

## **Educational Program**

### **Trillium Team Motto**

*“We’ll provide the magic, all we need is you!”*

### **Mission Statement**

Cultivating life long learners to be successful members of a competitive society by embracing academic excellence, strong character values, appreciation for culture and the Arts, and individual student passions.

### **Educational Philosophy**

The Academy is designed to develop culturally literate children while nurturing their sparks of curiosity, creativity, talent and intelligence. By stimulating a love and appreciation of the arts, the Academy will create a safe learning environment that will emphasize academic achievement, focusing on individual needs while maintaining a strong curriculum integrating the fine arts.

The goal of the Academy is to foster learning that leads to self-confident, independent thinkers, who are energized to learn as they strive for excellence. Students of the Academy will be placed in an environment that will meet their individual needs in specific areas of interest, with the specific intention of giving the student a sense of self-empowerment, within the framework of respecting the self and others.

### **Parent Commitment**

The Academy is founded on the belief that active parental involvement in the Academy program is a key component to student success. The Academy believes that in order for a student to reach his/her maximum potential, that parental support is essential. The Academy recognizes multiple ways for parent involvement including the Parent Educator Organization which meets in the AM and PM once a month, volunteering for lunch room assistance, mandatory parent teacher conferences, social events, assist in activity planning for classroom celebrations, chaperoning field trips, reading to students and various other ways.

The Academy also offers assistance to parents to working with their students at home. Parent Support Group meetings are offered once a week. This is an opportunity for parents to discuss issues and learn from each other ways to deal with different student behaviors. Parent development is also offered throughout the school year with topics ranging from dealing with ADHD to assisting with homework.

### **Fundraising**

The primary source of revenue for the Academy, this is an active piece throughout the school year. Activities include theme fundraisers, sales at performances, off-site activities and other fun events. Funds generated provide support for all school activities and groups. The committee will also coordinate specific fundraising activities requested by school clubs.

### **Communication**

Use all available resources (telephone, newsletter, e-mail, website and so forth) to provide information which will link teachers, staff, parents and the community. Assign department liaisons/teacher partners so that teachers and staff have adequate support to accomplish the Academy's mission and goals. Collect and track information from Parent Participation Hours Monthly Tally Sheets and report these hours to the Academy and families.

### **Special Events**

Plan, coordinate and oversee special events during the school year. This may include: orientation, back to school night, Halloween activities, graduations, dances sponsored by parents, prom, receptions, and cultural fairs.

### **Curriculum Planning**

A curriculum framework is necessary to develop lessons and to keep the school focused on the essential elements of instruction. Trillium Academy has adopted a curriculum framework which meets all of the standards and benchmarks set forth by the Michigan Department of Education including all Grade Level Content Expectations. The curriculum framework includes grade level objectives for all core content areas as well as Physical Education, Technology, Drama, Music, Visual Art, and Spanish.

The Academy has adopted the Career Pathway structure, choosing to focus on the Arts and Communication cluster. Teachers will organize their teaching and student learning to incorporate this structure into the children's daily school experience. The Career Pathway program is successfully utilized by other schools in the state of Michigan and has been successfully implemented at other academies.

The Academy is intended for students interested in furthering their exceptional talent in the fine arts area, but is not limited to students only interested in these areas. This is a broad-ranging field, involving many opportunities in the fine arts field and may expand into other career pathways. The following areas are supported, but are not exclusive to:

1. Foreign Language
2. Music
3. Production Technical Arts
4. Visual Arts
5. Theatre
6. General Education
7. College Preparatory Education

The goals of the Academy are to prepare students to further their abilities and talents to a level of professionalism in which students maximize their potential in the fine arts arena. Through the combined efforts of a caring, talented staff, outside professionals and the involvement of the parents, the Academy intends to nurture and stimulate the students desire to achieve their maximum potential.

At the Academy, the curriculum is dynamic in nature. Instead of presenting one concept on a timeline, a concept is presented at different times, in different degrees of difficulty and is integrated into multiple subjects. This allows students to develop an understanding of the concept when they are developmentally ready. The curriculum will be monitored through the continuous school improvement process to assure that all benchmarks in the Michigan Curriculum Framework are being introduced. To facilitate a dynamic “spiral” curriculum, many learning opportunities must be made available to children in a structured and prepared environment. This prepared environment is designed to facilitate the development of the children’s independence and sense of personal empowerment. This is the children’s community. They move freely within it, selecting work that captures their interest. In order to generate this interest and enthusiasm for learning, the Academy will create a learning culture.

To facilitate motivation and opportunities in learning, a learning culture will be created. The learning culture at the Academy is comprised of three distinct elements: 1) a climate of enthusiasm for learning; 2) appropriate opportunities for learning; and 3) the prepared environment.

Creating a climate of enthusiasm is accomplished by recognizing and rewarding positive student achievement and learning behaviors. Many systems have to be in place in the school to give all children the recognition and support they need to get excited about learning. The recognition system at the Academy is not designed to create competition, but to acknowledge a student for appropriate learning behaviors. This will begin with morning announcements. Children will be publicly recognized for some of their major learning accomplishments. The Academy will have a large wall called The Gallery of Greatness. On this wall will be the names and activities of children who have accomplished learning activities. The purpose of this wall is not to create a competitive atmosphere, but to recognize achievement. The Academy will incorporate many displays in which the work of children is showcased. Recognition revolves around the notion that the Academy is a family and that all children are recognized for their achievements.

The Montessori curriculum is organized into a spiral of integrated studies. In the early years, lessons are introduced simply and concretely and are reintroduced several times over succeeding years at increasing degrees of abstraction and complexity.

The course of study uses an integrated thematic approach that ties the separate disciplines of the curriculum together into studies of the physical universe, the world of nature and the human experience. The arts, literature, history, social issues, political science, economics, science and the study of technology all complement one another. This integrated approach is one of Montessori’s great strengths. As an example, when students study Africa, they also read African folktales, create African masks and make African block print dashikis in art, learn Swahili songs in music and traditional folk dances and study the ecosystems, flora, fauna and natural resources (Seldin, 1966).

Skill development, as opposed to memorization, is important in the Montessori system. Whenever possible, reading, writing and math skills are incorporated into applied

activities. Examples of applied activities could be software designed to teach skills in a game, format classroom games and puzzles, which require skill development and cross age tutoring.

### **Measurements**

Achieving high student performance through excellence in educational programs requires informed decision-making that results in continuous school improvement. Quality school improvement is driven by vision and requires the integration of several ongoing processes: curriculum development, professional development, and accreditation. These processes operate simultaneously as part of the larger system of continuous school improvement, and focus on improving student achievement in rigorous core curriculum content standards.

Continuous school improvement is a unifying process that keeps the Academy focused on its vision of high expectations for all students. It allows the Academy to coordinate the direction of other important processes. Target goals and strategies that emerge from the school improvement process guide the Academy's efforts to achieve educational excellence for all students. The Academy sets target cognitive goals as it evaluates the results of student achievement of core curriculum content standards and benchmarks. Strategies are then developed to improve student performance in targeted areas. (Taken from the Michigan Curriculum Framework)

The process of school improvement at the Academy will revolve around the Michigan Curriculum Standards and Benchmarks. At each school improvement meeting, teachers will discuss the benchmarks to determine if the activities they are incorporating in their classrooms are creating the desired outcome. Ongoing assessment strategies will be utilized to assure that individual students have met the desired outcome.

### **Special Education**

Montessori education at the Academy revolves around the notion that special education children need to be integrated into the regular classrooms; have developmentally appropriate materials; and be treated with respect. The Academy, to facilitate the IEPC process and to provide appropriate programming consistent with all applicable Federal and State regulations, will employ a special education/special needs resource room teacher. The resource room teacher will address special learning material and behavior plans as needed and as determined in the IEPC. This teacher will ensure that a continuum of service is available to special needs students. The teachers will continuously meet to facilitate programming for the special education/special needs students.

All special needs students will receive the support necessary to fulfill academic, emotional, physical, and social needs. The resources available will either be a staff member of the Trillium Academy or a contracted service provider. The Academy will

provide such services as speech and language, occupational therapy, social work services and more.

### **Montessori Structure**

The structure of the Academy affords an opportunity to retain a small school atmosphere within a large student body. Dr. Montessori referred to her first school as the “Children’s House.” Starting out, the Academy will be made up of four houses. Each house will represent three grade levels and the names will reference terms that Dr. Montessori utilized in the developmental process:

- The Concrete House Kindergarten
- The Imagination House First, Second & Third Grade
- The Creativity House Fourth, Fifth & Sixth Grade
- The Wisdom House Seventh & Eighth Grade

Each of the houses will be composed of two or three grade levels, excluding the Concrete House. A headmaster will guide each of the houses. The headmaster will be selected from one of the teachers in each of the houses. The headmaster will have time during the day to solve problems which arise in the house, including student discipline, scheduling conflicts, and curriculum concerns. Every other week, the headmasters will meet with the Academy principal for a school improvement discussion to align curriculum and provide unique educational opportunities.

### **Technology**

The Academy will provide advanced technology for discovery and applied learning. Students will utilize technology as a tool to promote their ideas. Students will have a system for digital photography, video, presentation software, word processing, communications and research. Parents will have access via the Internet to electronic portfolios showing all aspects of the student’s work. Cameras will be set up in classrooms so that teachers can have the option of creating a virtual classroom where parents can “tune-in” to observe special lessons or activities. The technological aspects of the Academy will be introduced over time, as our capacity to secure state-of-the-art equipment and technical support increases. Tech support and training will be available to parents to teach them how to access student portfolios, school information, etc. Technology will be incorporated in all subject areas. The Academy wants a very strong technological program for all students.

### **Exchange City and Earthworks**

Exchange City and Earthworks will be a special part of the school that will offer a hands-on learning experience with a focus on economics and entrepreneurs. Life skills will be taught through instructional methodologies of both classroom-based curriculum and real-life simulation. There are four main parts to this program: 1) teacher preparation 2)

student preparation 3) Exchange City visits 4) Follow-up. Exchange City ties into Dr. Montessori's belief that as students get older, they need a more practical education. She proposed that children move to the country and become involved in an agribusiness. This philosophy encompasses all of the 6 Career Pathways.

### **Mentoring Program**

Another opportunity that will be beneficial for the students is the mentoring program. The Academy will afford the students an opportunity to meet, get to know, question and experience role models in the student's specific specialized areas. This will help with future networking in the fine arts arena.

### **After School**

The Academy recognizes the need for children to continue learning after school, and for them to explore other interests. A wide variety of additional, fee-based and non-fee based educational enrichment and childcare programming for students and community will be offered. Before and after-school care will be a part of the school.

The Kid's College is an evening program that will be located at the school. The Kid's College will provide many enrichment activities, including: 1) a school band, 2) music lessons, 3) a learning center for students who need academic support, 4) a computer lab for lessons on the internet and other computer technology, 5) training in various sports, 6) dance lessons, 7) foreign language lessons and various other areas to assist in development of social, emotional, academic, and physical needs of students.

### **High School**

The high school program at Trillium Academy consists of seven four-year academic programs. Each student attending Trillium Academy in grades 9-12 will establish goals for a particular career path. The program allows students to gain insight and introduction to subject areas within a chosen career pathway. Students will choose the career pathway based on interest inventories taken before beginning the 9<sup>th</sup> grade year. A basic college preparatory program is the seventh option for those students uninterested in a particular career pathway program. Advisors that are assigned to the student will assist in setting class schedule, dual enrollment options, and internship opportunities.

#### *Academic Advisors:*

Advisors will be assigned to each student and will be present during homeroom hours. Students will meet each day in homeroom and have this opportunity to set up conferences for assistance in academic program. The Advisor will be assigned to the student for entire high school program. Advisors will assist with such things as choosing classes, enrolling for dual enrollment courses, and establishing and monitoring internships.

#### *Schedules:*

Schedules will be established by Administration with assistance from Academic Advisors. Elective schedules will be set based on availability of subject educator as well as number of students enrolled.

*Elective Courses:*

Each student will have an opportunity to take at least 1 elective course each trimester. Elective courses will be chosen for students based on student requests and Academic Advisory. Each program of study has a recommended list of elective courses. Students and Advisors will continually meet to decide on appropriate timing and selection of elective course. Dual enrollment and internships are included in this category. Both options are available based on need and progress of each student within the chosen academic pathway.

*Dual Enrollment:*

Dual enrollment courses are available to students based on academic need and progress. Dual enrollment consists of taking college level courses at a college level institution and receiving high school credit at the same time. Courses can be in any academic or elective area which is not offered at Trillium Academy. The fees for these classes are the responsibility of Academy and require Administration approval prior to registration for the courses. Transportation to the college is the responsibility of the student.

*Internships:*

Internships are available to those students in junior or senior year of the academic program. Internships consist of on-site learning through job shadowing and participating in activities of a real-world nature. During the internships, students will apply previous knowledge to a job-based situation and have a final project to relay understanding. Internships will be established by the Academic Advisor with approval by Administration. Transportation to the internship is the responsibility of the student.

*Graduation Requirements:*

Trillium graduation requirements are aligned to the Michigan Graduation Requirements. All students are required to complete 16 core academic courses four each of English Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies. Each course is 1 full year term and consists of 1.5 credits. This is an equivalent to 24 credits. Each student is required to complete, unless waived, 2 full term courses of a Foreign Language an equivalent to 3 credits. Each student is required to complete 1 trimester of Personal Finance. Each student is also required to complete 17 elective courses. Each elective course is a term of 1 Trimester and consists of .5 credits. This is an equivalent to 8.5 credits. Elective choices must include 3 P.E./Health course and 3 Fine and/or Performing Arts Course. At graduation a student is required to have 33 credits with the possibility of 36.