Engineering, Math &amp; Medicine (STEMM) curriculum design and instructional delivery.</li> <li>● Partner on applications for federal and state grants.</li> </ul>
 <p><u>Okemo Valley TV</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Leverage distance learning, pre-recorded educational segments &amp; live streaming technologies</li> <li>● Work together on joint solutions pertaining to Internet capacity and innovative program development</li> </ul>

To ensure our school is situated as a hub from catalyzing community and economic development can revolve, additional community partnerships are in the process of being identified and developed.