

COMPASS JOURNAL

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DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Doing the Little Things Right

It's been a busy year at Compass. Schools are very human institutions and the lives of adolescents and adults are full of challenges and opportunities as we interact day after day. Compass is particularly dynamic, offering engaging "regular" classes in addition to all the "special" educational experiences such as Winterm, Project Week, Health Days, and Trips.

This year, in addition to our normal level of activity, we updated our long term strategic plan, won a major grant for health education, were up for our 5 year state approval, and are on the way to completing the biggest construction project in the school's history.

Through all this, there were many noteworthy accomplishments. Some of the more traditional school highlights included seniors being accepted at almost every college to which they applied and receiving over \$1 million in scholarship awards, having seven students accepted at Governor's Institute (the highest percentage of any school in Vermont), a stellar season for the soccer team, our 10th anniversary film festival with this year's entries once again rising to a high standard of production, the student edited middle school human rights newsletter, a successful trip to the DR for 11th graders that stretched students' boundaries, and the always impressive and moving roundtables for grades 8, 10, and 12.

While it is easy to recognize high profile events, many of the year's most significant achievements were experienced in more personal and individual contexts. Some examples that come to mind: a once shy student singing acapella at the variety show, another speaking from the heart to express admiration for Louise as she heads off for maternity leave, students participating as equals with a group of professionals in a health symposium, a middle schooler



Senior Roundtable

confidently teaching peers on a topic he studied, writing a well argued paper, doing lunch clean-up willingly and happily, winning the long jump on health day, playing endless hours of nukem with unparalleled sportsmanship, and being unfazed by the rain for a last day of class outdoor celebration.

There are countless moments throughout the year when an individual student demonstrates maturity, insight, thoughtfulness, caring, dedication, persistence, creativity, humor, grace, and any number of other qualities that don't necessarily show up on a standardized test, but are essential to creating the kind of individuals and society we hope for.

Sometimes, the most challenging events lead us to be more honest with ourselves and others, share our feelings, ask for support, and wrestle with ambiguity. Through several deep and open conversations among students and teachers, we are seeing the

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Class of 2014 and Their Diplomas

I'll be leaving Compass and heading to Northeastern University. It's going to be at least as big a change as I experienced when I came to Compass—except this time, I'm not scared at all. I don't know what lies ahead, but I am confident I can handle whatever gets thrown my way.

- Ari Fox, Grade 12



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Sean's Cross Country Bike Trip

ALUMNI PROFILE

SEAN HENNIGAN - CLASS OF 2011

Current Location: Endicott College **Major:** Biotechnology

What you are doing now: I am currently working towards a bachelor's in Biotechnology/Biology at Endicott College, focusing on either public health or medicine. This upcoming fall I spend 4 months in Fiji constructing HIV/AIDS outreach programs and working with the locals on their health issues. I am also doing a senior thesis on the molecular components of tissue engineering.

Since Compass: I have really grown, as the school was a catalyst for self-exploration and pursuing challenges. I have done two internships in health-care related fields (oncology at Brattleboro Memorial Hospital and the medical center at Cheshire County Correctional Facility), both which were outside my comfort zone. I biked across the northern tier of the United States this summer, a tiring journey that required an immense amount of inspiration. I turned to my Compass trip to Ecuador, reminding myself that the unknown should not be something to avoid. I also became President of LIGHThouse Leadership Society and the Endicott Environmental Society, both required teamwork and emotional commitment that Compass helped me see in myself.

Favorite Compass Memory: Spelunking with everyone in Ecuador. The inch long thorns, narrow caves, and swimming through flood caves have made for some of the best memories of my high school years.

How Compass has helped you in your current life? I was/am/will be shy with certain groups. Compass gave me enough confidence to work towards meeting new people and put myself out no matter the company. It taught me to push forward no matter the barriers in front of you and try to forget the odds.

What you tell others now about Compass: It certainly has a strange atmosphere; if you try to fit in you are almost the oddball out. The school and its student body encourages uniqueness; be yourself and they will accept you then - that's a powerful thing that makes Compass certainly special.

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need and opportunity to “re-form” the Compass program.

The Compass program has been exceptional in creating well-rounded, interesting, vibrant graduates prepared for the world beyond our high school walls. Since the school's founding, students have been part of creating the educational program, along with teachers, the board, and parents. This consistently lends a sense of dynamism and ownership to our school culture.

As we conclude our 15th year, we realize our current group of students have missed some of this dynamic as so much of the program was established before their arrival.

With the new building project, some staff changes, and years of experience with curriculum, we envision great possibility to consider some changes to best serve this particular group of students at this particular time. We may be ready to return to some of the original ideas about personalized learning from the school's founding, finding even more ways to allow students to pursue individual interests.

A planning retreat scheduled for the week after school ends will bring together staff, students, and parents to consider possibilities for rethinking some of our curriculum and structure. One idea being developed is what I am calling “accomplishment-based

learning”--defining the accomplishments we expect to see from graduates and supporting students achieving these in more individualized ways.

As the world becomes ever more complex, our educational program needs to adapt to prepare students for this dynamic. Based on our decade and a half of experience, we know better what we expect to see from our graduates to be ready for the world beyond the school's walls. Working together with students, faculty, and parents, we can continue to evolve the Compass program to embody the school mission to “inspire and educate students to gain the knowledge, skills, and personal qualities essential to pursuing their dreams and having a positive impact on the world.”

These last two years I have grown as a friend, as a leader, and as a student. I think that my friends and other have seen a great improvement in my life. I have learned the basics to a fun and healthy life ahead, and that is a great experience for a student in middle school. -Wesley Austin, grade 8



ANNUAL AWARDS

Volunteer of the Year

Mike Wilson
Stuart Stocker
Rob Guerrina

Governor's Institute 2014

Rachael Drinker
Jaya Solin
Taylor Drinker
Nolen Donovan
Theo Sutton
Quinn Oliver
Ren Chock

Friend of Compass Award

Andrea Ansevin-Allen

Vermont Honor Scholar

Ari Fox



Diploma Art



Laying the Foundation of the New Construction

COLLEGE ACCEPTANCES 2014

College of the Atlantic
Eckerd College
Earlham College
Goucher College
Hampshire College

Johnson State College
Lawrence College
Northeastern University
Northland College
Ohio Wesleyan University

Prescott College
Smith College
Stevens Institute of Technology
University of Vermont
Unity College

Warren Wilson College
Worcester Polytechnic Institute



8th Grade Trip to Boston



Juniors with Family Stay Hosts in the Dominican Republic

NOTEWORTHY NEWS

Construction Update

On May 20, Compass celebrated the impressive progress on the building construction project. We were honored to host Lt. Governor Phil Scott, representatives from Senator Leahy and Sanders' offices, dignitaries from the USDA, and members of the design and construction teams, along with Compass board members, staff and students and members of the press. At a time when it seems fashionable to criticize government, it is affirming to work with such a responsive and supportive agency such as USDA Rural Development and to see the bipartisan support for their work and our school.

We are deeply immersed in construction of the new art space, science lab, and administrative offices. The walls are up and the new construction will be enclosed by school end. The summer will involve inside work, both replacing the ceiling and lights schoolwide and improving mechanical systems and energy efficiency throughout the building. We invite donations to support these important improvements and welcome help closer to September when we move back in and set up these new classrooms.

STEM Grants

Thanks to a generous donation from Compass board member Wilson Schreiber ('05), several students have received funding for STEM related independent work. Sydney Bobrow ('14) received funding for her bio-char senior project, Quinn Oliver ('16) got support for a summer of science pursuits with programs in Mexico and Vermont, and Connor Greene ('17) requested funding to build a computer for project week. The STEM grant is inspiring opportunities for students and teachers.

Awards for Compass Students

Quinn Oliver was awarded a scholarship to attend a 3-week marine biology study program in Mexico this summer that is run by the Experiment in International Living and made honorable mention in the Marlboro College Beautiful Minds contest. Ren Chock and Rachael Drinker have been recognized for their writing in the Vermont Regional Scholastic Art and Writing Competition. Franz Robert was selected as the pianist for the All-State jazz ensemble. Rachael Drinker and Theo Sutton earned honorable mentions for their work in the Brattleboro Student Art Show.

Holt Health Grant

Thanks to generous funding from the Fanny Ames Edna Louise Holt Fund, we have focused increased attention on health and wellness throughout the year. Our efforts include: a symposium for mental health professionals (along with Compass students, alumni, and teachers) to explore effective practices for working with teens, a year long pilot of health classes for grades 7-10, a substance free overnight lock-in framed by Olympic coach Hank Lange, a culminating Health Day led off by Olympian Sophie Caldwell, a family fun health event, a summer health course for teachers organized by the Center for Health and Learning, and on-going planning for health programming for next year.

Staff Changes

We offer our deepest appreciation to departing staff. Para-educators Ragan Anderson and Tim Clark have contributed to the school in countless ways including classroom support, tutoring individual students, teaching classes, and engagement in our variety of Compass events. Amir Flesher will be leaving after being with us the past seven years and will leave big shoes to fill. We will miss Amir's intelligence, insight, questioning, humor, and spirit. We are hopeful he will continue to be connected to Compass as he pursues his interest in teaching mindfulness in schools. Janet Van Alstyne, who has been the heart of student support services for over a decade, is moving to a new professional growth opportunity to build on her recently completed MEd. leadership degree. It is impossible to overstate our appreciation for all Janet has contributed at Compass, and we wish her the best in her next adventure. With Janet remaining in the area, we are confident she will always be part of the Compass community.

In high school I have become a traveler, an independent learner, and more socially outgoing. I hope to continue this growth as I progress in life. I will always fondly remember Compass even when I'm sailing in the sea of life.

-Adam Sawyer, Grade 12



Sydney Presents her Senior Project

SENIOR PROJECTS

Sydney Bobrow From the Amazon to New England: A Case Study in Ecological Restoration.

Ari Fox Teaching Applied Mathematics: What does research and professional work in the field of mathematics actually look like?

Jordan Hom Photography: What is the process of planning, producing, and exhibiting an art show?

Adam Sawyer Therapeutic Riding and Instruction: A Career Exploration



Middle School Journal



Travis on 7th Grade Cape Cod Trip



THANK YOU, COMPASS DONORS!

The following people, foundations and businesses have contributed via donations or grants to our Annual Fund and Scholarship Program. These generous contributions enable us to provide life-changing educational experiences for students who wouldn't otherwise been able to attend Compass. We also thank those donors who directed their gifts to the furnishing and equipping of the arts and science spaces in the new addition.

Individuals

Anderson, J. Eric
 Atsalis, Katina
 Augusta, Karen
 Baldo, Elizabeth & John
 Bedros, Shirley & Aram
 Bingham, Diana
 Blake, Roxane M.
 Bloch, Lisa
 Bourne, Elizabeth W.
 Brooks, Teri
 Clark, Ronnie & Sandra
 Copeland, Mary Ellen & Anthes, Ed
 Cowan, Rick
 Cramer, Maera
 Cramer, Michael & Washburn,
 Crystal
 Donovan, Billy, Nolen & John
 Donovan, Jaime
 Dorman, Dean
 Dorman, Thomas
 Drinker, Phil & Beth Ann
 Edwards, Ross
 Ewing, Thomas
 Flesher, Amir
 Gentile, Ralph

Galbraith, Peter
 Gianotti, Laura & Dean
 Gordon, Rick & Elaine
 Gordon, Herbert & Shirley
 Gordon, Marcia
 Guarino, Susan
 Handy, Charmion & James Saunders
 Hazlebeck, Patricia
 Hodson, Louise
 Huber, J. Parker
 Kane, Paul
 Kincaid-Brown, Constance
 Kovaleff, Nancy & Theodore
 Lowell, Thomas
 MacArthur, Lauren E.
 McGonagle, Elizabeth & David
 Moryl, Polli
 Ostebo, Ryan & Hepburn, Mary
 Payne, Susan
 Peake, Matthew & Goldman, Leslie
 Pilette, Anna & Ron
 Ramsey, Tina & Michael
 Rhomberg, Lynn
 Rinder, Craig & Linda
 Ryan, M. Sue & Anthony
 Saunders, Lucas

Scherer, Alice & Mark
 Schreiber, Wilson
 Shaw, Rachael & Bryan
 Shuman, Eileen & Richard
 Singleton-Spencer, Atreyu
 Snyder, Melissa & Steven
 Steckler, Philip & Marcia
 Stern, Meg
 Sutton, Eaddy
 Swanson, Suzanne
 Swing, Devereux
 Szuch, Julie
 Taylor, Julia
 Temple, Peter
 VanAlstyne, Janet & David
 VanOrder, Lillian & Bill
 Wilson, Laurie & Michael
 Wimberger, Margaret
 Wojcik, Janice E.
 Wojcik, Richard J.
 Zuser, Alexandra

Businesses

Business and Tax Consultants
 Chroma Technology Corporation
 Northwestern Mutual Insurance Co.
 Joy Wah Restaurant
 Ramsay MacLaren
 The Richards Group
 Westminster Auto Service

Foundations and Trusts

The Clowes Fund, Inc.
 George A. Dascomb Trust
 Fanny Holt Ames & Edna Louise
 Holt Fund
 NGM Charitable Foundation
 McKenzie Family Foundation

Gifts in Kind Donors

Phil Drinker
 Steve Holmes
 Suzie and Jack Peters
 Andrew Smith
 Stu Stocker
 Hal Wilkins
 Mike Wilson

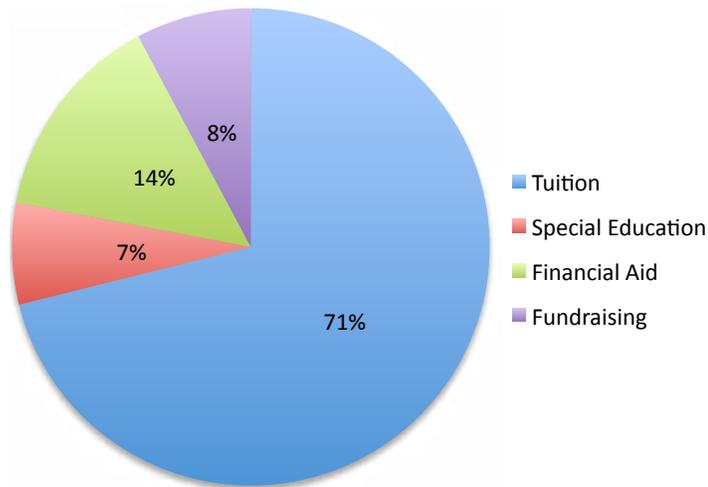




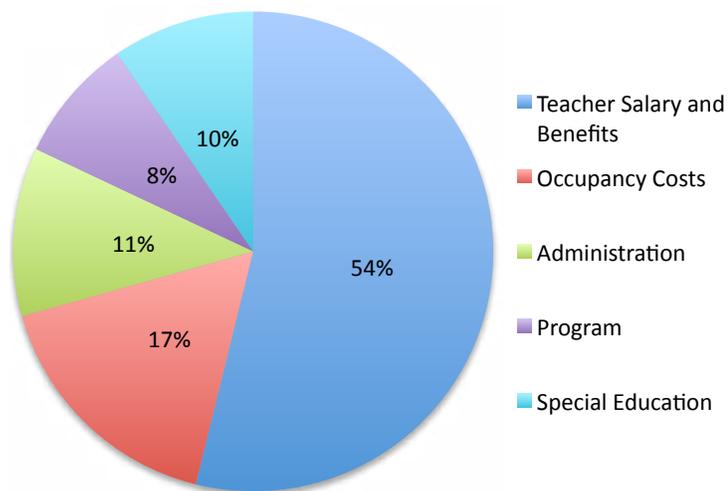
BUDGET OVERVIEW

Compass provides a rich program on a frugal budget. It's a tribute to all who make so much wonderful learning happen with limited funds.

Income (\$1,090,000)



Expenses (\$1,090,000)



Jessie working on the new school sign



Chess Playing during quiet time on Health Day



Modern Henna Face Painting



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PARTING THOUGHTS

Compass saw something in me that I didn't see in myself then. It was my drive—my dreams and my determination. I wanted to succeed and Compass was there to support me. I value the way in which the Compass curriculum is organized—into five different, very integral realms of learning. Each realm reflects part of my learning and my journey. Each realm is a mirror where I see myself as a student and as an individual who values learning and loves to learn. Compass teaches those facets of an individual that are essential to a solid base of continuous life-long learning and development.

-Sydney Bobrow, Grade 12

THE SECRET OF COMPASS SCHOOL'S SUCCESS?



Health Day Food Preparation Contest

I would be lying if I said my first year at Compass was easy. But amidst the challenges of seeking the funds and students needed to continue this noble endeavor, I think I've discovered what makes this place work.

Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky's Theory of Social Development holds that social interaction precedes development. In his words, "Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people and then inside the child."

Given my job as recruiter, fundraiser and public relations guy for Compass, it's taken a long time for me to reach this understanding. Relationship-based education can look messy and my admission director persona still occasionally winces at the apparent chaos of the Big Room. But after a year in the saddle, I've come to understand that what looks like chaos often reflects dynamic interaction and active engagement. What I've learned is that powerful and authentic teacher-student relationships are the secret of this school's success.

Some random vignettes from a Compass day:

- Eric Rhomberg practicing with student guitarists, drummers, keyboard players and singers in the music room, learning new licks from the kids as he shares his talent with them. A previously shy and retiring young woman stands at the microphone and belts out a rock classic, confident that her affirming bandmates are right behind her.
- Alexandra Zuser's suggested "translation" of more affirming phrases for her students to say as they confront the challenges of mathematics.
- Brian Whitehouse in animated discussion with students as they cluster on the floor, intently playing Magic: The Gathering card game.
- Ron Bos-Lun lovingly yet firmly explaining to middle schoolers how they must listen to him and one another for learning to proceed.
- Julia Taylor's gentle, ironic humor guiding student writers as they seek to find their voices and improve the mechanics and style of their writing.
- Seeing pride in the eyes of 7th and 8th graders as I compliment them on the brilliant Human Rights Newsletter they published under the guidance of Gabe Allen-Fahlander and Ragan Anderson.
- Rick Gordon holding a metaphorical mirror up to students sent to his office, helping them to see how their behavior may have caused hurt, distraction or disruption.

More regimented and hierarchical schools may be neater and quieter but Lev Vyotsky and I doubt that they impart skills and nurture creativity and growth as well as a place like Compass does.

-Rick Cowan, Director of Admissions and Development