

# Youth Initiative High School

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## **Youth Initiative High School Teacher Development Program**

### **About Youth Initiative High School**

The Youth Initiative High School ([www.yihs.net](http://www.yihs.net)) is a unique independent high school with about 60 students located in the heart of the Driftless Area of rural southwestern Wisconsin. YIHS was founded in 1996 out of the collaborative initiative of a pioneering group of students, parents, and teachers. Today, YIHS continues to emphasize the development of student responsibility, initiative, and citizenship in all aspects of school life. Students are full voting members of the school community, serving alongside parents and faculty on the Board of Trustees and on all other committees. YIHS students also take responsibility for raising a significant part of the school's annual budget through a variety of independently organized fundraising activities.

Pedagogically, YIHS takes inspiration from the Waldorf curriculum, which is based on the ideas of Austrian philosopher Rudolf Steiner (1861 – 1925) and the school is an initiate member of the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA). Youth Initiative High School strives to integrate head, heart, and hands into the fabric of school life. On the basis of this philosophy, YIHS pursues a balance of academic rigor in the sciences, humanities, and foreign languages, compassion and cooperation in social life, and creativity and excellence in the practical and fine arts.

YIHS is an independent high school and does not receive substantial funds from federal, state, or local government. YIHS has a strong commitment to making holistic education accessible to all who seek it. Thus, tuition at YIHS is arranged on a flexible basis in order to enable students from families of all income levels to participate in the school, with several students each year working to pay their own tuition. YIHS also has a boarding program that hosts a number of boarding students each year from around the US and the world.

## **Introducing the Teacher Development Program**

The Youth Initiative Developing Teacher Program is a year-long opportunity for individuals seeking an immersion experience in the unique model of education practiced and developed at YIHS. People interested in learning more about student initiative in school governance, hands-on arts, nutrition, and manual skills curriculums, Waldorf education at the high school level, and about grassroots, non-profit, community-based organizations in general would all benefit greatly from this opportunity.

The goal for this program is to focus on educating and training new teachers on the Youth Initiative model. The Youth Initiative Teacher Development Intern will have the chance to learn about Waldorf education, Project Based Learning, as well as unique models of education used by the various faculty at YIHS. Participants will be expected to be engaged in the material on hand, accept responsibility in and outside of the classroom, and be willing to think critically about the school's pursuit of the highest quality education possible.

### **Program Details**

*Please note that the Youth Initiative High School Internship is not affiliated with any teacher certification or credential granting bodies and does not confer formal qualifications of any kind.*

The YIHS Internship is a 10-month program. Applicants should be prepared to arrive in Viroqua, Wisconsin by the middle of for faculty inservice and orientation activities. The school year ends with graduation in late May or early June. Interns will be offered a \$300 monthly stipend. The applicant could expect to be at school 20-25 hours a week. It is helpful but not necessary for an applicant to have a valid driver's license, and, ideally, a personal vehicle, since we are located in a rural community. Applicants should know that a criminal background check will be conducted as a part of the acceptance process and interns will be expected to uphold a high standard of personal conduct both within the school and within the community while participating in this program.

### **Three-Fold Approach to our Program**

Each aspect of program will be tailored to fit the applicant's abilities and needs as well as their interests.

#### **I. Experience: In the first semester the intern will**

- meet with a member of the YIHS Administrative staff to lay out a plan for the year
- participate as a chaperone for all-school camping trip (Dates to be Confirmed)
- serve on a minimum of two committees - Curriculum, and one of their choice
- attend Faculty Meeting regularly and one Board Meeting every trimester
- sit in on classes
  - record observations for personal use and provide feedback to the observed instructor
  - complete an student life "all-day" observation
- perform administrative tasks designed to both help the school as well as give the intern a better look into the running of our school

#### **II. Practice: In the first and second semester the intern will**

- guest-teach a class session or sessions with a current YIHS instructor
- co-teach a block with a current YIHS instructor
- plan and teach a block on their own
- become more involved as a faculty member in meetings and on committees
- begin mentoring students

### **III. Reflection: In the second semester the intern will:**

- create a Personal Capstone Project
  - at the beginning of the year the student will meet with their faculty mentor to help design and propose a personal thesis project that will be handed in and presented at the end of the school year. Each project will look to help applicants to think critically about their time at YIHS, both for personal growth and growth of the school. The details and structure of the program will be decided on during the first month of the applicants stay at YIHS.
- reflect in various manners, with each addition being collected in a binder
  - keep a journal of their observations, lesson plans, thoughts, etc.
  - create a portfolio of pedagogical influences throughout the year that can be carried forward
  - attend periodic meetings with their mentor for giving and receiving feedback
  - present two reflection sessions to faculty meeting on what the intern has perceived and experienced in our school

Some basic administrative assistance is also expected from our Teacher Development intern. These tasks may include but are not limited to office support, transportation support, and light cleaning and maintenance.