



2026 MAGNA FACTA

*Hodie Determinat Cras:
Today Determines Tomorrow*



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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.”***

With profound gratitude, I present Merit Academy’s 2026 Magna Facta. In these pages, we offer our stewardship, progress, and the horizon ahead—a view of what we built together and a declaration of the excellence that we refuse to compromise.

Merit Academy is a classical school of distinction, founded on the conviction that children deserve an education of the highest caliber—one that forms the intellect, strengthens character, and orients the heart toward what is true, good, and beautiful. We are a school of excellence because, every day, we raise the bar and our students rise to meet it. We do this in authentic partnership with parents, honoring this sacred trust through a unified commitment to each student’s flourishing.

At the center of our work stands an unwavering dedication to principled lessons in history, the arts, language, mathematics, sciences, and literature. These integrated disciplines prepare graduates who think clearly, speak persuasively, lead courageously, and serve faithfully.

Our students’ achievements have secured Merit Academy’s standing among Colorado’s high-performing schools. From our intensive college-prep curriculum to our hands-on Career/ Technical Education pathways, to the knowledge-rich domains studied at the Grammar level, and everything in between, excellence is both the expectation and achievement. These results reflect high standards, dedicated faculty, and families joined in purpose.

The inspiration that launched this school remains as compelling and necessary as ever. Every consideration, each action, stands 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 excited not only about what we have accomplished, but also about what we are going to achieve. 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 discern what is good, beautiful, and true. Virtue requires a trained mind and 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.



CLASSICAL EDUCATION

Classical education at Merit Academy is a time-honored, knowledge-rich approach that teaches students how to think—not merely what to think or how to look up information. It follows the developmental trivium (grammar in elementary, logic in middle school, and rhetoric in high school), using the Core Knowledge sequence, classical literature, original-source documents like Federalist Papers, the Declaration of Independence, and the Constitution of the United States and rigorous programs like Singapore Math, AP and college classes. We build cumulative knowledge, reasoning skills, and articulate expression while forming intellectual and moral character through great works, history, Latin, and the Western Canonization.

DISTINGUISHED

For several years, Merit Academy has earned ratings of distinction. Families choose into our commitment and expectations of high academics and conduct, through an intensive curriculum. We uniquely blend classical foundations in order to master even the most modern of applications (such as aviation science and computer/cyber sciences). Merit Academy reinforces personal responsibility through its motto “Hodie Determinat Cras” (Today Determines Tomorrow).

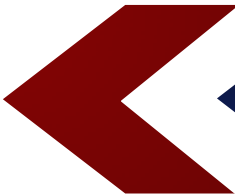


“It is an object of vast magnitude that systems of education should be adopted... which may implant in the minds of the American youth the principles of virtue and liberty.”
~ Noah Webster

Ever since Merit Academy opened in 2021, our mighty school has flourished. This standard of excellence is a beacon for families who seek the educational opportunities we provide.

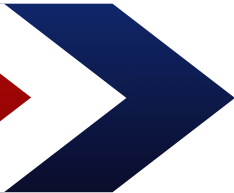


+ 129% MA Enrollment
STATE OF CO
-1.9% Enrollment



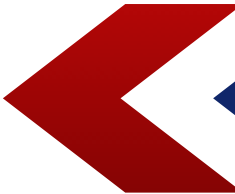
**IN FIVE YEARS
ENROLLMENT MORE THAN DOUBLED
AND CONTINUES TO INCREASE AT
AN INCREDIBLE RATE**

**MERIT ACADEMY IS ATTRACTING AND
RETAINING FAMILIES FROM ACROSS
THE NATION TO OUR AREA.**



**75% OF NEW MA
STUDENTS WERE FROM
OUTSIDE THE DISTRICT**

**2026-27 FORECAST:
MERIT ACADEMY
685 STUDENTS**



**ON TRACK TO BE THE LARGEST
SCHOOL IN THE 4-DISTRICT
14-SCHOOL REGION IN 2026-27**

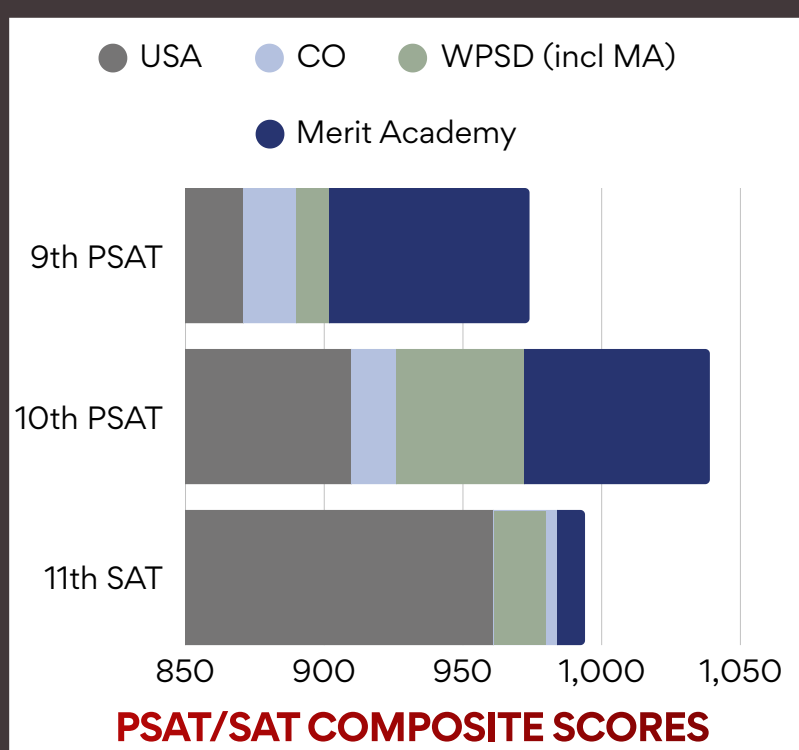
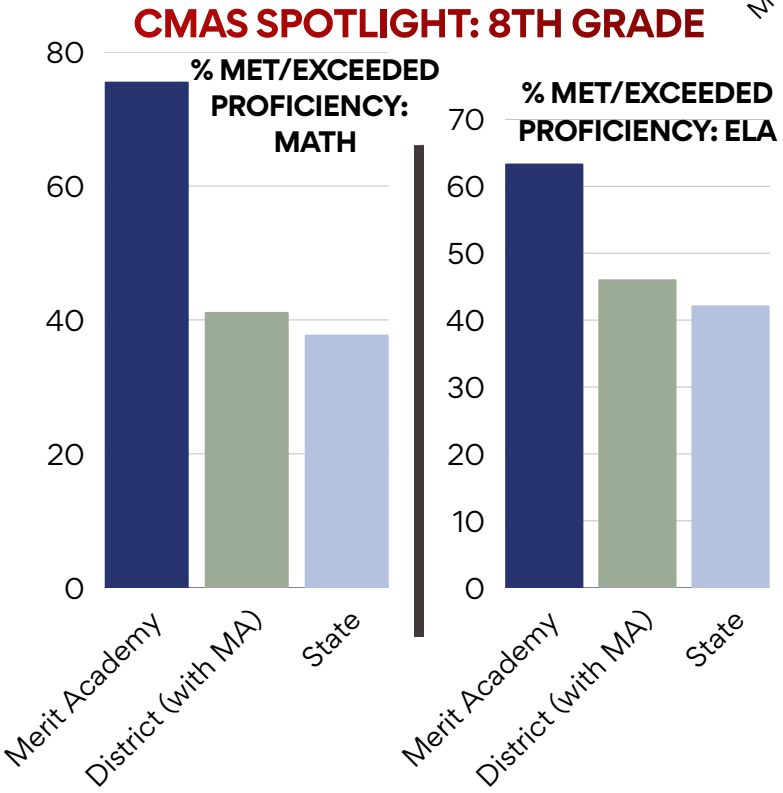
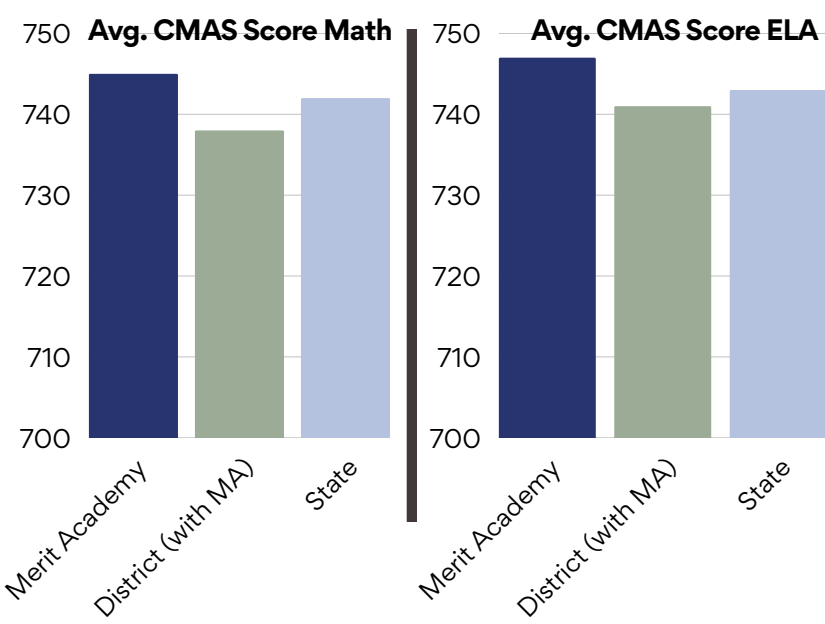
After five glorious years, Merit Academy celebrated our inaugural commencement ceremony for the legacy class of 2026.





FOR FOR SEVERAL YEARS NOW, MERIT ACADEMY HAS EARNED “ EXCEEDS“ IN MULTIPLE CATEGORIES, THE **HIGHEST** PERFORMANCE RATINGS FROM CDE.

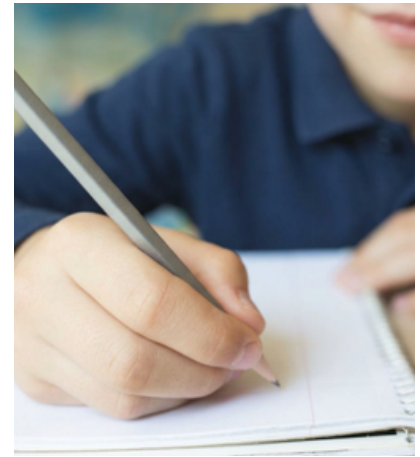
97%
OF 9TH GRADERS
MET/EXCEEDED
READING/
WRITING
PSAT



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 provide supports for students, to encourage growth and achieve the exceptional. Students know 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.

A student entered fifth-grade in the fall of 2025 scoring in the lower 42% on the national Dibels assessment (below benchmark for Reading and Math). At the end of the school year, following small groups and intervention in both subjects, his score soared to the top 80% in the nation, above benchmark.

42% - 80%

**5TH GRADE STUDENT'S
INCREASE IN MATH &
READING**

**2ND GRADER'S
GROWTH IN
MATH & READING**

42% & 67%

A second-grader came to Merit Academy in August, 2025 scoring below/well-below average in Dibels and NWEA assessments compared to other 2nd graders. At the end of the school year, his score climbed to a remarkable improvement rate of **42%** in Math and **67%** in Reading.

The third grade team placed tremendous effort to increase their students' mathematics abilities and number sense. The results were amazing, with the classes averaging 80% growth and **78% proficient** in math by the end of the year.

**80%
78%**

**THIRD GRADE'S
GROWTH PERCENTAGE &
PROFICIENT IN MATH**

**AP TEST SCORES THAT WERE A
PASSING SCORE OF 3 OR GREATER** **63%**





63% - 83%

**8TH GRADE INCREASED
20 POINTS
BY THE END OF THE YEAR**

**5TH GRADE INCREASED
ACHIEVEMENT IN MATH 59% - 69%**

100% of Merit Academy K-8 grade levels increased their NWEA Math achievement-percentile during the 2025-26 school year.

66% - 75%

**FIRST GRADE'S
INCREASED
ACHIEVEMENT IN MATH**

**KINDERGARTEN'S
INCREASED
ACHIEVEMENT IN MATH 62% - 70%**



41% OF MERIT ACADEMY'S FULL-TIME K-12 STUDENTS RECEIVE SUPPLEMENTAL SUPPORT THROUGH INTERVENTIONS OR LEARNING PLANS

CAREER INDUSTRY PROGRAMS:

117

SUCCESSFUL HIGH SCHOOL COURSE COMPLETIONS

Programs that lead to industry certification in medical science, construction, and culinary arts are a natural and essential complement our classical model. Classical education develops the intellect, moral character, and habits of mind required for wise judgment and self-governance, while these hands-on programs cultivate the practical virtues of discipline, craftsmanship, responsibility, and perseverance through real-world application.



1st

INAUGURAL TINY HOME BUILD BY MERIT ACADEMY STUDENTS, HBI, CICC, & SEED & BEAN CONSTRUCTION

By mastering industry standards and earning professional certifications, students learn the dignity of productive work and the satisfaction of serving others—whether healing patients, building with excellence, or preparing nourishing food. In a self-governing republic, citizens must be both thoughtful and capable; these programs prepare young people not only to think clearly and uphold the principles of liberty, but also to contribute meaningfully to their families, communities, and economy as responsible, self-reliant adults.



*“Those who expect to
reap the blessings of
freedom must, like men,
undergo the fatigue of
supporting it.”*

~ Thomas Paine

2,320

RECIPES/ DISHES MADE

14

LARGE BANQUETS CATERED BY THE CULINARY ARTS STUDENTS

OVER **3,500** TOTAL HOURS OF
TUTORING OR INTERVENTION



70 STUDENT CADETS IN CIVIL AIR PATROL
OVER **100** HOURS OF FLIGHT TIME
BY OUR CAP CADETS



12 COLLEGE BOARD NATIONAL
RECOGNITION AWARDS RECEIVED



20% CO SCHOOLS' AVG. STAFF TURNOVER RATE
11% MERIT ACADEMY'S STAFF TURNOVER RATE



OVER **75%** OF OUR CLASS OF 2026 AND NEARLY **65%** OF OUR CLASS OF 2027
HAVE EARNED COLLEGE CREDITS.



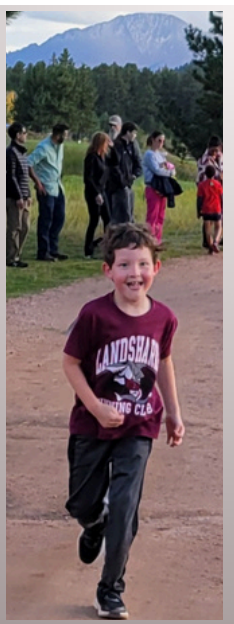
SCHOOL OF GRAMMAR EVENT DAYS

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, Dr. Seuss & Read Across America, 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, with over 70 K-5th graders participating. This prepares them for our competitive cross country and track teams at the Upper School level.



Girls SOL Volleyball finished a strong 10-2. Due to demand and a successful foundation of great coaching, we are adding a high school JV team in the 26-27 school year



Upper School cross country finished with school records and strong showings across the league.

Boys SOL Basketball: 1st in the League, Nearly undefeated at a 12-1 record!

Boys SOR Basketball: finished with an impressive 10-3 record.

Girls SOL Basketball (Year 1): 2nd in the League, a commanding 10-2 record.

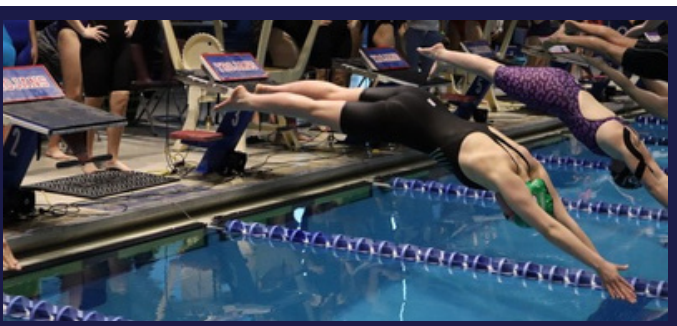




Representing their home town and Merit Academy with the WPHS swim team in CO's State Swimming (and Team Relay) Finals:

Kensley Pekron (Senior) medaled top 10 in CO State 3A in the 200 Free and 500 Free and Ellie Geissler (Senior) placed top 20 in the 100 Fly, 100 Back.

Merit Academy graduates our first NCAA Athlete!

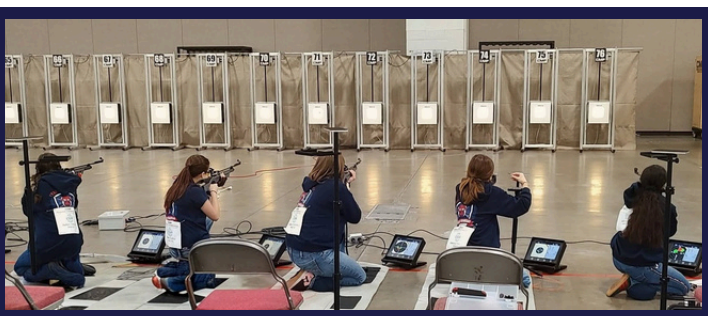


Varsity Air Rifle Team's 2nd year:
5 Qualified for 13-Western-State Regionals

1 student-athlete qualified for Nationals
Natasha Viele placed 9th in 17 and under
(3rd in Western Regionals)
and 32nd overall (over 1,330 shooters)



Rifle Regional Qualifiers were Natasha Viele, Delaney Halcomb, Ashlyn Halcomb, Aci Henderson, Sarah Gottus



In addition to these expanding athletic teams, Merit Academy is proud to sponsor our own rodeo team!



ACTIVITIES SPOTLIGHT

Our Civil Air Patrol Squadron lends tremendous flight, leadership, and character opportunities for students.

Several of Merit Academy's CAP cadets are pictured celebrating our incredible and brave servicemen and women.



School of Grammar clubs include:
K-Kids
Shooting Club
Chess/Rubiks Cube
Student Government
Crochet Club
and more!



Upper School Clubs include:
Civil Air Patrol
Student Government
Red Cross Club
National Honors Society
Science Olympiad
Science Bowl
and more!



**1st Annual MA/
Red Cross Blood Drive**

OVER 50 DONORS

53 UNITS OF BLOOD

83% NEW DONORS

SCIENCE OLYMPIAD

Both upper school teams are among the best in the state. Earning 2nd at Southern CO Regionals, both teams are well poised as championship challengers in 2027. Three of our duo teams placed 2nd at State in multiple events at the high school level.





**Merit Academy's performing arts program continues to grow and excel.
K-5th graders learn music, both instrumental and voice.
6th-12th graders may participate in band, jazz band, guitar
or choir at the advanced levels.**



Merit Academy's performing arts program includes our 4th- 5th grade choir.



Not only do students engage in the performing arts, our students in the visual arts program have been recognized with multiple awards in several art shows along the Front Range.



***"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, therefore, is not an act but a habit."
~ Aristotle***

FY26 FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

+ \$1,231,509

18% Increased Revenues

+ \$142,989

Community Donations Received

+ \$400,000

Additional Investment in Curriculum & Instruction

Enrollment Growth Outpaced Spending Growth: Enrollment increased by 22% where expenses increased by only 11%

+ 22% ~ 11%

Merit Academy's Expense Per Pupil

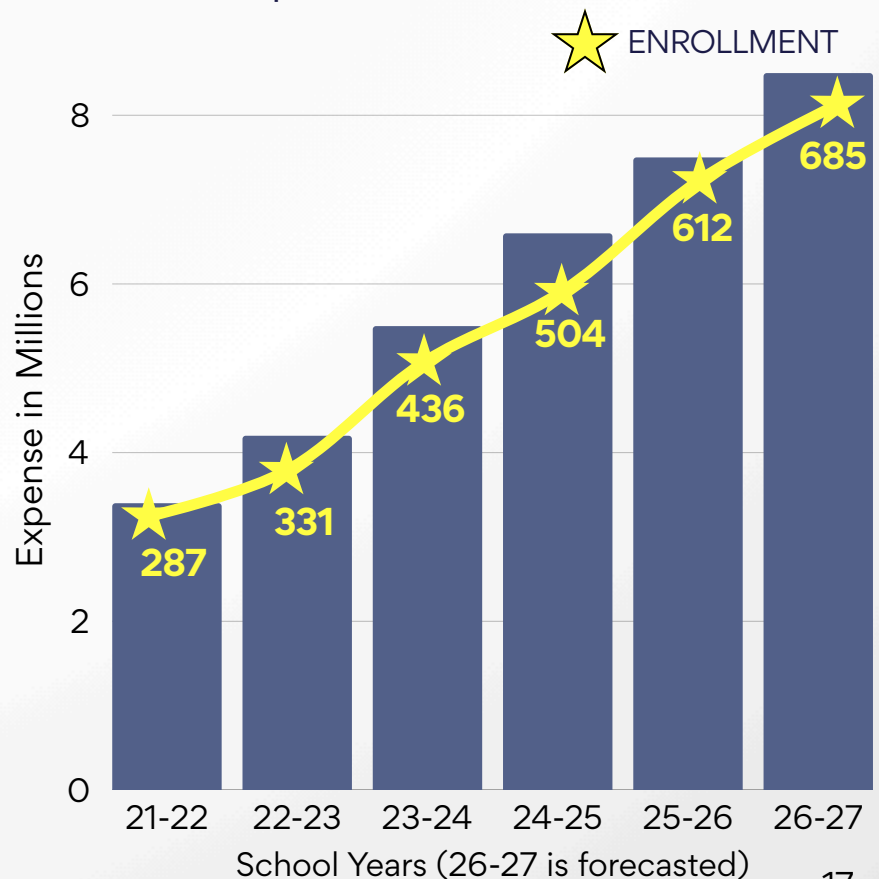
\$12,300

CO Average Expense Per Pupil

\$15,897

**FY25
ANOTHER CLEAN
INDEPENDENT AUDIT
WITH NO
MATERIAL WEAKNESSES
OR MATERIAL CONTROL
DEFICIENCIES.
FY26 AUDIT
COMING SOON!**

Expense and Enrollment Trends





FUTURE PLANNING

ACADEMICS & CHARACTER

- * **Additional Classes: Keep class sizes small and meet demands of growth**
- * **Bolster Interventions**
- * **Additional Athletic Teams & Clubs**
- * **New Criminal Justice Offerings**
- * **Fortify History Program: This Republic's Founding & Freedoms - K-12**
- * **Grow STEM Options at All Levels**
- * **Close the Liveable Wage Gap for Staff**
- * **Expand Medical Science Program**



FACILITIES & OPERATIONS

Merit Academy operates in a public school district facility that was built and paid for by local taxpayers to serve students in the Woodland Park community. As a public charter school, Merit Academy educates local children, fulfilling the same purpose for which these community-funded facilities were created. A WPSD board director noted, and we agree, that taxpayers are the true owners of these buildings. Honoring our stakeholders, we take great pride in preserving the integrity of the campus as we care for this taxpayer asset.

The following are current and future items or improvements at our campus:

HVAC

Parking Lot & Drainage

Roof/Leak Repairs

Safety/Security Features & Updates

Welding/Smithing Shop

CTE Classrooms

Preschool: Playground & Expansion

Shooting Sports Venue/Equipment

Shuttle, Van, Snow Equipment

Performing Arts/Stage

Deep Cleaning Equipment

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

We sincerely thank our devoted donors for your essential role in our success. By joining Merit Academy's Order of Champions with a contribution of \$1,000-\$9,999 in a single year, or \$10,000 or more over multiple years, you are recognized as a

CHAMPION OF FREEDOM AND ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE.

MERIT ACADEMY IS A 501C3 CHARITABLE ORGANIZATION.

EIN: 85-2365942

YOUR GIFT IS TAX DEDUCTIBLE.

MERIT.ACADEMY/DONATIONS

ORDER OF CHAMPIONS

➤ **\$500,000 + (LIFETIME)**

➤ **\$250,000 - \$499,999 (LIFETIME)**

➤ **\$50,000 - \$249,999 (LIFETIME)**

Daniels Fund



ORDER OF CHAMPIONS, CONT.

➤ **\$10,000 - \$49,999 (LIFETIME)**

Edrington America	Karakin Foundation	Midway USA Foundation
HBA Workforce, LLC	Legget Foundation	Barbara C. Pekron
Newmont Mining CCV	Toshiba Foundation	Matt & Bini Viele
Waggoner Family	Monica Wooden	Chris & Liz Wright
Christine & Todd Kaberna	Sprouts Health Communities	
Kickappoo Springs Foundation		
Prosser Verner Foundation		
Sportsmen for Community CO Chapter, Safari Club Int'l		

➤ **\$1,000 - \$9,999 (2025-26)**

Victor and Teresa Lebario	Mary Sekowski	Aspen Interiors, LLC
Curt Grina	HDK Investments	SSR Mining
Juli Anna Vonderharr	Rebecca Schilling	Trout Roofing, LLC
Dr. Gwynne & Sean Pekron	Catherine Kinton	Sky Tree Book Fairs
Rocky Mountain Chapter AFCEA Education		Heather Buckman
Frontier Sportsman's Club	Ray Wahl	Teller WiFi
National Assoc of Secondary School Principals		Michael Hassell
Philip & Mary Hart Wilheit	Krystin Suto	Kelly Cheston

*"An investment in knowledge pays the best interest."
~ Benjamin Franklin*

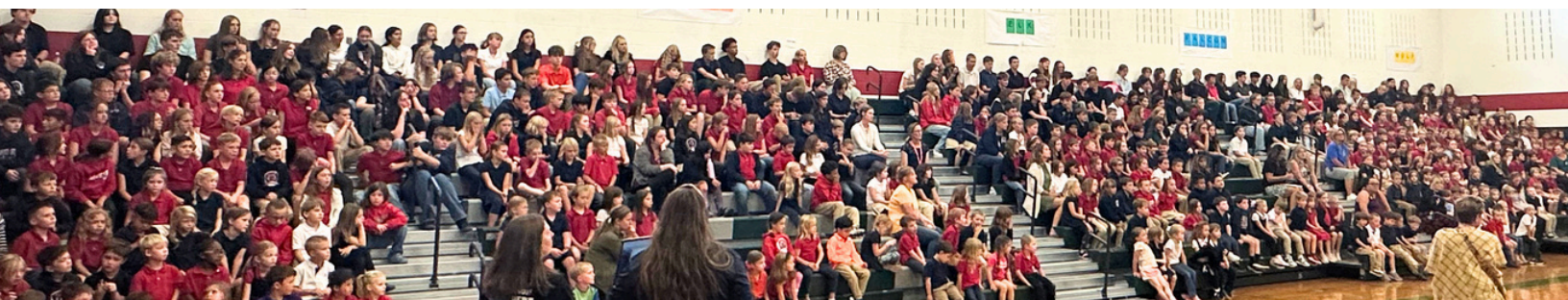
When school choice is battle-ridden, excellence remains fragile and must be secured. Open donations are used to support multiple programs and operational needs for Merit Academy's pursuit of excellence. However, some donors prefer to donate to a specific program. Those donations may be used for staffing, curriculum, materials, or other expenses to support that program.

Science
History
Athletics

Technology/Engineering
Literature/English
Career/Industry Programs

Mathematics
Interventions
Growth/Expansion

Visual & Performing Arts
College Credit/AP Program
Capital Projects/Facility



YOUR GIFT



CASH GIFTS

Whether made by cash, check, credit card, ACH 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 may recommend “planned giving” to clients. This offers a means to reduce taxes while supporting Merit Academy through charitable trusts, life insurance, or endowments.

TO INVEST IN MERIT ACADEMY:

Contact Merit Academy's
CFO: Jennifer Faircloth
719-370-4889 or:
jfaircloth@merit.academy

500 E. Kelley's Rd.
Woodland Park, CO 80863

OR

GIVE HERE



AS A 501C3, YOUR GIFT IS TAX DEDUCTIBLE. EIN: 85-2365942



+ 14% GROWTH

**+ 2 NEW HIGH SCHOOL
ATHLETIC TEAMS**

**7 ADDITIONAL
FULL-TIME TEACHERS**

Looking Ahead



2026-27

**4X MORE STUDENTS
CTE CAREER START**

**20% MORE HOURS
TUTORING/SUPPORT**

**2 MORE CAREER/
TECH PROGRAMS**



*Learning is not attained by chance,
it must be sought for with ardor and diligence. ~ Abigail Adams*



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<https://www.Merit.Academy>



*Hodie Determinat Cras:
Today Determines Tomorrow*