



THE GOVERNOR'S ACADEMY

ALFOND COASTAL RESEARCH CENTER AND BASS INSTITUTE



For over a decade, The Governor's Academy's science department has brought classes to the Parker River and Great Marsh to engage in hands-on learning.

Opened and launched in September 2023, the Bill '67 and Peter '71 Alfond Coastal Research Center and Bass Institute increase the Academy's focus on experiential and place-based learning, specifically in the marsh ecosystem.

The **ALFOND CENTER**, located on the northern edge of our campus, includes an aquatic laboratory fed by water drawn from the Parker River, classrooms, and accommodations for a scientist-in-residence. Experiential learning is about learning by doing, and the Alfond Center allows students in every grade to "get their hands dirty" with real-world data and projects.

The **BASS INSTITUTE** serves as the intellectual center of experiential teaching and research initiatives at Governor's. Learning deeply about the place where our school is located allows students to develop complex questions, design research, collaborate with organizations in the larger community, and develop a greater appreciation for our school's unique location.

Not limited to science, the Alfond Center and Bass Institute generate innovative intellectual experiences across the Academy's curriculum.

BASS INSTITUTE

AT THE GOVERNOR'S ACADEMY

Who are the Bass Institute's outreach partners?

Through partnerships with professionals in the field, Governor's students and faculty can work collaboratively on projects that involve real-world approaches and data.

Marine Biological Laboratory scientists partnered with chemistry faculty on a water quality testing project. MBL continuously takes high-quality water samples every 15 minutes from the Alford Center's dock using a YSI device. Chemistry students take similar data using Vernier equipment biannually, compare their data to MBL's findings, and discuss how concepts like gas laws, polarity, and acid/base theory can help them understand the health of the Parker River.

Lowell's Boat Shop, the oldest boat-building shop in America, taught a Visiting Professional Seminar Series for Governor's students. For eight weeks, students learned to build a 20-foot wooden surf dory using mostly hand tools. As they worked, students learned engineering and sculpting skills and also discussed the history of dory boats in the region. The finished dory will be part of the Academy's "fleet" of vessels and available for class-use this fall.

Mass Audubon scientists took biology students to Great Marsh sites on campus, taught them proper fieldwork techniques, and shared the importance of these data sets for the long-term health of the Great Marsh ecosystem. Remarkably, most ninth graders spent their first eight weeks of science class at Governor's outside in the Great Marsh contributing valuable data to ongoing research.

Other partners include **MassBays, MassZoos, the E.O Wilson Biodiversity Foundation, Essex County Greenbelt, Mere Point Oyster Company, Manship's Artists of the Great Marsh Program**, and **MIT Sea Grant**.



What projects has the Bass Institute been working on?

In October 2023, the Bass Institute partnered with the Museum of Ould Newbury to host the first **History and Culture of the Great Marsh Conference** at the Wilkie Center and Alford Center. Over 125 adults from the greater North Shore community attended the full-day event which featured talks such as: "Slavery and Memory in the Great Marsh" and "Splendour in the Grass: Art Inspired by the Great Marsh."

In the 2024-2025 school year, Governor's will pilot a new place-based class for our ninth graders called **New England Coastal History & Ecology**. The class will be co-taught by two faculty members, one each from the history and science departments, and is designed for students interested in digging deeper into the ecological, cultural, and social history of New England through a multidisciplinary approach. Field trips, guest speakers, and an emphasis on spending time in the local ecosystem will be cornerstones of the class.

In the spring of 2024, through the generosity of Peter Dorsey '69, P'08, '14, three senior Environmental Club leaders designed a **nature walk** that leads to the Alford Center. The students designed plaques with custom illustrations to highlight unique plant and animal life in the area and worked with groups of faculty on campus to execute their vision.

To learn more, please contact Bass Institute Director Erika Mitkus, emitkus@govsacademy.org



1 ELM STREET
BYFIELD, MA 01922

978.499.3120
ADMISSION@GOVSACADEMY.ORG

THEGOVERNORSACADEMY.ORG

THE
GOVERNOR'S
ACADEMY

