



## American Community School of Abu Dhabi

American community school chooses VHS to help deliver a more well-rounded global education

Considered to be one of the most modern cities in the world, Abu Dhabi is also thought to be one of the greatest metropolises of our time. It is home to just over 400,000 citizens, each with an average net worth of over \$15 million thanks to its status as one of the world's largest oil producers. It's no wonder that this great city, celebrated for its culture and architecture, plays host to people from all over the world. The employment and investment opportunities in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) are so attractive that expatriates outnumber Emiratis eleven to one with approximately 40,000 hailing from the United States.

Since 1995, the American Community School of Abu Dhabi has been serving the needs of parents and students. Chartered to give priority admission to U.S. nationals, enrollment is open to all English-speaking students who are likely to successfully complete a challenging college prep curriculum. Like the city in which it's based, the not for profit private, International Baccalaureate (IB) diploma school welcomes over 1,000 students in grades kindergarten through 12 who represent 49 unique nationalities, as well as hails teachers from all over the world. Few schools today embody the concept of a global education more than the American Community School of Abu Dhabi.

By 2006, the school began being challenged by its small stature. They wanted to offer more course options to their 350 high school students—in particular, Advanced Placement (AP®) courses and options for incoming seniors not eligible for IB classes, but were not able to do so given their existing staff and budgetary constraints. A former staff member knew of VHS from his work at another international school and suggested a membership.

In 2006, the school became a member of VHS through the organizations @IS School Consortium for small international schools. As a Consortium participant, the school was able to share resources with other international schools, and participate in VHS with fewer resources than it would otherwise occupy as a full-fledged member. Word of the program spread quickly through the student body as well as additional marketing via

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*Brian Turner, VHS Site Coordinator  
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parent nights and seats in the global classrooms filled up quickly. So quickly in fact, that the school determined immediately that they would become a full-fledged member of VHS. Today, in exchange for providing a VHS teacher, (who teaches a section of VHS' Video Game Design course) the American Community School of Abu Dhabi benefits from 15 student seats per semester.

Brian Turner, VHS Site Coordinator & K-12 Systems Integrator, came on board with the program upon successful completion of VHS' Site Coordinator Orientation (SCO) training. As a Site Coordinator, Turner ensures the program's success at the school by managing all technical and administrative aspects of VHS, and serves as the primary contact between their students, their school, and VHS faculty and staff.

Up until recently, students have self-selected to participate in the program however; the school is considering altering that procedure due to rising popularity and student interest in VHS online courses. Said Turner, "We're currently looking at defining the traits that make a successful VHS learner and filtering our VHS students based on these criteria to ensure that the students who are the best fit for the program get to participate. We're also looking at moving the Site Coordinator role to more of a student support role, which essentially are teachers here who instruct on colleges, careers and study skills. This is a highly directed study where the teacher checks in on all of the students' classes."

Since embarking on the program in 2006, many of the school's students have participated in VHS courses with high marks. "We like that VHS mirrors our philosophy and places a heavy emphasis on global collaboration. Students get an experience that is similar to what they get here in-person and that's important to us."

*The Virtual High School (VHS, Inc.), a non-profit leader in blended and online learning, offers a variety of programs and curriculum to meet the needs of schools, students, and families. To learn more visit [www.VHSLearning.org](http://www.VHSLearning.org).*