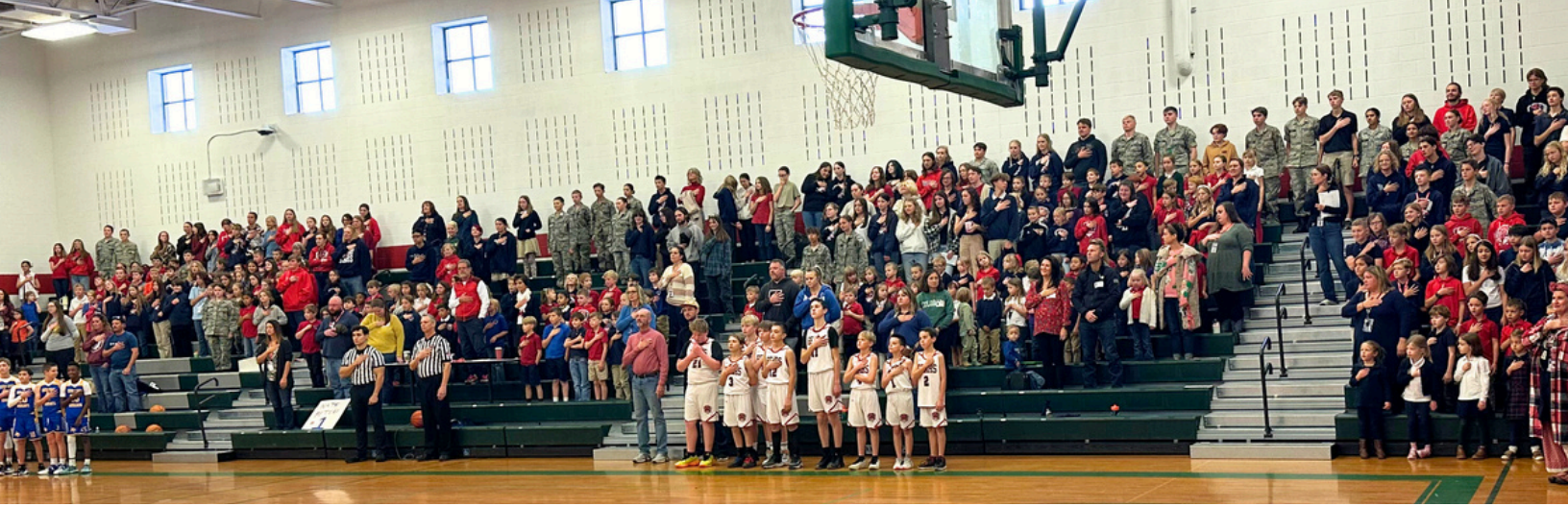




2024 ANNUAL REPORT



*Hodie Determinat Cras:
Today Determines Tomorrow*



FROM THE DESK OF DR. PEKRON, HEADMASTER & CO-FOUNDER



Gwynne N. Pekron, PhD

**Industrial/Organizational Psychologist
Founder/Headmaster: Merit Academy**

***“Aut viam Inveniam Aut Faciam:
I shall either find a way or make one.”***

The most learned and wise individuals in history emphasize the importance of reflection, especially when it comes to future visioning.

In order to forge our paths ahead I often find myself looking back to the first moments that breathed life into this mighty school . We must do this so that we can best honor and achieve those foundational precepts.

Each purposeful decision we make in our journey of growth is bound by our continued commitment to excellence, not only in academics but also in conduct and character.

Every consideration, each action, is stood upon our providence, and is strategically made to continue the vision so intentionally and passionately designed.

It is with great joy and honor that we celebrate our incredible odyssey with you. I am passionate and excited not only about what we have accomplished, but also about what we are going to accomplish in the future. Every decision is a plan ahead. Every action is a commitment to excellence.

Hodie Determinat Cras: Today Determines Tomorrow.

SCHOOL OVERVIEW

VISION

Students prepared for success in a free society, promoting civic responsibility and contributing their talents in a flourishing republic by pursuing beauty, truth, and good.

MISSION

Merit Academy will cultivate the minds and nurture the hearts of K-12 youth in the Ute Pass/Woodland Park region with instruction in the principles of moral character and civic virtue, employing honored foundations of classical education and Core Knowledge®



VIRTUES

Moral character is the cornerstone of our educational model. In order to properly reason and make the best decision, one must be able to discern what is good, beautiful, and true. Virtue requires a trained mind and a benevolent heart, uniting our ability to reason with our passions.

At Merit Academy, we believe in an intensive curriculum that stretches students to do their best and excel academically. Attitude, mindset, and one's character contribute to a student's success in academics and conduct.

Today's society expects and teaches complaining, criticism, or condemnation. Today's society presses controversial social topics onto students at a young age. Today's society teaches children that deadlines don't matter. These habits destroy an individual's strides to excellence and minimize a student's achievements.

Through our virtues, Merit Academy teaches habits needed to be responsible citizens in our flourishing Republic: Valor, Perseverance, Responsibility, Friendship, and Goodness.

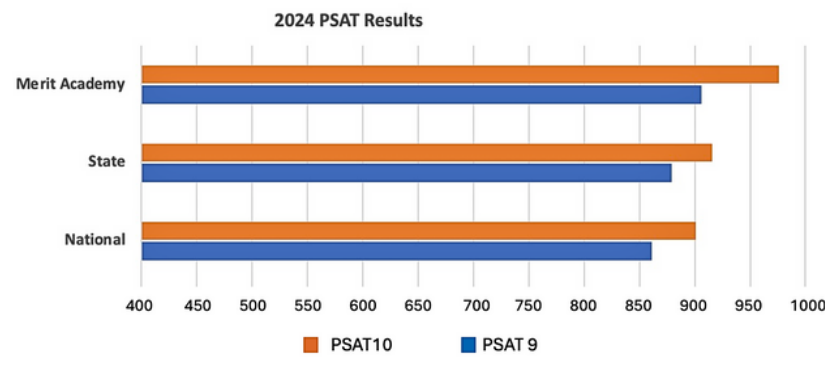
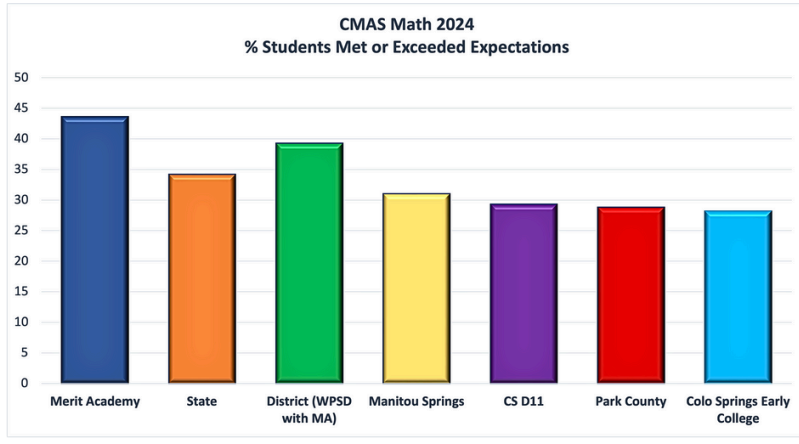
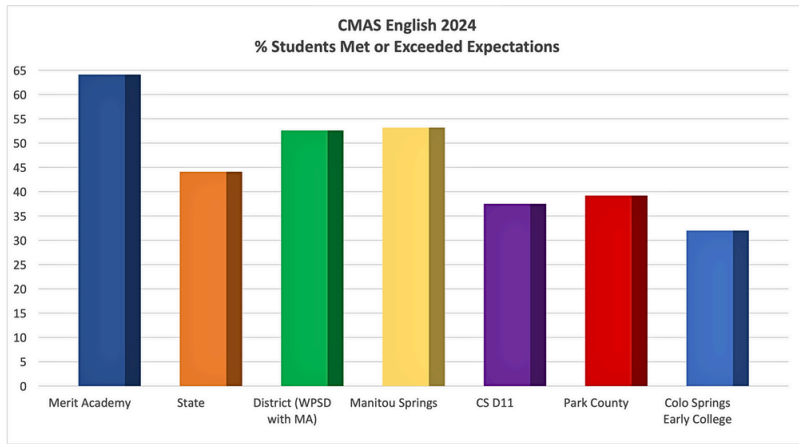


Ever since Merit Academy opened our doors in the Fall of 2021, our mighty school has made great strides in our academic growth and performance.

FOR TWO YEARS RUNNING, MERIT ACADEMY WAS RECOGNIZED WITH THE TOP PERFORMANCE RATINGS OF DISTINCTION FROM CDE.

Out of 1,387 CO schools, Merit Academy ranks 301 (top 21% in the State), which is also the highest academic rank within the four-district area.

This is a tremendous catapult in ranking from 560 in 22-23 to 301 in our third year (2023-34)



NEARLY 60% OF OUR JUNIOR CLASS AND OVER 30% OF OUR SOPHOMORE CLASS HAVE ALREADY EARNED OR ARE CURRENTLY EARNING COLLEGE CREDITS.

SUCCESS STORIES

Merit Academy provides a classical education that is intensive and purposeful. There is pride in being a Merit Academy Bear, because excellence is a standard and students learn “they can.” Staff are diligent in their supports for students, to encourage growth and achieve the exceptional. Students learn that the effort they put in today leads to the results and accomplishments of tomorrow.



The following are spotlights of exceptional growth and achievement. These stories of learning and academic advances are not so much the exception as they are the norm.

**4TH GRADER'S
INCREASE IN MATH 35%-85%**

A fourth-grader came to Merit Academy in the fall of 2023 scoring in the bottom 35% on the national NWEA Math assessment compared to other 4th graders. At the end of the year, his score climbed to the top 85% in the nation.

A first-grader came to Merit Academy in the fall of 2022 scoring in the bottom 2% on the national NWEA Reading assessment compared to other 1st graders. At the end of his second year at Merit Academy, his score had climbed to the top 75% in the nation, compared to other 2nd graders.

**2%-75% 2ND GRADER'S
INCREASE IN READING**

**KINDERGARTEN'S
CLASS AVERAGE
COMPOSITE INCREASE 18%-76%**

In August, only 18% of the entire Kindergarten grade scored proficient in Math and Reading's beginning of the year benchmark. At the end of the school year, over 76% of our Kindergarteners scored as proficient or higher on the end of year benchmark.

At the beginning of the year, only 38% of 7th graders scored as proficient (met/exceeded expectations) on Math. At the end of the year, over 62% of 7th graders met or exceeded math proficiency.

**38%-62% 7TH GRADE CLASS
SCORED: MET/EXCEEDED
ON MATH**



SCHOOL OF GRAMMAR EVENT DAYS

Our staff provide students with a learning experience like no other. In conjunction with the intensive classical curriculum, Merit Academy students experience event days that correspond to domains of their classes. We host Renaissance Festivals, Merit Academy Medical Center, Vikings Day, Kings & Queens Day, 100's Day, Ancient Civilizations, and more.



While academic focus is first and foremost, it is imperative that students also engage in activities that promote character, resilience, responsibility, and a sense of belonging. Athletic programs are essential to this well-rounded education. Students take pride in their school and their teammates when they are a part of something bigger than themselves. We will continue to add popular, competitive sports for our student-athletes.

ATHLETICS SHOWCASE

Merit Academy's Landsharks program offers track and cross country to K-6 children. This prepares them for our competitive cross country and track teams at the Upper School level.



Woodland Park's HS State swim team was primarily weighted with Merit Academy students: Kensley Pekron (Soph.) ranked top 15 in the 200 Free and 500 Free; Riley Holsapple (Fresh.): 200 Free, 500 Free); and Ellie Geissler (Soph.): 100 Fly, 100 Back.



Not only is 2024 (Fall) the first year of our Cross Country team, it's also the first year of our Varsity Rifle Team. These students are extremely competitive and are on track for a very exciting showing at both regionals and nationals in the spring. We can't wait to showcase their results in 2025.

Our Merit Bears boys basketball teams are off to a tremendous start this season. The heart and competitive drive in these athletes is nothing short of exciting. The SOL (middle school) boys took the championship in their bracket in the league.



ACTIVITIES SPOTLIGHT

Our Civil Air Patrol Squadron lends tremendous flight, leadership, and character opportunities for students. Merit Academy's CAP is pictured celebrating our incredible servicemen and women, including those who served in WWII.



There are many clubs to showcase our students, and one such club is the Shooting Club. It is a feeder program for our Varsity Rifle Team. Students practice various positions and precision with the air rifle and air pistol.

Both the middle school and high school Science Olympiad teams are some of the best in the state. Earning 2nd at state in 2024, the middle school team is well poised for an earned spot to nationals in 2025. The high school team is also climbing the ranks to a possible championship title.



Merit Academy's performing arts program continues to grow and excel. K-5th graders learn music, both instrumental and voice. 5th-12th graders may participate in band or choir at the advanced levels.

Theater is also a growing opportunity for our budding performers!





MERIT ACADEMY IN THE NEWS 2024

[Fox News: "No Politics" school that faced battle to open in blue state boasts high test scores](#)

[Federalist: "No Politics" Classical School Opened by Conservatives Rock CO Tests](#)

[Gazette.com: "Merit Academy Students Help CPW Conduct Wild Turkey Research Project"](#)

[Pikes Peak Courier: "Merit Academy Top Shots Announced"](#)

[Pikes Peak Courier: "Rapidly Growing Merit Academy Providing Paths To Success"](#)

[Fox 21News: "Living History: 106 Yr Old WWII Veteran Visits School"](#)



23-24 FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

+\$980,963

30% Increased Revenues

+\$148,575

Donations Received

+\$165,235

32% Increase in Cash & Investments

Decreased long-term liability from \$474,521 to \$24,000 due to \$450,521 payoff of loan.

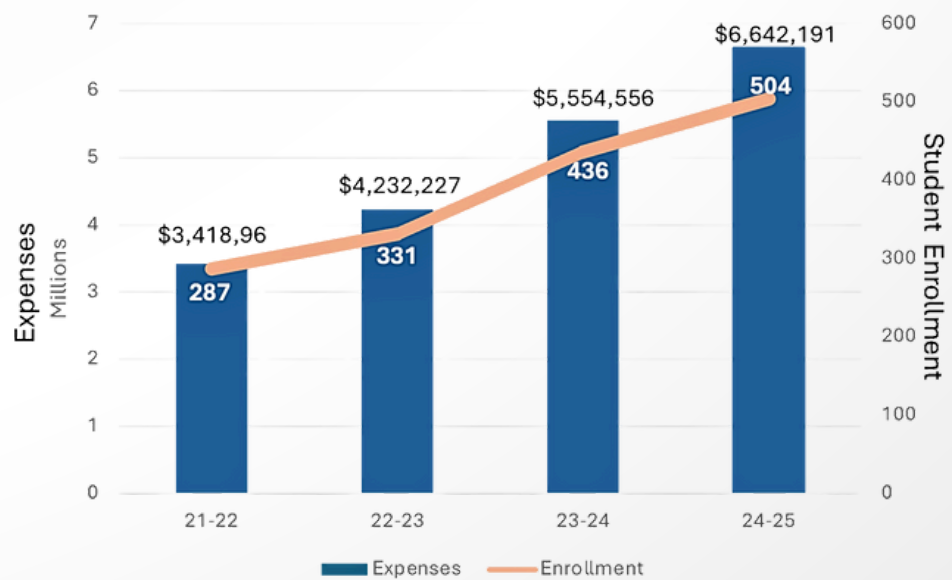
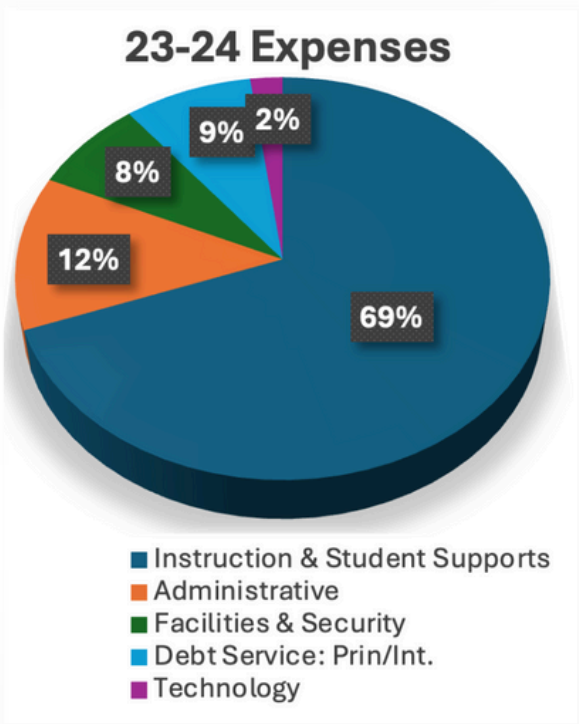
\$450,521

Merit Academy's Expense Per Pupil.

\$13,179

National Average Expense Per Pupil.

\$15,633





FUTURE PLANNING

ACADEMICS & CHARACTER

- * Additional Classes: Keep class sizes small and meet demands of growth
- * 1/2 Day Kindergarten
- * Matriculation Through 12th Grade
- * Additional Athletic Teams & Clubs
- * Bolster Interventions
- * Expand Course Selection
- * Close Staff's Liveable Wage Gap



FACILITIES & OPERATIONS

- Building & Grounds: Maintenance & Improvements
- Safety/Security Features & Updates
- Preschool: Playground & Expansion
- Shooting Sports Venue/Equipment
- Shuttle, Van, Snow Equipment
- Performing Arts/Cafetorium
- Welding/Smithing Shop

CAPITAL
CAMPAIGN
FUNDRAISING

ORDER OF CHAMPIONS

We express our deep appreciation for the invaluable contributions of our generous donors, whose transformative gifts significantly benefit Merit Academy and the children and families we serve. This ongoing support is crucial in propelling the school's academic objectives forward.

We sincerely thank these devoted donors for their essential role in our success. By joining Merit Academy's Order of Champions with a contribution of \$1,000 or more, you are recognized as a champion of freedom and academic excellence.

YOUR GIFT

➤ CASH GIFTS

Whether made by cash, check, credit card, or bank transfer, your gift is tax-deductible.

➤ MATCHING GIFTS

Many businesses encourage community giving and philanthropy by matching employee donations to non-profit charities like Merit Academy.

➤ PLANNED GIVING

Financial advisors often recommend planned giving to their clients. This gift offers a means to reduce taxes, while supporting Merit Academy. Gifts may be made through charitable trusts, life insurance, or endowments.

GIVE HERE





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