

MC² DISTINGUISHING (SPECIAL) CURRICULUM FEATURES

Learner Profile

Led by the advisors, learning teams (student, advisor, parents or guardians, and other relevant adults) work together to develop learning profiles for each student. Students and families are partners in this process, with students learning about their own learning and consciously developing and applying strategies for effectively managing their own learning experiences. Parents are provided information and training as well, and a common language is developed for talking collaboratively about students' learning. Ongoing analysis of each student's learning strengths and weaknesses combines with analysis of quantitative and qualitative data to provide a continually updated foundation for targeting supports, modifications and accommodations, while leveraging students' strengths and affinities.

MC² utilizes the state Early Warning System as well as other data monitoring to identify students put at risk of dropping out of school and for tracking and monitoring students' progress. Individualized transition planning will be part of every student's plan throughout their MC² experience, including school-to career planning and support services.

Standards/Competencies

State and national standards provide the footprint of our students' learning, with the Common Core Standards as the foundation. Standards from national academic organizations, such as National Science Teachers Association, National Council for Social Studies, and Modern Language Association, will be continually reviewed, aligned with New Hampshire state competencies and incorporated into MC² academic expectations. The Asia Society Global Competencies and Global Leadership Competencies are an explicit component of the MC² standards. All curriculum standards are correlated to Career Clusters, guiding students to explore relationships between academic learning and career, vocational, and recreational pathways.

Competencies are clustered in Key Stages: Primary (K - 2), Intermediate (3 - 5), Middle (6 - 8), High (9 - 12). Each Key Stage will be delineated by appropriate academic and social and emotional learning progressions, with clearly defined documentations for progress.

Learning Opportunities

Through a variety of ***project based and experiential learning*** opportunities, ranging from interdisciplinary classes to personal learning experiences, students work with teachers and mentors to design personally meaningful work that addresses curriculum standards while

infusing *global competencies*. Progress is *proficiency-based*, with clearly identified benchmarks and documentation requirements articulated and shared with students and parents/families. *Community based learning* is an integral component of our learning program, beginning with service learning for younger students and culminating in internships (and apprenticeships as appropriate) for older students.

There are four main types of learning opportunities at MC²: interdisciplinary classes, community based learning, treks, and personal life experiences.

● **Interdisciplinary classes (called learning studios):** Classes are designed based on students' needs, and focus on life-roles, relevant issues, and personal perspectives. Students integrate their knowledge and understanding through a variety of activities that promote critical thinking, collaboration, and self-reflection. Classes begin with an experience that connects students to the "essential question" or "big idea" of the course (example: "What does it mean to be human?" and "Are data always right?"). That experience is debriefed by the whole class, and then unpacked through learning around core knowledge and skills for that course. About halfway through the class, students identify topics of interest related to the class, and develop personalized projects with targeted goals for investigating specific areas of the course more in depth. Global competencies are intentionally infused throughout all domains of knowledge. Goals also target Habits of Lifelong Learning (detailed in section (g) below). Students are assessed based on their application and extension of the core knowledge and skills, as well as the specific Habits goals they set. Students are expected to meet or exceed MC² expectations for application, documentation, and defense demonstrating proficiency in competencies. The Critical Skills Program model from Antioch University serves as a basis for developing all students' will, knowledge, skill, and capacity to assume ownership and accountability for their learning over the course of their educational career.

- Literacy is developed through multiple strategies, including but not limited to:

- Linguistics Workshop Model: Workshops are highly structured, predictable, purposeful, and well planned: they allow for students to take initiative, create work, and learn in a way that is meaningful. Readers' and Writers' Workshop occur daily and are the heart of the reading and writing curriculum. Although students read and write throughout every component of the curriculum, this is where students are explicitly taught the strategies and habits of effective reading and writing, throughout all stages of their school career. Literacy Stations, Guided Reading, and Book Clubs: Depending on the needs of individualized students, they will be engaged in one or more small groups settings for further reinforcing and extending literacy skills and content, applying and developing fluency and comprehension skills, and engaging in literary response and analysis.

■ **Critical Literacy:** Critical literacy is the crucial link between the Linguistics Workshops and projects and community-based learning applications. Students are taught how to read

their work with a critical lens, using the Four Dimensions of Critical Literacy (as developed by Mitzi Lewison, Amy Seely Flint, and Katie Van Sluys [2003]): disrupting the commonplace, interrogating multiple viewpoints, focusing on sociopolitical issues, and taking action and promoting social justice, for the purpose of engaging students in looking at how to make the world they live in a better place.

- Numeracy is developed through multiple strategies, including but not limited to:
 - **Workshop Model:** Similar to Readers' and Writers' Workshop, the Numeracy Workshop are highly structured, predictable, purposeful, and well planned. Students are explicitly taught the essential concepts of numbers and computation, geometry, data analysis, probability, problem solving, measurement, and algebra. Through a series of investigations, students encounter and use important mathematical ideas, actively engaging in mathematical reasoning to solve complex mathematical problems.
 - **Active Explorations, Projects, and Math Clubs:** Depending on the needs of individualized students, they will be engaged in one or more small group settings for further reinforcing and extending numeracy skills and content, identifying problems and persisting in solving them, reasoning abstractly and quantitatively, constructing viable arguments and critiquing the reasoning of themselves, using appropriate tools, attending to precision, and modeling and making use of patterns and structure.
 - **Critical Numeracy:** Similar to critical literacy, students are taught how to view their work with a critical lens, applying the Four Dimensions of Critical Literacy to numeracy issues, particularly through applications and modeling of mathematical structures and patterns.

● **Community Based Learning** - Community based learning requirements help students find their place in the world as they explore service opportunities individually and in groups. In service learning opportunities, students identify areas of concern or need in their larger community and work with adults to enact positive change in the world. Career exploration will be an integrated component of community based learning, with students explore careers through a variety of developmentally appropriate experiences.

- ○ Primary and Intermediate Key Stages will highlight group Service Learning experiences, along with developmentally appropriate career explorations.
- ○ Middle Key Stage will engage students in group and individual Service Learning, with investigations and explorations of career clusters.
- ○ Division I and Division II Key Stage students will engage in individual and group Service Learning experiences. Career learning will expand to incorporate job shadows, internships, and for older students, dual enrollment and apprenticeships to discern areas of vocation, avocation and hobbies. Job shadows can be short visits or a series of interviews in a particular career cluster for the student to explore the area, and can lead to a longer-term Internship. Internships will involve students working in a one-on-one relationship with an adult mentor, doing real work

culminating in a project that adds value to the work environment while simultaneously evidencing students' application and mastery of their learning.

- **Treks:** Field experiences provide students opportunities to develop skills and apply learning in meaningful settings. Treks aim to engage students' sense of curiosity, wonder, and exploration while promoting lifelong learning and developing skills, knowledge, and good judgment. Treks may be initiated by students or teachers, and may be school-based or personal. All treks include pre-trek work, involving research, forming questions and, in some cases, hypotheses, and addressing logistical planning. Post-trek work is also required, where students reflect on the experience, analyze their information, and synthesize their learning into a final product (*e.g.* paper, project, presentation, etc.). Students are assessed based on their application and extension of content knowledge and skills, as well as specific related habits (detailed in section (g) below), including Management and Information and any additional Habit goals they set.
- **Personal life experiences:** Students will be encouraged to design Extended Learning Opportunities (ELOs) to earn academic credit for learning outside the MC² program. Each ELO plan will include clearly identified competencies, accountability and assessment checkpoints, and teacher and community mentors. All ELOs will meet or exceed MC² expectations for application, documentation, and defense of demonstrating proficiency in competencies.

Personal life experiences may include, but are not limited to, after school and recreational learning experiences, online courses, community college and continuing education courses, and vocational training such as Fire Explorers, Firefighter Training, and Nurse's Aide training.

Documentation of Learning

- Assessment of learning is based on shared responsibility, between academic and content/skill experts, and among the learning team. A strong emphasis is placed on formative and performance-based assessments, including portfolios and exhibitions of learning. Students are coached on developing responsibility for documenting and defending their learning in relation to the standards and identified academic and personal goals. Students are expected (and provided support) to communicate their learning through a variety of methods, including but not limited to, demonstration, informal and formal reflective writing, informal conversation and formal presentation, and both norm- referenced and criterion-referenced tests. Information

and communication technologies are essential tools in students' documentation process. An online learning management system provides the basis for timely feedback and communication to all members of the learning team and allows students to build a body of work for life. Student engagement in the learning management system begins in the early grades, through developmentally appropriate use of communications technology, including photos, scanned work, and audio and video clips, and increases in sophistication over students' educational careers.

Learning Community

- Advisories are the structural foundation for learning at MC². Students work with their learning teams to develop goal setting and project management, while learning how to maximize their learning strengths and improve weaknesses. Students identify long-term (quarterly) goals in their Individualized Learning Plans, and then set weekly targets for making progress toward their goals. The learning team consists of the student, parents and/or family members, and the advisor, with community partners/mentors as appropriate.
- MC² is an intentionally democratic community, with student voice at the center of the process. The school governance structure is designed to provide multiple opportunities for students to develop and practice using their voices to co-construct their learning community. Throughout all key stages, teachers solicit regular feedback from students, coach them on articulating their feedback so it is audible, credible, and actionable, and help them develop comfort with multiple perspectives.