

South Burlington High School
550 Dorset St.
South Burlington, VT
802-652-7060



Interest Based Learning



IS THERE MORE THAN ONE WAY TO LEARN?

Are you one of those students who find it difficult to engage in school through the traditional structure? Despite doing well in your classes, do you find it hard to relate the material to your “real life?” Would you like your learning to be more geared toward your interests and needs? Here’s a new approach available to students who will be Sophomores & Juniors during the 2009-2010 school year:

Next year there is an opportunity for you to approach learning in a new and exciting way. Learning starts with the student, not the courses or subject area. Each student will have an individualized curriculum based on his/her strengths and challenges and who he or she wants to become.



What will a weekly schedule look like?

- Each week students will spend two full days working at an internship site that matches their interests.
- Each student will be paired with a mentor at the site who is considered a valuable member of the educational team.
- Students will spend three days per week at South Burlington High School in a Core Advisory Group with a student/adult ratio of 10/1

What will learning look like?

- Each student develops a personalized curriculum in close collaboration with their teacher and parent(s)/guardian(s).
- All learning is framed by a set of goals that includes questions or statements that place an emphasis on “doing.”
- All learning will be connected to relevant issues and topics, and students will *experience* the direct connection between their (school) work and the real world.

How will students be evaluated?

- Students demonstrate and defend their work through quarterly exhibitions. The exhibition provides an opportunity for the student to present their work to a team. In turn, the team provides valuable feedback to the student to advance the learning to a new level.
- Students present quarterly work through portfolios which include samples of their best work and reflections on their internship.
- Each quarter the student receives a narrative evaluation addressing the core learning goals.

Community Service:

As each student receives a gift from their mentor and internship site, they will be provided with opportunities to give back as well.

- Each student will also connect with a member of the community in need of support. This could be an elderly person, special needs individual or an elementary student.
- Students also participate in a week long major community service project in another part of the country.

Examples:

- Build homes for Habitat for Humanity in Rocky Mount, North Carolina
- Provide hurricane relief in New Orleans, Louisiana

Sample Internship Projects:

Jane possesses a strong interest in marine biology and has an internship at the Echo Ctr. Jane's work at the center involves the educational programming. She learns how to speak to school groups and, in time, will run her own tours. Since she knows that some school groups can't get to the Echo Center, she has decided to develop a web based program to increase access to Echo. Her work at Echo elicits an interest in fish anatomy and she creates a web based dissection video of the catfish.

Carl is passionate about art. Everyone in school has seen his sketch books and his paintings. Carl finds an internship with a local artist who not only sells paintings in art galleries throughout New England, but is also a muralist. Carl develops a project that will involve painting a mural for the Sarah Holbrook Center. He'll be designing and painting this mural with a group of middle school students at Sarah Holbrook.



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Will this new model prepare me for college?

- Yes! Students develop skills in the areas of writing, organization, creativity and independence which are all necessary for a successful college experience.
- Students will continue to enhance their knowledge in the core subject areas.
- An emphasis will be placed on college preparation and juniors will be able to enroll in college courses during the school year.
- Colleges value the independence and self-directed projects this program provides.

How can I get additional information?

- Have a conversation with your school counselor if this sounds interesting. They can let you know about upcoming informational meetings for students and parents/guardians.

