



# The Herald

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## Are We Really That Different?

Very often the question arises how MCA is different from the traditional public schools around us. Are we really that different? There are, indeed, many ways that we are very similar to other schools. We educate children by teaching the North Carolina Common Core and Essential Standards just like all the other public schools. We have a diverse mix of students just like all the other schools. We get our per pupil allotment from the state of North Carolina just like all the other schools. So, how then, can a small independent school like Millennium Charter Academy really be all that different? Actually, there are many ways! When our faculty and staff were asked what sets their teaching above and beyond the traditional and expected, their responses revealed even more.

**Kindergarteners come away from their very first year of school knowing their continents, their numbers up to one hundred fifteen, and they can write four or five sentences at one sitting. Most schools just have the goal of having kindergarteners know their ABC's, count up to thirty-five, and be able to recognize sight words.**

-- Mrs. Joy Parsons, Kindergarten Teacher



*This artwork reflects the second grade study of artists Georgia O'Keefe and Katsushika Hokusai.*



*Mrs. Emily Mauck, 1<sup>st</sup> grade teaching assistant, works with Matheson Williams to dye Easter eggs from natural plant dyes, part of first grade's study of plants from Core Knowledge.*

**The quality of literature our students read is higher than most middle schools. Our students read Shakespeare, Orwell, Twain, Homer, and Stevenson, just to name a few. We compete in many academic competitions, and have resounding success in most every competition we enter, for example, Science Olympiad, the NC Student Academy of Science Research Paper Competition, Mathcounts, Model UN, and Mock Trial.**

-- Mrs. Pamela Braley, Middle School Dean of Students

**We have a one to one laptop program that is entering its eighth year, two computer labs, and iPods and iPads for our Exceptional Children Department. Our middle school employs the use of advisory groups where students learn how to be better students and citizens, as well as participate in fun activities that help build relationships and team building skills.**

-- Mrs. Mandy Dean, Educational Technologist



*Fourth graders visit science stations during the day long, hands on Catawba Science Fair, held in the MCA gym. This event was for all students and provided exposure to various areas of environmental science.*

**Our philosophy of education and our philosophy of character development differ significantly from other schools. We teach children to think well and to make decisions based on what is true, good, and beautiful.**

-- Mr. Kirby McCrary, Headmaster

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**MCA offers high school math courses when many of the middle schools surrounding us do not. We even offer geometry, and no other schools in this area do that I know of.**

-- Mrs. Christie Speer, Middle School Math Teacher



*The MCA Advanced Music class performs for the City of Mount Airy at the annual Christmas Tree lighting.*

**As a parent, I feel my daughter is exposed to a wider variety of educational experiences than she might be elsewhere. I appreciate the attention to communication that comes home from teachers.**

-- Ms. Shanda Lawson, Business Secretary



*The MCA Mock Trial team awaits their case in the Catawba County Courthouse.*

**I think MCA is above and beyond the norm because we truly try to educate the whole child, their brains AND their hearts. Character development and correct thinking are such an integral part of our children's education, and they miss this in most other schools.**

-- Mrs. Ann Moore, Middle School English Teacher



*Third graders review major systems of the body and celebrate the end of that unit with their annual "body buffet."*

**Being able to offer different types of electives, such as sign language, helps give our students the opportunity to "grow another way of communicating" and build language skills. Normally, classes such as sign language are only offered weekly, and not daily like our electives. Being able to have daily practice ensures the students make quick progress in all electives.**

-- Ms. Jane Theis, Director Exceptional Children



*Second graders observe a hive of bees as part of their Core Knowledge study on insects.*

**When I hear my friends talk about their schools, I realize how MCA teachers make a personal connection to each student, which makes the more rigorous curriculum of MCA seem more interesting and feel more rewarding. This connection ignites a passion for learning, one that I know I have carried with me past graduating from MCA, and one that has truly made a difference in my life.**

-- Mary Beth Browne, Former Student