

K12 ACADEMICS — STATE EDUCATION SERIES



Vermont Education Guide

A complete profile — schools, testing, graduation, accountability, school choice, teacher certification & financial aid, each in depth.



Find Your Community
2026 EDITION

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Everything about school in Vermont.

This guide profiles **Vermont's** education system in seven parts, each a two-page deep dive with the key facts, plain-English explanations, and a link to the full, regularly-updated guide online. From K12 Academics, the world's largest education resource, online since 2004.

WHAT'S INSIDE

Education Overview · State Testing · Graduation Requirements · Accountability & Report Cards · School Choice · Teacher Certification · Financial Aid

SEARCH 200+ DIRECTORIES

K-12 Schools · Colleges & Universities · Vendors · Summer Programs · International Programs · Performers

Education Overview

EDUCATION IN VERMONT

Vermont educates roughly 83,000 public K-12 students — one of the smallest enrollments in the country — across about 50 school districts and supervisory unions , overseen by the Vermont Agency of Education and the State Board. Vermont is rural, with many small schools. Vermont's education system has some genuinely unusual features. It...

WHO MUST ATTEND SCHOOL

- ✓ **Start age** — 6
- ✓ **End of compulsory age** — 16
- ✓ **Districts** — ~50 districts/supervisory unions (consolidating)
- ✓ **Satisfying it** — Public, approved independent, or home study

UNIVERSAL PRE-K

Vermont is one of the few states with truly universal prekindergarten . Under Act 166 (2014) , Vermont provides publicly funded pre-K to all 3- and 4-year-olds (and eligible 5-year-olds not yet in kindergarten) — at least 10 hours a week for 35 weeks — which families can use at a public program or an approved private/community provider....



AT A GLANCE

Compulsory	Ages 6–16
Districts	~50
Testing	Smarter Balanced
Diploma	Proficiency
Choice	Town tuitioning

DISTRICTS & TRANSFORMATION

Vermont's public schools are organized into local districts and supervisory unions (which provide shared services across small towns). Vermont has no charter schools — one of the few states without a charter law. Vermont is also undertaking a major reform: Act 73 (2025) begins a transition to a "reimagined" system with larger school...

PRIVATE SCHOOLS & THE "TOWN ACADEMIES"

- ✓ **St. Johnsbury Academy** — A large independent school in the Northeast Kingdom
- ✓ **Burr and Burton Academy** — Founded in 1829, in Manchester
- ✓ **Thetford Academy** — Founded in 1819 — "an independent school with a public purpose"
- ✓ **Lyndon Institute & Sharon Academy** — Among other long-established academies

READ VERMONT'S FULL EDUCATION OVERVIEW GUIDE
tools.k12academics.com



State Testing

WHAT YOUR STATE TESTS

Vermont uses the VTCAP (Vermont Comprehensive Assessment Program): the Smarter Balanced ELA and math tests in grades 3–8 and grade 9, plus the VSA (Vermont Science Assessment). Run by the Vermont Agency of Education. There's no exit-exam gate.

WHICH TESTS, WHICH GRADES

- ✓ **Smarter Balanced — ELA & Math** — Grades 3–8 and grade 9 (computer-adaptive with a performance task)
- ✓ **Vermont Science Assessment (VSA)** — Grades 5, 8, and 11
- ✓ **PSAT/SAT** — Offered in high school (a college-usable score)
- ✓ **Vermont Alternate** — For eligible students

FORMAT & SUBJECTS

The VTCAP Smarter Balanced tests are computer-adaptive ; the VSA is computer-based.

IS PASSING REQUIRED TO GRADUATE?

No exit-exam gate. Vermont doesn't require passing a state test to graduate; districts set course and proficiency-based graduation requirements. Confirm your school's current diploma requirements.

HOW IT'S SCORED

Smarter Balanced reports four levels (Level 3+ meets standard); the VSA reports science achievement levels.



AT A GLANCE

System	VTCAP
ELA/Math	Smarter Balanced gr 3–8 & 9
Science	VSA gr 5, 8, 11
Also	PSAT offered in HS
Grad requirement?	No exit-exam gate
Format	Computer-adaptive

TESTING WINDOWS

VTCAP testing runs in a spring window set by each district.

HOW TO PREPARE

- ✓ **Practice & training tests** — The state provides free practice tests for the computer-adaptive format
- ✓ **Apply skills** — Smarter Balanced rewards reasoning across standards

PARTICIPATION & OPTING OUT

Students in tested grades participate. Ask your district about make-up windows and any questions.

ACCOMMODATIONS & MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS

Accommodations follow a student's IEP or 504 plan ; eligible students take the state's alternate assessment. Multilingual learners take an English proficiency test (WIDA ACCESS or the state equivalent) and may receive designated supports.

READ VERMONT'S FULL STATE TESTING GUIDE
tools.k12academics.com



Graduation Requirements

AT A GLANCE

Vermont uses a proficiency-based graduation system: students earn a diploma by demonstrating proficiency against state standards (Proficiency-Based Graduation Requirements), not just seat time. There's no exit exam, and districts implement the specifics.

CREDIT & COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Vermont does not set a single statewide credit total — districts define proficiency-based requirements aligned to state standards across English, math, science, social studies, the arts, and more. Confirm your district's requirements.

TESTING TO GRADUATE

No exit exam. Vermont students take state assessments, but a passing score is not required to graduate. Proficiency is demonstrated through coursework and performance.

DIPLOMA TYPES & HONORS

Vermont issues a standard diploma, with the Seal of Biliteracy available. Districts may add honors.

ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS

The proficiency-based design lets students demonstrate learning through projects, portfolios, and performance — with flexible pathways to proficiency.



AT A GLANCE

Model	Proficiency-based diploma
Exit exam?	No
Demonstrate	Proficiency in required areas
Districts	Set specifics
Confirm with	Your district

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- ✓ **How many credits does Vermont require?** — The state sets a minimum, but your district may require more — confirm locally.
- ✓ **Does Vermont require a test to graduate?** — No — Vermont is proficiency-based; a passing test score is not required to graduate.
- ✓ **Are there different diploma types?** — Yes — plus honors designations and seals; see the diplomas section.
- ✓ **What if my student is behind on credits?** — Talk to the counselor about credit recovery and alternative pathways.
- ✓ **Where do I confirm the exact requirements?** — Your school counselor, district, and the state department of education.

READ VERMONT'S FULL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS GUIDE
tools.k12academics.com



Accountability & Report Cards

AT A GLANCE

Vermont publishes school data and conducts Education Quality Reviews , and identifies lower-performing schools for support under ESSA — rather than assigning a single letter grade or star rating.

HOW THIS STATE RATES SCHOOLS

Vermont reports proficiency, growth, graduation, English-learner progress, and school-quality measures , and identifies schools for comprehensive or targeted support . It also uses Education Quality Standards reviews. Read across the indicators and any support status.

WHAT GETS MEASURED

- ✓ **Academic achievement** — How students score on state tests (proficiency in reading/ELA and math)
- ✓ **Academic growth / progress** — How much students improve year to year — not just where they land
- ✓ **Graduation rate** — For high schools (the 4-year cohort rate)
- ✓ **English-learner progress** — How English learners are progressing toward proficiency
- ✓ **School quality / student success** — An extra indicator — often attendance/chronic absenteeism, college/career readiness, or similar

FINDING & READING THE REPORT CARD

Look up any school on the Vermont Education Dashboard / Snapshot (via the Agency of Education). Review the indicators (especially growth) and the trend.



AT A GLANCE

Format	Data reporting + support Identif...
No	Single grade or stars
Also	Education Quality Reviews
Tool	Vermont Education Dashboard
Look up at	education.vermont.gov

HOW FAMILIES SHOULD USE RATINGS

- ✓ **Read it in context** — A school's score reflects its students' circumstances too, not only its quality
- ✓ **Look at growth, not just scores** — Growth shows how much a school moves students — often more telling than raw proficiency
- ✓ **Check the trend** — Is the school improving over time?
- ✓ **Look past the summary** — Dig into the underlying data (subgroups, attendance, readiness)
- ✓ **Then visit** — Data raises questions; a visit answers them (see our guide on evaluating a school)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- ✓ **How does Vermont rate schools?** — Vermont uses data reporting and Education Quality Reviews plus federal support identification — not a single grade or stars.
- ✓ **What do the ratings measure?** — Test scores, growth, graduation rate, English-learner progress, and a school-quality indicator.
- ✓ **Where do I look up my school?** — On the state's official report-card portal (see below).
- ✓ **Should I choose a school by its rating alone?** — No — use it as a starting point, weigh growth and context, and visit.
- ✓ **What are CSI and TSI?** — Federal labels for schools flagged for Comprehensive or Targeted Support and Improvement.

READ VERMONT'S FULL ACCOUNTABILITY & REPORT CARDS GUIDE
tools.k12academics.com



School Choice

AT A GLANCE

Vermont has one of the oldest town tuitioning systems in the country: towns that do not operate their own public school at certain grade levels pay tuition for their students to attend another public school or an approved independent school. Since *Carson v. Makin* (2022), eligible independent schools can include religious schools.

THIS STATE'S CHOICE PROGRAMS

Under town tuitioning, if your town doesn't run a school for your child's grade, it pays tuition to a public or approved independent school you choose (up to a set amount). This is geographically specific — it applies to students in "tuition towns," not all Vermont families. Vermont does not have a statewide ESA or voucher for everyone.

ELIGIBILITY

Town tuitioning applies to students who live in a town without its own public school for their grade level. Whether you qualify depends on your town. Confirm with your district / supervisory union.

APPLYING

Work through your school district / supervisory union to use town tuitioning. Confirm eligibility, approved schools, and tuition amounts.



AT A GLANCE

Program	Town tuitioning
How	Towns without schools pay tuition...
Since Carson v. Makin	Can include religious schools
No	Statewide ESA or voucher
Confirm with	Your school district / SU

PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE, TOO

- ✓ **Open enrollment / transfers** — Attend a public school outside your zone, where allowed (see our finding-your-school guide)
- ✓ **Charter schools** — Tuition-free public schools of choice (where available)
- ✓ **Magnet schools** — Tuition-free public schools with a specialized focus
- ✓ **Homeschooling** — Legal in all 50 states (rules vary)

LEGAL & LEGISLATIVE STATUS

After Carson v. Makin (2022), Vermont cannot exclude religious schools from tuitioning solely because they are religious. Confirm the current rules with your district.

READ VERMONT'S FULL SCHOOL CHOICE GUIDE
tools.k12academics.com



Teacher Certification

HOW LICENSURE WORKS HERE

Vermont licenses teachers through the Vermont Agency of Education . You complete an approved program, pass the required Praxis exams (and a reading test where applicable), and earn a Level I License , later a Level II License .

WHICH TESTS THIS STATE USES

- ✓ **Praxis Core** — Basic skills — or satisfied with qualifying scores
- ✓ **Praxis Subject Assessments** — Content test(s) for your endorsement area
- ✓ **Foundations of Reading** — Required for elementary and some other candidates
- ✓ **Note** — Requirements vary by endorsement — confirm your specific tests

WHAT YOU NEED TO GET LICENSED

- ✓ **A bachelor's degree** — From an accredited college or university
- ✓ **A state-approved teacher-preparation program** — Completed at a college or through an approved alternative route
- ✓ **Student teaching / clinical practice** — Supervised classroom experience
- ✓ **Pass the required exams** — See the exams section above
- ✓ **A background check** — Fingerprint-based criminal background check
- ✓ **Apply to the state** — Submit your application and documents to the licensing agency



AT A GLANCE

Agency	Vermont Agency of Education
Basic skills	Praxis Core (or qualifying score...
Content	Praxis Subject Assessments
Reading	Foundations of Reading (elementa...

OTHER PATHS INTO TEACHING

Most states offer alternative routes for career-changers and those with a degree in another field. In Vermont, these typically let you start teaching while completing licensure requirements — through district or university alternative-certification programs, residencies, or emergency/provisional permits. Requirements (and the exams) are...

RECIPROCITY & OUT-OF-STATE LICENSES

- ✓ **Interstate agreements** — Most states participate in the NASDTEC Interstate Agreement, which eases (but doesn't guarantee) recognition of an out-of-state license
- ✓ **You may still owe exams** — States often require you to meet their own testing (or coursework) requirements, sometimes within a grace period
- ✓ **Check both states** — Confirm the specific steps with Vermonts agency and your current state

READ VERMONT'S FULL TEACHER CERTIFICATION GUIDE
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Financial Aid

THE STATE AID PICTURE

Vermont's state aid is administered by the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation (VSAC) , with need-based grants and a free-community-college program for lower-income residents.

NEED-BASED STATE GRANTS

- ✓ **Vermont Grant (Incentive Grant)** — Vermont's main need-based grant for full-time residents at approved colleges (in-state and some out-of-state).
- ✓ **Vermont Advancement Grant** — Need-based aid for part-time Vermont students.
- ✓ **Non-Degree Grant** — For Vermonters taking courses toward job skills.

PROMISE & FREE-COLLEGE PROGRAMS

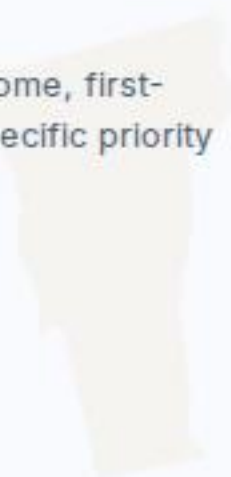
The 802 Opportunity Grant makes tuition free at the Community College of Vermont (CCV) for eligible residents with an adjusted gross income under a set threshold (around \$75,000).

COLLEGE SAVINGS (529 PLAN)

Vermont's VHEIP (Vermont Higher Education Investment Plan / VT 529) offers a state income tax credit for contributions.

DEADLINES & TIMING

State deadlines are typically much earlier than the federal FAFSA deadline , and some aid is first-come, first-served until funds run out. File the FAFSA as soon as it opens (in the fall) and confirm the state's specific priority date.



AT A GLANCE

Need-based	Vermont Grant
Free community college	802 Opportunity Grant (CCV)
Part-time	Advancement Grant
529 plan	VHEIP (VT 529)
Agency	VSAC

APPLYING & THE STATE AGENCY

- ✓ **File the FAFSA early** — It's the trigger for state grants and many scholarships
- ✓ **Register with Vermont Student Assistance Corporation** — Create the state agency's student account to track and claim awards
- ✓ **Confirm your details** — Verify residency, GPA, and enrollment as required
- ✓ **Meet any extra requirements** — Some programs need a separate form, GPA, or service commitment
- ✓ **Reapply every year** — State aid is awarded annually

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- ✓ **How do I get Vermont aid?** — File the FAFSA (and any state form) by the deadline; Vermont Student Assistance Corporation administers the programs.
- ✓ **Is it need-based or merit?** — Both — Vermont offers need-based and merit programs.
- ✓ **Are the deadlines earlier than federal?** — Usually yes — file early, as some aid is first-come.
- ✓ **Can I use it out of state?** — Most aid is for in-state schools (with exceptions); check each program.
- ✓ **Does this list private scholarships?** — No — this guide covers official programs only.

READ VERMONT'S FULL FINANCIAL AID GUIDE
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