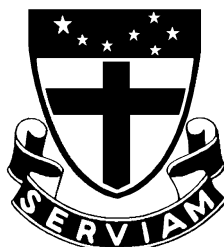


*Our Mission*

*Mount Merici Academy is dedicated to nurturing the whole child – mind, body and spirit – providing love and guidance so that students can achieve their personal best. In partnership with families, our mission is to instill Christ-centered values of respect, responsibility and self-discipline, teaching students in the Ursuline Serviam tradition of service to our community and the world.*

# **WELCOME TO MOUNT MERICI ACADEMY**



*Where a proud tradition  
embraces a promising future*

## **CURRICULUM OVERVIEW**

Upper Grade Teachers:

Mr. Nappi  
Mr. Nadeau  
Mrs. Smith  
Mrs. Young  
Mrs. Rispoli  
Mrs. Shoulta  
Mrs. Couturier

School Year: 2022 – 2023

<p align="center"><b>Sixth Grade</b></p> <p align="center"><b>Language Arts</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>Seventh Grade</b></p> <p align="center"><b>Language Arts</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>Eighth Grade</b></p> <p align="center"><b>Language Arts</b></p>
<p>Language Arts aims to enhance the reading and writing capabilities of students. Different formats of writing such as novels, poetry, and informational texts are used to improve reading comprehension and apply higher level thinking skills such as comparing and contrasting and using text to support ideas. Identifying and analyzing elements of fiction, such as plot and setting, and writer’s techniques, such as foreshadowing and imagery, will also be studied in relation to appropriate texts. Students will also work on deriving meaning of vocabulary words either through the context of these books. Students will be using the Six Trait Writing program as a framework for improving their writing skills. This program simplifies how to improve writing by describing the components of good writing. These descriptions allow students to assess and improve different styles of writing.</p>	<p>Students will delve more deeply into the meaning of modern and classic texts. They will engage actively in the processes of reading and writing and to develop an appreciation of both. Students will read a variety of short stories, poetry, and novels. Students will learn how to use higher order thinking to look beyond the surface of the text by doing character analysis and developing and defending their opinions both in class discussions and in their writing. The six traits of ideas, sentence fluency, organization, voice, word choice, and conventions of print will be developed in the writing of formal essays and other forms of written expression.</p>	<p>Language Arts in 8th grade focuses on promoting independence, appreciation of literature, and reinforcement of skills introduced in both 6th &amp; 7th grade. There will be more choice incorporated into the books that are studied and students will start discussing reading in student led groups. Close reading will be used in order to examine texts. Students will continue using the Six Trait Writing program as a framework for fine tuning their writing skills. This program simplifies how to improve writing by describing the components of good writing. The aspects of the traits that we address, particularly in conventions of print, voice, and sentence fluency, will be more sophisticated.</p>
<p align="center"><b>Social Studies</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>Social Studies</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>Social Studies</b></p>
<p>Surveys the development of the United States chronologically from Reconstruction, opening the West, the Industrial Age, Urbanization, the Progressive Era, WWI, WWII, the Cold War, The Civil Rights era, Vietnam, to the present through the study of geography, history, and modern world issues. Students will discover the nature of historical inquiry and assume the role of historian. Students will develop their critical thinking, researching skills and writing through a variety of assignments. Note taking, research, presentation, and writing skills will be highlighted.</p>	<p>Through the study of ancient and medieval civilizations students will understand the economy of ancient and medieval cultures and how goods and services were produced and distributed. Students will study geography through the concepts of location, place, movement, region, and human-environment interaction. They will develop historical thinking skills including chronological thinking and recognizing change over time. Cultures studied include Ancient Egypt and Kush, the Israelites, Ancient Greeks, Greek Civilization, Ancient India, Early China, Rome, the rise of Christianity and Islamic Civilization. We will also study current events through Junior Scholastic, an age appropriate current events publication.</p>	<p>Through the study of ancient and medieval civilizations students will understand the economy of ancient and medieval cultures and how goods and services were produced and distributed. Students will study geography through the concepts of location, place, movement, region, and human-environment interaction. They will develop historical thinking skills including chronological thinking and recognizing change over time. Cultures studied include Roman Civilization, rise of Christianity, Islamic Civilization, African Civilization, the Americas, Imperial China, Civilizations of Korea, Japan, and southeast Asia, Medieval Europe, Renaissance and Reformation, Age of Exploration, the Scientific Revolution and English Tenement, Political and Industrial Revolutions, Imperialism and WWI, WWII, the Cold War, and building today’s world. We will also study current events through Junior Scholastic, an age appropriate current events publication.</p>

<b>Earth and Space Science</b> <b>(every other year rotating with Life Science)</b>	<b>Life Science</b> <b>(every other year rotating with Earth and Space Science)</b>	<b>Physical Science</b>
<p>Students will study Earth Science with a focus on 5 units of study.</p> <p>Unit 1 explores the Earth through mapping, structure, minerals, rocks, weathering and soil and erosion and deposition.</p> <p>Unit 2 studies geologic changes including plate tectonics, earth dynamics, earthquakes and volcanoes and geological time.</p> <p>Unit 3 focuses on weather and climate by looking at the Earth's atmosphere, weather and climate.</p> <p>Unit 4 looks at water through oceans and freshwater and studies the properties of water and natural resources.</p> <p>Unit 5 explores the universe by looking at the sun, earth, and moon system, the solar system, and the stars and galaxies.</p> <p>Students will work independently and collaboratively to find creative solutions to authentic and complex problems. They will use resources, including technology, to conduct research, demonstrate critical thinking, and to communicate their findings.</p>	<p>Students will study Life Science with a focus on 5 units of study.</p> <p>Unit 1 studies the structure and function of life through classification, cell structure and function, organisms, genetics and the environment as it changes over time.</p> <p>Unit 2 looks at bacteria, viruses, protists, fungi, plant diversity and plant processes and reproduction.</p> <p>Unit 3 focuses on animals through diversity, structure and function and animal behavior and reproduction.</p> <p>Unit 4 involves the body systems including structure and movement, digestion and excretion, respiration and circulation, immunity and disease, control and coordination, and reproduction and development.</p> <p>Unit 5 explores interactions of life through matter and energy, populations and communities, biomes and ecosystems, and natural resources.</p> <p>Students will work independently and collaboratively to find creative solutions to authentic and complex problems. They will use resources, including technology, to conduct research, demonstrate critical thinking, and to communicate their findings.</p>	<p>Students will study Physical Science with a focus on 5 units of study.</p> <p>Unit 1 is Motion and Force. Students will learn the laws of motion, work and power and using simple machines, and forces and fluids.</p> <p>Unit 2 studies Energy and Matter including thermal energy, foundations of Chemistry, and states of matter.</p> <p>Unit 3 focuses on Properties of Matter through the study of atoms, the Periodic Table and the elements of chemical bonds.</p> <p>Unit 4 explores chemical reactions and equations, acid and bases, and carbon chemistry.</p> <p>Unit 5 is the study of waves, electricity, and magnetism.</p> <p>Students will work independently and collaboratively to find creative solutions to authentic and complex problems. They will use resources, including technology, to conduct research, demonstrate critical thinking, and to communicate their findings.</p>

# **LIBRARY TIME AT MOUNT MERICI ACADEMY**

## **General Library Curriculum**

### **PreK Through Grade Two**

Library time begins with a story at all grade levels. Choosing which book to read depends on several variables. First, the grade level of the class is considered. In grades PreK and kindergarten, a picture book is chosen. Sometimes the book will highlight a particular issue, such as getting along with each other. For instance, if children have been arguing on the recess playground, a book might be read that deals with friends cooperating and working out differences together. Christian values such as kindness, love, caring and respect are often threaded into the stories and discussed. Many times, humorous stories are read for fun. Holiday stories are always enjoyed at holiday times. In grades one and two, more advanced picture books are read, and chapter books are introduced. This gets many of the students interested in some of the more popular\beginning level chapter books that are available in the library. Students will also learn about and read nonfiction books. This helps them get an idea of what we have in the library collection, as well as enrich topics they are currently studying in their respective classrooms. At all levels, library skills are taught periodically throughout the year so that students know how to use a library for both research and enjoyment.

### **Grades Three Through Five**

In grades three through five, a variety of texts are read. Students will read picture books, chapter books, graphic novels, and sample novels with First Chapter Book Tastings. This is a wonderful way to get the older students interested in new authors or perhaps a certain genre of books such as mystery or historical fiction.

### **Junior High School Library**

The library for the middle school is available to all students wishing to conduct research or simply to choose a book for their enjoyment. The library is a great resource that can help students to develop skills in critical thinking, writing, and overall lifetime learning.

### **Statement of Philosophy – Library**

Library time is meant to provide students with two basics: one being to enhance a child's joy of reading and the other to learn the mechanics of using a library. In learning to use

the library, respect, cooperation, consideration, and responsibility are continually discussed and stressed.

### **Library Management Plan**

The library is a walking place.

Please use an inside voice.

Please respect our books.

### **Positive Reinforcement for Appropriate Behavior**

#### Verbal praise

Classroom teacher informed of a good library time

#### Consequences of Inappropriate Behavior

Verbal reminder of rules

Classroom teacher notified of behavior

Loss of following week's library time

## **FRENCH AT MOUNT MERICI ACADEMY**

### **General French Curriculum**

A Sequential FLES (Foreign Language Elementary School) Program is used at Mount Merici Academy. It is approached as an introduction to a foreign language in lower grades K through two. A sequential development of language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) begins and expands in grades three through eight, with an increasing emphasis conversational skills and grammar, and a cultural component that complements the thematic areas covered. Because of the time allocated to our course of study, moderate fluency can be expected of students who have been with our program for the full nine years.

Early levels of French begin with the basics, starting with the alphabet, numbers, days of the week, months of the year, colors, and basic conversation. Constant, varied repetition

of material is necessary in the study of any language, especially at the elementary level. Each lesson at every level begins with some basic conversational material.

In grades three and four, students acquire language via a storytelling approach known as TPRS: Total Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling. There is no textbook involved, but rather lists of target vocabulary that students acquire via physical gesturing, the telling and dramatizing of silly stories, and the reading aloud of stories familiar to the students. In this storytelling method, vocabulary is not learned in list form, but rather acquired as it is used in context. Students are exposed to grammar at this level, but grammar is not taught explicitly.

In grade five, the TPRS approach is continued at a point dependent upon where the class left off at the end of fourth grade. The TPRS method at this level gradually involves stories that are more free form than the highly controlled stories used in grades three and four. Grammar lessons and practice activities are also introduced with the goal being that this is done as naturally as possible and that the language learned is then used in communicative ways so that students can *acquire* it, rather than just *learn* it from a book-like lesson and rote worksheet practice.

Books are used in grades six through eight. The text used is a middle-school level book that is entitled *C'est à toi!* (It's your turn!). In this text, grammar is presented in an interesting format that makes it easy and interesting to learn. The book stresses the importance of the oral component of foreign language study and therefore promotes a great deal of class participation.

The text is supplemented with resources from other teacher-selected sources (1) in order to keep students interested and motivated, and (2) so that students gain as much practice as possible in the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing.

## **Kindergarten Through Grade Two**

Kindergarten, first and second grades meet once a week. The year begins with a look at the country of France: where it is in the world, the flag of the country and some basic geographical information. The alphabet, numbers, colors, days of the week, months, body parts, family vocabulary, food vocabulary, weather information and other basics are all taught at this level. The language is brought to life using songs, games, color sheets, and basic conversation. Concepts are introduced sequentially, with a high emphasis on listening skills and speaking in the French.

## Grades Three Through Eight

Grades three, four and five meet for 30 minutes, twice a week. This weekly hour gives the students a greater opportunity for growth in the language. The year begins with a look at the country of France. With each consecutive year of study, the country is considered in more detail, and the francophone world is also introduced. The grammatical content of the language study is also expanded accordingly, with a greater focus on grammar beginning in grade five when more explicit lessons on grammar points are introduced.

In grades three and four, the TPRS method, as referenced above, greatly develops aural skills and gives the students the opportunity to begin communicating in French in a very natural and fun way. Vocabulary is presented at the start of each “episode” (based on the *Raconte-moi* TPRS curricular series by Carol Gaab) and is (1) reinforced through conversational activities which help to make their experience more personal and (2) acquired through the creation, telling and dramatization of silly mini stories\*, culminating in an episode story about the misadventures of a rather bizarre cat.

Fifth grade sees a wrapping up of the Gabi stories depending on where the class left off at the end of fourth grade. The TPRS method\* continues based on the more advanced curricular series *Raconte-moi Encore!* as a springboard to using the language to communicate about oneself and one’s family and friends. Grammar is introduced and presented very simply and is reinforced with meaningful oral exercises to develop proficiency. All lessons and activities are designed to give students the opportunity to build on the aural/oral skills they started developing in previous years.

In grades six, seven and eight, the French 1 textbook entitled *C’est à Toi!* by EMC Publishing is both the home base and the springboard for language study. With each consecutive unit in the book, the students are guided to build upon what was previously taught, to expand their cultural knowledge, to build confidence and proficiency in the language and to feel successful in their study of French. Other sources are used to supplement the textbook so that language acquisition can occur in the most natural way possible within the confines of a classroom. Another goal during the middle school years is to continue a pen pal program with students in France, begun in 2019-2020. This program is an excellent cultural exchange that generates enthusiasm. Such pen pal correspondence continues from year to year insofar as the teacher can establish it reliably with the English teachers in France at the start of each school year.

By the end of their nine years of the study of French at Mount Merici, most MMA students can move into a French II program or to study another Romance Language with relative ease and success in any of the area high school.

## **Art at MMA**

Art instruction in the youngest grades (Pre-K – Grade 1) occurs seamlessly as part of activities and projects within the grade level classrooms. Students in grades two through eight experience a separate art class once per week for forty-five - sixty minutes with a teacher who joins them in their classrooms with all necessary supplies. In these art classes, students are met at their developmental level as they learn about the elements of visual art and design (line, color, shape, form, value, space, and texture) and create their own works of art using what they have learned about these essential elements and a variety of media. Brief artist and genre studies are often the springboard for learning about the elements of art and the media to be used in our artwork. Students typically begin the year in Art creating a class collaborative work (to be displayed within the halls of the school) and creating personalized portfolios for the safekeeping of their work as the year progresses. Since the 2020-2021 school year, students have shared their artistic creativity with residents of area nursing homes as part of our Serviam mission.

## **Music**

Throughout the music curriculum all students will be introduced to and become familiar with a variety of musical skills and concepts such as rhythm, melody, pitch, harmony, expression and articulation, musical genres, composing, instrument recognition, performance and audience etiquette. The music classroom will use a variety of instruments, songs and activities to help students reach their full musical potential.

### **Kindergarten through Second Grade**

In Kindergarten and first grade students will gain knowledge and understanding of musical skills and concepts by using classroom instruments, body percussion, solfege learning/singing folk songs, and responding to music with movement. Students will be introduced to pitch and melody, rhythm, orchestra instrument families, tempo, basic music notation and proper breathing techniques for singing.

### **Third Grade through Fifth Grade**

In Third grade through Fifth grade students will continue to develop their musical knowledge in rhythm, melody, music notation, solfege, proper singing/ instrument techniques, basic composition, orchestra instruments, and be introduced to different musical genres and composers. Students will also be able to work with a variety of instruments.



## **Sixth Grade through Eighth Grade**

At the junior high level, Students will focus their time on music theory and having the opportunity to apply their skills to different musical instruments. Such as a trumpet, clarinet, flute, saxophone, guitars, keyboards, and violins. Students will also have the opportunity to participate in a small choir to learn proper singing and performing techniques.

### **From Our Teachers**

**Mrs. Rispoli** - In my roles as Art and French Teacher at Mount Merici, I am fortunate to meet and get to know all our students, and for this, I feel very blessed. As Art Teacher, I seek to encourage creativity and originality with any and all materials at hand, as well as instill an appreciation for all types of art and a sense of confidence when it comes to artistic self-expression. I want students to understand that we are all artists in our own way: no one is bad at art. Our art lessons often spring from our reflections on past and present artists and various art genres, but sometimes they involve creative challenges or just plain tinkering like American artist Alexander Calder! Students regularly have their art displayed in the lobby and hallways of our school, as well as in the former chapel space of our neighboring Merici Woods senior housing community and at the Ticonic Gallery as part of the Waterville Creates Youth Art Month (YAM) in March. As French Teacher, I believe that everyone can acquire another language and I enjoy guiding students in their acquisition of French. For me, the keys to successful acquisition in a school setting are a respectful and non-threatening environment, a lot of repetition within a variety of meaningful activities across all modes of communication (listening, speaking, reading and writing), and the understanding within the class that mistakes are always okay and are important to the acquisition process. In today's world, being able to communicate in at least one other language is extremely valuable. It can open doors both professionally and personally and has been shown in studies to have a positive effect on cognitive development, including increased creativity and problem-solving skills. Anecdotally, I can also add that it can be a great confidence-booster. In French class, we learn to become effective communicators in the language; we also learn about other cultures in the francophone world. During the middle school years, I seek to establish pen pal relationships with francophone students abroad and enjoy seeing the connections students make. While they are living their lives as MMA students here every day, there are children their own age in countries around the world who are living their lives, and many are also learning English!

**Mrs. Smith** – “Give a person a fish and they eat for a day, teach them to fish and they eat for a lifetime.” I believe that students learn best by doing and having hands on activities in a classroom setting. I will strive to create an environment where the students can learn to be the best they can be and learn from mistakes that they make. I expect the students to be respectful of each other and the lab materials, and to be safe and obey the rules associated with all aspects of science labs. We will do daily instruction, classroom discussions, hands on projects, as well as weekly labs. As a parent of two MMA alumni, I appreciate the mission of Mount Merici Academy and will foster the Wiser-Stronger-Kinder motto every day.

**Mr. Nadeau**-My classroom is a place where great things happen and everyone is valued as a member of our learning community. It is a place where the learners are able to take risks and are not judged if mistakes are made. Students are allowed to burrow into ideas that they never thought their minds could handle. They get opportunities to grapple with real life problems and learn to overcome the hangups, mysterious traps, and the occasional monkey wrench that life throws their way through questioning and observation. Students in my class get a chance to harvest high quality information to help them formulate their own understandings about the world we live in. They not only get the chance to explore viable solutions but learn to collaborate and provide evidence that their solution, in fact, works and they can campaign to spread their knowledge to their peers in our classroom.

My classroom is student-centered and driven. The instruction is guided by the needs of the learners. Each lesson is strategically planned to meet as many learners' needs as possible as well as challenge others. We use a growth mindset when we converse about our learning knowing that not everyone knows everything yet, but we are working towards an end goal, becoming a better version of ourselves through learning.

As a leader in the school, I need to be visible in the school, and at community events. My interactions involve the many different people that make a school what it is (students, staff, administration, community members, etc.), and the need to see that I am there for not only students, but for everyone else as well. To show that students come first, I will advocate for them and always have their best interest at heart, whether it is disciplinarily, emotionally, educationally, or spiritually. If things need to be corrected, I will be open and discuss what I see, and hope that my students/staff will be open with me as well.

Maya Angelou once said, “I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.” I think if we all keep that in mind when dealing with school issues or trying to be leaders, we will have people become part of our mission “Putting students first.”

**Mr. Nappi-**Teaching is about the formation of a complete human person more than it is about teaching content. It's not the content of a class that is primary, it is the skills and life lessons that are transmitted through the content that are primary, and the content, which is still vital, is secondary. When this style of education is done correctly the content knowledge follows, but instead of being a boring requirement of the class it is an integrated part of the student's overall education. This perspective forms the foundation of my teaching philosophy and guides my classroom conduct and expectations.

To create and maintain an environment that is conducive to learning structure and cleanliness are required. When structure is lost students are more likely to get confused and academic results will fall. More importantly this loss of structure dismantles any opportunity for real personal growth, we cannot expect students to thrive in a chaotic and unpredictable environment. Therefore, I require that all students maintain clean working spaces and participate within the framework of the class to maintain a pleasant and organized environment where learning, and growth can take place, both personally and academically.

I do not believe in teaching material but in teaching students. Content wise I work to extract the technical skills and the valuable lessons out of history instead of simply learning dates and events. Outside of content I emphasize what it means to be human, how to learn on their own, and how to analyze and interpret conflicting information through the lens of a particular curriculum.

**Mrs. Young-** In Language Arts, students will continue to grow as lifelong readers, writers, speakers, and listeners. They will study a variety of texts, including poetry, nonfiction, drama, and fiction, and acquire critical thinking skills for complete, authentic understanding. Students will work as a class, with partners, and individually to interpret and gain meaning from text. They will communicate effectively and grow in empathy through analyzing different voices and stories. Learning will be scaffolded to meet the needs of all learners.

**Mrs. Shoulta-**I believe learning is a lifelong endeavor. It is my responsibility to encourage and prepare my students with the tools they will need to be successful in school and in life. I believe every child is a special and unique gift from God. As an educator, I must try to recognize the individuality of my students and to promote their emotional, academic, and social growth. Teaching in the Ursuline tradition will allow the students to grow spiritually and emotionally while learning in a safe and supportive environment.

Children are naturally curious and full of wonder. They seek answers to the most pressing serious and intellectual questions to the silliest of trivia. My role in the classroom is to guide their learning through a variety of teaching activities that not only present curriculum, but also teach academic discipline, creativity, love of God and life skills.

