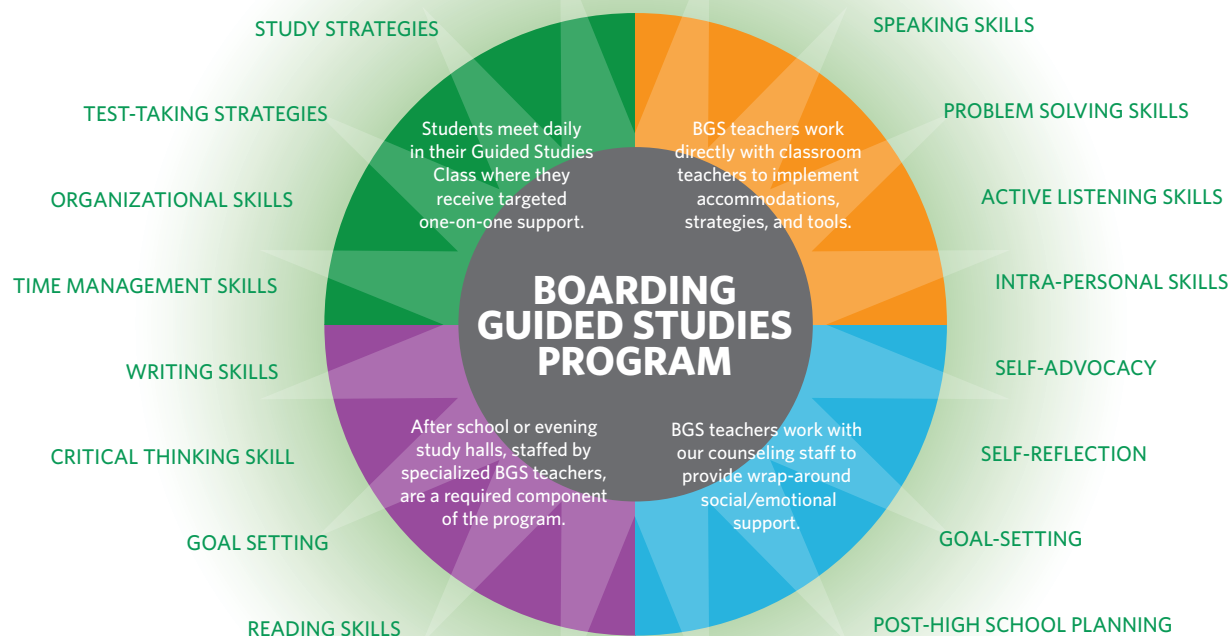


## Boarding Guided Studies Program

Our Boarding Guided Studies program is designed to foster and promote student growth through one-on-one instruction in a structured setting. All students focus on current class assignments as vehicles to build individual learning skills and strategies. BGS teachers serve as point people and advocate through their coordination of classroom accommodations and regular communication with other teachers, advisors, educational consultants, dormitory proctors, and advisors.

*"We are convinced that we made the best decision, and that we sent Santiago to the right school. You are always attentive to his needs and help him achieve his goals, overcome his fears, and direct him towards a goal."*

**BLANCA CONTRERAS MORA,**  
PARENT OF BOARDING GUIDED STUDIES STUDENT



**Jason Waldman**  
*Boarding Guided Studies*

My name is Jason Waldman and I am a graduating senior at St. Johnsbury Academy. Next year I am enrolled at the University of Denver and I fully believe that St. Johnsbury Academy helped me in helping myself reach my full potential.

Before SJA, I went to much smaller schools, including a smaller boarding school with only

35 students. When I arrived at St. Johnsbury Academy I was overwhelmed at first by the size of the school, the campus, and the dorms. I needed a lot of extra support due to my dyslexia and dysgraphia and I enrolled in the Boarding Guided Studies program to help me flourish in my academics. At first, I felt like I was taking a different path from everyone else, away from others, working toward a different goal. I soon realized that I was on the right path, in step with my peers, just taking an alternate route to get to the same place.

The Boarding Guided Studies program allowed me a block of time with the support of the BGS teachers to help me complete my homework. It was like having a block with a parent by your side helping you through your assignments. Mrs. Stark is kind, humorous, charismatic, and she appears to be one person doing 1000 people's jobs. Because of my work with her in GS, I was able to succeed and thrive academically and socially. I even graduated out of the Guided Studies after my junior year due to the skills I learned while in the program. I was ready to face senior year (and the rest of my life) on my own without that extra layer of support.

I've grown significantly as a student and feel as though my time here has prepared me for the future, specifically the coursework and lifestyle that awaits me at the University of Denver in the fall. Before SJA, I struggled to perform to the best of my ability in the classroom, specifically in math. Middle school was like a warm-up, my previous boarding school was a rough draft, and St. Johnsbury Academy feels like it was my final project. Through the help and support of the faculty and staff at SJA, including Mrs. Stark in Guided Studies, I feel as though I passed this final project with an A+.

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## Faculty Profiles



**Karen Stark**

Boarding Guided Studies  
Teacher

**Education**

MA from the University of  
Phoenix in Curriculum and  
Technology Integration

BA in Special Education from Daemen College

**Teaching Experience**

2009-present: Special Education Teacher,  
St. Johnsbury Academy

2007-2009: Special Education Teacher,  
Monroe Consolidated School District

2003-2007: Curriculum Coordinator,  
Cattaraugus Little Valley Central School

2001-2003: Grade 4 Teacher, Randolph  
Central School District

*"Early in my career, I participated in a program called 'Capturing Kids' Hearts' and it completely shifted my educational philosophy. The founder, Flip Flippen, states, 'If you have a child's heart, you have a child's mind.' To me, relationships matter. In my work with students in Boarding Guided Studies, I try to establish an environment that fosters and promotes connection and trust. It isn't easy for teenagers to be vulnerable, admit areas of struggle, and feel comfortable enough to seek out support. I try to strengthen relationships so that students feel more at ease in addressing areas of academic or social/emotional struggle. I also embrace student strengths and help students recognize their unique gifts. It is so important that students recognize their strengths and how they can utilize those strengths to achieve success."*



**Katy Smith**

ESL/Boarding Guided  
Studies Teacher

**Education**

MA in Education and  
Human Development: Special  
Education for Culturally and

Linguistically Diverse Learners from George  
Washington University

BA in English and Education from Colgate  
University

**Teaching experience**

2013-present: ESL Teacher, St. Johnsbury  
Academy

2003-2005: English Teacher, St. Johnsbury  
Academy

*"Our Boarding Guided Studies program is like a sanctuary; it is a structured place of encouragement, warmth, and care, that breath that our students need in the day. Here, we help hold our students to their individual academic and community responsibilities while mindfully supporting students' whole needs. Boarding Guided Studies is a space to listen, really listen, and I most appreciate the time I have for individual and group conversations with students. Sometimes these conversations are difficult, often fun, all valuable in their insight. I also appreciate the connections our Boarding Guided Students make with each other. In learning about the school and life experiences of others and in sharing personal experiences, our students are able to see and value multiple perspectives. These diverse perspectives illuminate connections and deepen our students' thinking about the world"*



**Jade Huntington**

Boarding Guided  
Studies Teacher

**Education**

MA in Developmental  
Counseling from Vanderbilt  
University

BS in Organizational Development from  
Vanderbilt University

**Experience**

2019 to present: Guided Studies Teacher  
Basketball Coach, Class Dean, St. Johnsbury  
Academy

2015-2019: Assistant Athletic Director,  
St. Johnsbury Academy

2010-2015: Athletic Director, Dean of  
Students, Thetford Academy

*"It is wonderfully rewarding work to spend time with our students in our small group setting of Boarding Guided Studies. The carefully crafted space and the philosophy of the course is purposely designed to create an atmosphere that is conducive to work completion and lends itself to many learning styles. We deliberately work to build trusting relationships with our students while holding them to high expectations, learning to be accountable for their own academic success through perseverance and awareness of their needs. The multiple layers of support by our expert special educators and teachers lays the foundation for our students to be successful."*

