The Blue Mountain Union School Mission is to develop citizens who:

**RESPECT** others and themselves

**THINK** creatively, collaboratively, and critically

**THRIVE** locally and globally

**PERSEVERE** through challenges

**UNLEASH THEIR POTENTIAL** by finding and using their voice
Superintendent’s Message

DEAR BLUE MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY,

It is with great pleasure that I write to you on behalf of the district and its students. We are excited to unveil, in the pages that follow, our new report to the community. This document introduces the community to all of the wonderful things that Blue Mountain does to support its students. We also hope that it can help to attract new students to our school and new families to our area, drawn to us for the close-knit community atmosphere that we offer our students as well as the high quality education our school delivers.

Blue Mountain has come a long way in recent years, and many of us – like many of you – are beaming with pride about what we can offer our youth in the communities of Groton, Ryegate, and Wells River. In the pages that follow, you will learn more about those offerings and opportunities; designed with student learning as a cornerstone of our decision making. Many of our new programs, such as J-Term, Cape Cod Sea Camps, Robotics and Coding Club, universal Pre-K, personalized learning plans, travel study, YATST, and internships, are highlighted in this report.

It is an honor to serve the students and families of the district, and as your educational leader I am proud of the progress that we have made. Our work and plans for continuous improvement of our school district are not done yet. Great things are in store. As we look to the future, we are undergoing a dramatic overhaul in curriculum as we re-define what is taught at each grade level. We are re-thinking the way we do high school, designing systems that ensure that all students can be successful in school, and keeping abreast of the latest best practices in education. As our mission states, BMU is “Unleashing its Potential.”

Thank you for your continued support of our school and its programs.

Sincerely,

Emilie Knisley

Emilie Knisley, M.Ed., CAGS
Superintendent of Schools

“It is an honor to serve the students and families of the district, and as your educational leader I am proud of the progress that we have made. Our work and plans for continuous improvement of our school district are not done yet. Great things are in store.”
**THE DUAL ENROLLMENT PROGRAM**

Dual enrollment allows Vermont high school students to take college classes while they’re still in high school. Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU), a member of the dual enrollment program, allows academically-prepared BMU students the opportunity to earn early college credits while still in high school. At BMU, designated courses have been aligned to meet the same content, rigor and learning outcomes as that of SNHU. The high school teachers instructing these courses meet the University’s adjunct faculty requirements and have been approved by the University.

**VERMONT VIRTUAL LEARNING COMMUNITY**

The Vermont Virtual Learning Community (VTVLC) was founded in 2010 as Vermont’s first state-wide online program offering programs and courses to K-12 students by partnering with public and independent schools. Today, VTVLC serves hundreds of middle and high school students with more than 70 online courses. Enrollment is open to public, private and home-schooled students. Students from non-partner schools and from outside Vermont enroll on a tuition basis. Blue Mountain Union has partnered with VTVLC to give students access to courses not offered at Blue Mountain in areas such as math, English, science, social studies and various electives.

**River Bend Career and Technical Center**

River Bend Career and Technical Center partners with Blue Mountain Union School to provide a technical education as well as a full range of services.

- The following programs are available at River Bend Career and Technical Center for grades 11 and 12.

  - Automotive Technology
  - Construction Technology and Residential Energy
  - Cosmetology
  - Culinary Arts
  - Diversified Agriculture/Natural Resources
  - Electrical Technology
  - Emergency Services and Fire Management
  - Gaming, Animation and Web Design
  - Health Sciences Technology
  - Heavy Equipment Operators and Maintenance

**Blue Mountain High School Graduation Requirements**

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<th>Subject</th>
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<td>Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Sciences</td>
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<td>Physical Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>World Language</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fine Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
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<td>Senior Seminar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Electives</td>
<td>5 Credits</td>
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“**We believe that all students will succeed in rigorous and engaging learning when all adults share this belief and are committed to making it happen.”**

— JOHN BARONE, ED.D., DIRECTOR OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION
Student Support Services

GUIDANCE SERVICES

School counselors, formerly called guidance counselors, are vital members of the education team at BMU. They help in areas such as academic achievement, personal growth and social development, and college and career readiness. The school counselors at BMU advocate for student needs based on data; provide classroom and small group lessons; advocate for programs and services that benefit students; and assist with Personalized Learning Plan development. They also serve as the liaison to River Bend Career and Technical Center, VSAC’s Gear Up Program, Adult Basic Education, The Division for Children, Youth, and Families, and various community mental health organizations. BMU’s school counselors also serve as case managers; work with students on prevention, intervention, and support of personal safety issues; provide crisis counseling to students; and make recommendations/referrals for more intensive services outside the school. BMU’s school counselors are professional members of the American School Counselor Association and the Vermont School Counselor Association.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Special education services are provided to students identified with a disability and in need of specialized instruction. Through direct instruction from special educators, paraprofessional support, and quality first instruction with accommodations from classroom teachers, Blue Mountain Union seeks to equip eligible disabled students with the concepts, skills, and tools for success, both in school and in their transition to adulthood. Each child’s Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is tailored to his or her particular learning needs. Currently we have 8.5 special educators, 15 paraprofessionals, a Speech Language Pathologist and a Speech Assistant available full-time for approximately 80 students. In addition, we have a part-time Occupational Therapist and a School Psychologist on-site. Special education teams also collaborate with a variety of specialists and consultants as needed. Blue Mountain Union is committed to ensuring that all eligible students receive a free appropriate public education.

Student Support by the Numbers

87+ Students in the Blue Mountain School District receive special education services, grades Pre-K through 12.

1 Pre-K Special Educator

7 K-12 Special Educators

17 Instructional Assistants serve students across grades Pre-K through 12.

About the Educational Support Team

The Blue Mountain Union School Educational Support Team consists of a diverse group of staff members who work together to support teachers and their students in grades Pre-K through 8 within the classroom setting. The Blue Mountain Union School Educational Support Team’s mission is to:

- Collaborate in an ongoing cycle of observing, reflecting, and planning the implementation of strategies
- Assist teachers in accommodating children in the classroom
- Recommend resources
- Ensure student success
- Support colleagues and families

Taking a Positive Approach

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is a national effort designed to help school teams form a proactive, school-wide systems approach to improving social and academic competence for all students. The central theme is teaching behavioral expectations that are positively stated and easy to remember. In other words, rather than telling students what not to do, we focus on the preferred behaviors.
Where Are They Now?
BMU Graduates attend some of the finest colleges and universities, including:
- Berklee College
- Castleton University
- Cedarville University
- Champlain College
- Clark University
- Colby-Sawyer College
- Community College of Vermont
- Husson University
- Ithaca College
- Johnson State College
- Keene State College
- Lesley University
- Lyndon State College
- Manchester Community College
- Norwich University
- Plymouth State University
- Rivier College
- Southern New Hampshire University
- Southern Vermont College
- St. Michael’s College
- University of Northwestern Ohio
- University of Southern Maine
- University of Maine, Farmington
- University of Vermont
- Vermont Technical College
- Wentworth Institute of Technology
- Western Carolina University
- White Mountains Community College

Life After Blue Mountain

Jamie Eastman
BMU CLASS OF 2010
Jamie (pictured at far left) is a trauma ICU Nurse (RN) at the University of Maryland Shock Trauma Center in Baltimore, Md., and a flight Paramedic and medevac trainer with the Vermont Army National Guard.

“You can be a big fish in a small pond or a small fish in a big pond. Shark, sword, or clown fish – everyone can make a difference.”

Kate Conquest
BMU CLASS OF 2013
Today, Kate attends Clark University in Worcester, Mass., where she has one year left. While at Clark, she has studied abroad at Griffith College in Dublin, Ireland. She is studying Sociology and wants to eventually attend graduate school for Public Health.

“I always impress people when I explain how small my hometown community and school were, but I wouldn’t trade it for anything. Going to BMU allowed me to thrive and participate in so many activities – varsity sports, band, chorus, theater, NHS, student council – in a way that I would never have been able to at a bigger school. The relationships that I formed through attending the same small school for 13 years were and are so valuable to me, and helped shape the confidence that I brought to my life beyond BMU.”

Emily Darling
BMU CLASS OF 2011
Emily continued her education in the nursing program at Vermont Technical College in Randolph, Vt., and became a registered nurse (RN). Now living in Stamford, Conn., she works in nursing management as the assistant director of resident care at an assisted living facility.

“At Blue Mountain, many of the staff members instilled in me a belief that I had the ability to do exceptional things. I learned vital life lessons about teamwork, respect, and leadership. Spending 13 years at Blue Mountain truly taught me to ‘bloom where I was planted.’”
On the Move: BMU Graduates After High School
A SNAPSHOT BY PERCENT OF GRADUATING CLASS

Student Performance on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)

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<tr>
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<th>2013</th>
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<td>Vermont Average</td>
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<td>497</td>
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</table>

Andrew Chase
BMU CLASS OF 2015
Today, Andrew is a freshman at Castleton University in Castleton, Vt.
“Blue Mountain Union has a very warm and welcoming feeling. BMU gave me the option to be who I wanted to be and make a name for myself. No other school gave me the warm welcoming feeling BMU did. I know I made the right decision to come to BMU.”
Pre-School at BMU

We believe that parents are a child’s primary teacher and we encourage parent involvement in Early Education programs at Blue Mountain Union School. We also believe that children learn best in a safe and nurturing environment, as well as an environment that allows children to explore at their own pace. We believe in the power of play, which is why we have chosen a play-based curriculum. Play allows children to learn about the world and themselves. We believe that when children play they learn new skills and develop new ways to handle challenging situations as well as positive social interactions with peers.

We offer both small and large group activities during the day, giving children the opportunity to explore the classroom and choose from a variety of activities.

Facts & Figures

- Pre-school is offered three days a week for students aged 3, 4, and 5
- Our pre-school works with the kindergarten to transition students to the elementary school
- Student progress is regularly assessed and reported to parents
Elementary School: Grades K-6

K-6 Enrollment

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K-6 Student Services

96% of our K-6 students attend school on a daily basis (based on average daily attendance data).

K-6 Average Class Size

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<td>13</td>
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Did You Know?
Over the last four years, our enrollment of K-6 English-Language Learners has grown from 0 to 4 students.

17% of our K-6 students receive Special Education services.

15 students per class is our average class size for grades K-6.
Middle School: Grades 7-8

MIDDLE SCHOOL’S CAPE COD TRIP

Each year our 7th grade students spend four days and three nights at the Cape Cod Sea Camps in Brewster, Mass. The first stop on the journey is Plimoth Plantation, which includes a tour of the Mayflower II and Plymouth Rock. After arriving and checking into the Sea Camps, the students and chaperones visit the Mass Audubon’s Long Pasture Wildlife Sanctuary, the Nauset Lighthouse on the eastern seaboard (which is the logo for the Cape Cod potato chips), and the Woods Hole Science Aquarium. This opportunity has been made possible by contributions from BMEF, local businesses such as Shaw’s and Walmart, and the Dr. Harry Rowe endowment fund. Dr. Rowe would be proud to know of the incredible impact this learning opportunity provides BMU students.

PERSONAL LEARNING PLAN

The State of Vermont enacted Personalized Learning Plan requirements through Act 77 in order to “help students achieve academic success, be prepared for post-secondary opportunities, and engage actively in civic life.” The Personalized Learning Plan is updated and modified as students’ needs change. The plan includes student intentions related to curricular choices, personal goals, future career goals, assessment data, work and life experiences, and other relevant information to help form a complete picture that will help lead to success during the middle school years, high school years and beyond.

Middle School Facts & Figures

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99% of our 7th- and 8th-grade students attend school on a daily basis (based on average daily attendance data).

15 students per class is our average class size for grades 7 and 8.

25% of our 7th- and 8th-grade students receive Special Education services.
High School: Grades 9-12

Learning Online
Blue Mountain is a partner school in the Vermont Virtual Learning Cooperative. Through our membership with VTVLC, we are able to offer online classes of varying subjects and levels of academic challenge.

ONLINE EDUCATOR: John Munson
COORDINATOR: Janet Beegle Gay

High School Facts & Figures

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</table>

Of Blue Mountain’s 100+ High School Students:

- **99%** attend school on a daily basis.
- **25%** receive Special Education services.
- **29%** participate in dual enrollment college courses.
- **14** students per class is our average class size in the high school.
- **23%** participate in the VTVLC online learning program.
Athletics & Extracurricular Activities

Blue Mountain Union School recognizes the value of participation in athletics and extra-curricular programs, and we encourage all of our students to participate in as many different interscholastic activities as possible. These activities provide a positive and meaningful experience that can enhance the growth and development of all who participate. Our programs strive to represent the very best in personal effort, competition, coaching, equipment, facilities, schedules and organization. The lessons learned through extra-curricular involvement benefit students well beyond their years here at Blue Mountain, and enable them to learn how to work both individually and as part of a team.

We believe that participation in athletics and extra-curricular activities is an integral part of the BMU educational program.

During the 2015-2016 school year:

- **81%** of high school students
- **57%** of middle school students
- **61%** of elementary school students participated in extracurricular activities at Blue Mountain Union School.

Activities at a Glance

Blue Mountain offers a wide range of athletics, plus a variety of clubs and activities.

- Girls’ Soccer
- Boys’ Soccer
- Cross Country
- Girls’ Basketball
- Boys’ Basketball
- Cheerleading
- Softball
- Baseball
- Forensics
- Hospitality Club
- National Honor Society
- Student Council
- Robotics
- Drama

“We encourage all students to participate in as many different interscholastic activities as possible.”

TODD POWERS
ATHLETIC DIRECTOR
Forensics team
The BMU Forensics Team is an extra-curricular offering focusing on public speaking. Students may choose to compete in eight different categories of speech from poetry and drama to impromptu and radio. The season runs from September through February, with after school practices and weekend tournaments around Vermont.

Robotics and Coding
The BMU Robotics and Coding Club is an extra-curricular offering focusing on robotics and programming skills. Presently the club is a member of VEX Robotics and participates in the yearly design challenges. The club also is exploring drones and other emerging technologies.
Beyond the Classroom

BMU Group Goes on Costa Rican Adventure

In January 2016, a group of fifteen students, faculty, and parent chaperones made a trek to Costa Rica. The goal of the trip was to make a difference. Over the two-week trip, the group visited national parks, cleaned up trails, went into wildlife preserves, and enjoyed all the marvels the Amazon rainforest had to offer.

Additionally, they cleaned picnic areas, built tables and benches for weary hikers, experienced hot springs from nearby volcanoes, and kayaked on the only lake in Costa Rica – which is the location where they filmed part of the movie *Jurassic Park*.

Aside from action packed adventure, the part that made the biggest difference was visiting local schools. The group visited a very typical elementary school outside of Arenal. “With dirt roads and bars on the windows, we got off our bus and were escorted one by one into the school building by typically-dressed students,” said Mackenzie Prasch, Spanish Teacher and trip organizer. “They were elated and warm hearted, and they graciously accepted our school supplies and soccer balls. We participated in a wonderful pick-up game of soccer.”

The visitors then had a home-cooked lunch and watched a beautiful traditional dance and a rendition of the Costa Rican national anthem.
YATST Team Builds Leadership

The Blue Mountain YATST Team (Youth and Adults Transforming Schools Together) is an experiential class, committed to the development of student voice and leadership. Based on the four educational principles of relevance, rigor, relationship and responsibility, YATST is a Vermont-based program where youth and adults work together to improve their schools and communities. Using a formal research process, students’ projects are based on the data they have gathered, analyzed and shared. This process is cyclical and requires a continual engagement in learning.

Ryan Curtis  BMU CLASS OF 2016

“I would like to take a minute to thank Blue Mountain Union School for giving me the opportunity to volunteer at Cottage Hospital in the emergency room. While I was there I quickly became part of the department, and I learned a number of different things that I will be able to use after I take my E.M.T. class. This experience showed me just how much I truly love the job. Thanks to Blue Mountain for setting all of this up…it made it much easier for me to decide what my career will be.”

J-Term Broadens Academic Offerings

The J-Term offers a variety of learning experiences for all BMU students. The program is designed to provide partial-day and full-day courses, seminars, field experiences, internships, community service and other teaching and learning opportunities. Students are offered a wide variety of enrichment courses. Teachers are afforded the challenge of offering a new course or alternative learning experience (full day or partial day) which might not be possible during the traditional school schedule.

YATST students at Lake Champlain after meeting with the YATST Team at South Burlington High School.

High school students participating in yoga in the great outdoors.
“What’s best for the community is a good school – one that has a good reputation. What is best for the kids is a good school.”

— HARRY M. ROWE, M.D. (1912-2012)
DEVO TED FRIEND AND ADVOCATE OF BLUE MOUNTAIN UNION SCHOOL