

Opening available July 1, 2019

Head of School Thetford Academy • Thetford, Vermont

Thetford Academy is a classic New England “town academy”—a school with a public mission but an independent governance structure. While meeting the highest public school Education Quality Standards of the Vermont Agency of Education, the Academy also sustains the traditions and character of its 199-year history. Founded in 1819, Thetford Academy is Vermont’s oldest secondary school. Today, it serves approximately 300 students in grades 7 through 12.



Location and campus

Thetford Academy is located in central Vermont, in the vibrant Upper Connecticut River Valley—just minutes from the myriad cultural, educational, and recreational opportunities at Dartmouth College, as well as from Dartmouth-Hitchcock, a major academic medical center. The Town of Thetford is in a scenic, rural locale, yet it is easily accessible by two interstate highways; it is just over two hours by car to Boston, about three hours to Montreal, five hours to New York City, and an hour and a half to Burlington, Vermont.

The school sits on 295 acres of partially wooded land immediately adjacent to the 260-acre forested Thetford Hill State Park, which the Academy manages under an agreement

with the state. Both the Academy campus and the state park's acreage serve as a living outdoor classroom for Academy students. The properties are also jointly the site of an award-winning 5-kilometer cross-country trail, which hosts the Vermont State Championship and the Woods Trail Run, a major high school invitational, every year and the



New England Championship every five years. In the winter, the trail offers students, faculty, and the public some of the finest cross-country skiing in the area. In addition, some of New England's premier downhill skiing is just an hour's drive from Thetford, and numerous other recreational opportunities abound in the region.

The school's facilities include a recently renovated historic classroom building, a state-of-the-art theater that seats 220, a gymnasium built in 2011 that seats 400, a weight room, science labs that were renovated in 2011, a greenhouse, a timber-framed outdoor classroom, a heated yurt to house the Outdoor Education program, and more.

School culture and curriculum

Thetford Academy is known for its strong sense of community; each student receives individual attention in small classes, and teacher-student relationships are personal and supportive. Strong emphasis is placed on developing each student's individual goals, starting with the development of a Personal Learning Plan (PLP). The PLP is supported by the student's advisor, teachers, and guidance counselor.

The school serves students from across the academic spectrum. Over 90% of this year's graduates are continuing their education beyond high school, with



over 70% attending four-year colleges directly from the Academy, while other students enter the workforce or the military after they graduate. While recognizing this breadth of student aptitudes and interests, Thetford Academy's curriculum is intentionally not

track-based; we strive to keep our classes as diverse as possible. This choice not only sustains our sense of community, but also benefits each individual student.

Our broad range of learners is served by a strong special education department, as well as honors and embedded honors programs. The embedded honors program allows for a



range of student experiences within a single classroom by providing an additional challenge for those who seek it. We also offer award-winning Theater, Music, and Art programs (for example, the Academy won the Vermont Drama Council's 2018 One-Act Festival). Students in our Robotics program regularly achieve regional and national honors and have reached world-level competition every year since the program's inception. In addition, the Academy offers

an innovative Outdoor Education program; service learning opportunities; challenge courses (student-designed independent studies); and place-based, hands-on, and project-based learning. Furthermore, students are afforded opportunities for off-campus learning, including classes at Dartmouth College, programs at local technical centers, industry internships, and work-based learning.

Weekly all-school meetings, at which students from every grade are encouraged to speak up and share their concerns and accomplishments, further foster students' sense of being an integral part of a close-knit community. Several signature all-school events—from the annual Mountain Day (when students, teachers, administrators, and board members climb one of seven mountains visible from the campus) to service days, celebratory banquets, and festivals—also nurture the school's sense of community.



Thetford Academy is accredited both by the State of Vermont through the Public School Approval process and by the Independent Schools Commission of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. The Academy has 35 faculty members, 13 administrators, and 18 staff.

Student body

Thetford Academy has an open admissions process; anyone who wishes to attend is welcome to enroll. As a result, the student body—300 students in grades 7 through 12—represents a wide range of socioeconomic backgrounds and academic aspirations.



The Academy is the designated high school for the towns of Thetford and Strafford, Vermont, and it also serves students from 11 other nearby towns in Vermont and New Hampshire, plus up to a dozen international students. There are no boarding students at the Academy, but the school's International Student

Program recruits students to attend the Academy and live with local families. Currently, in 2018-19, there are three students from China and one from Korea; in recent years, there have also been international students from Africa and Europe, in addition to Asia.

Because of the school's small size, students have a multitude of opportunities for leadership; service; and participation in the arts, athletics, and other pursuits.

Mission and values

Thetford Academy's mission is "to celebrate the unique worth of all students, to nurture their strengths, and to challenge them to fulfill their potential."

The Academy also has five core values: excellence, commitment, cooperation, caring, and diversity.

And the school's learning principles hold that education should be active and engaging; reflective and thoughtful; varied and adaptive; safe and supportive; structured and coherent; and motivating and inspiring.

Above all, the Academy embraces the best practices of good teaching and learning. The faculty is completely committed to a comprehensive supervision and evaluation program that is designed to help every teacher be



ever more effective in the classroom and to be constantly improving their techniques to meet the needs and interests of their students.

Facts about the school then and now

Thetford Academy has had a progressive approach to education ever since its founding. The school admitted young women from the very start and sent some of its women graduates to college before most colleges in the country allowed women to matriculate. The Academy also admitted students of color before the Civil War.

Among the Academy's illustrious alumni is Justin Morrill, who as a member of the U.S. Congress sponsored the 1862 Morrill Land Grant College Act, signed into law by Abraham Lincoln. The act established federal funding for higher education in every state in the nation, making it a cornerstone of the United States' public universities.

In the 21st century, as Thetford Academy approaches its bicentennial, the school has been recognized with a wide array of honors and distinctions:

- Vermont and New England Drama Festival Invitee (2018)
- Cofounder, High-Tech Manufacturing Internship Program (2018)



- Counseling Office RAMP (Recognized ASCA [American School Counselor Association] Model Program)-designated (2018)
- Two participants annually in the Vermont Mathematics Initiative, a math leadership development program (2017-2018)
- Student selected as U.S. Presidential Scholar (2016)

- Faculty member selected for NEA Excellence in Teaching Award (2014)
- Vex Robotics World Championship Participant (2011-2018)
- Faculty member selected for Siemens STEM Institute Fellowship for Innovation in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Teaching (2011)
- Faculty member selected for Rowland Fellowship for Technology Integration Leadership (2010)
- Faculty member selected for Vermont Council of Teachers of Mathematics Outstanding Teacher Award (2009)
- Faculty member selected as State Finalist for Presidential Award for Excellence (2009)
- Highest score in Vermont on New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) 11th-grade reading test (2008)
- Arts Advocate of the Year Award (2006)
- National School Reform Faculty Demonstration Site (2005-2008)
- Vermont Non-Profit Centennial Award (2005)
- Vermont “High Schools on the Move” Demonstration Site (2005)
- Vermont Business Roundtable Medallion for “exemplary high student performance” (2004)

Application requirements

The Thetford Academy Board of Trustees invites applications for the position of Head of School, beginning July 1, 2019. We are seeking an individual with strengths and experience in these general areas:

1. We are looking for an energetic, dynamic individual with excellent interpersonal and communication skills, someone able to interact effectively—both in writing and in speaking—with faculty, staff, administrators, students, parents, and members of the board of trustees and to maintain and nurture a strong sense of community among these constituencies.

2. Although the Academy is governed as a private 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, it is a “town academy” with a strong public mission; accordingly, our community is defined very broadly. We are looking for a leader who is sensitive to the needs of our diverse constituencies and is able to develop mutual respect and foster strong channels of communication by listening carefully, soliciting feedback, and creating workable solutions to issues.

3. We are seeking a passionate educational leader who embraces the public mission of the “town academy” school model and who is committed to serving the academic and social needs of students at all learning levels.

4. We seek an academic leader who can inspire faculty and students alike. The Head of School will work closely with the Academic Dean and the faculty and must be responsi-

ble for maintaining a vibrant academic curriculum that challenges students at all levels and abilities to reach high levels of academic achievement and personal responsibility.

5. We seek a person who is committed to, and capable of, nurturing faculty development and growth.

6. We seek an individual with the skills to embrace an energetic, creative, and vigorous development program. Thetford Academy seeks philanthropic support that is consistent with and supportive of the core values and the public mission of the Academy. This includes working with the Director of Development, development staff, faculty, alumni, parents, and friends of the school to further a culture of philanthropy, increase financial support for the Academy, and develop a creative bicentennial development initiative.

7. We seek a Head of School who will be responsible for energizing a proactive and comprehensive student recruitment and retention program in order to increase enrollment at the Academy. This will include marketing efforts in nearby Vermont and New Hampshire towns, as well as continuing to build the International Student Program.

To learn more about Thetford Academy, visit:

www.thetfordacademy.org

www.thetfordacademy.org/employment-opportunities

Compensation package: Salary will be commensurate with experience and comparable to that of other similar positions. The expected range is \$120,000 to \$130,000. Total compensation also includes a full benefits package and an optional residence adjacent to the campus.

Applications must be submitted electronically through **www.schoolspring.com**. Print material may be requested later in the review process.

The review of applications will begin in September 2018. The search consultant will apprise all applicants of the progress of the search. Applications will be considered until November 1, 2018.

Questions about the position and the application process should be directed to:

Bob Stevens, Search Consultant

Vermont School Boards Association

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