

## Missouri Academy



### A model for academic excellence

The Missouri Academy is a two-year accelerated, early-entrance-to-college, residential school that matches the level, complexity and pace of the curriculum with the readiness and motivation of the students. It is located on the campus of Northwest Missouri State University (in Maryville, MO) and is a part of it. This publicly funded school accepts students who have completed 10<sup>th</sup> grade, and thus replaces the junior and senior years of high school. It is a rigorous program of college coursework taught by professors at Northwest Missouri State University. Missouri Academy students sit in the same classrooms with traditional college students, and professors have the same high expectations of them as they do for traditional college students. Students who complete the program earn an Associate of Science degree and a high school diploma. It is an opportunity for exceptional students to live and learn in a community of peers.

The school has two primary goals: (1) to increase the pool of high school students adequately prepared to succeed in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), and (2) to provide a sanctuary for the gifted, talented and high performing high school students. The Missouri Academy has made significant progress towards achieving its goals since its inception in August 2000. This success is in large part due to the way the school defines quality. The school defines quality in terms of; (i) a rigorous academic curriculum that is demanding, engaging and yet flexible; the curriculum is tilted towards science and mathematics, but contains key courses of study to develop (oral and written) communication skills and the humanities, (ii) high student expectations both in academic performance as well as personal character, and (iii) a residential life program that is age-appropriate, complements the academic program, and is designed to develop and nurture critical thinking skills.

This school is designed for talented and high performing high school students, and the curriculum is heavily focused on science and mathematics. The following key features of the school render it suitable for use as a model in addressing some challenges faced in the traditional K-12 educational environment:

- High performing students are selected to enroll at the Missouri Academy for its challenging academics. These students are accustomed to receiving good grades with little effort at their traditional high schools. They quickly realize that they cannot succeed at this school without drastically changing their study habits. This is a lesson about adjustment, hard work, and time management.
- Students live and learn in a community of peers. There is a tremendous spirit of students helping other students academically and socially. This is a lesson about a community of students that values education and the welfare fellow students. New students coming to the Missouri Academy appreciate the values of this living and learning community.
- A survey of Missouri Academy alumni shows that 92% say that Northwest Missouri State University professors are as good as or better (in undergraduate teaching) than the professors where these students are completing their baccalaureate degrees. This confirms what we already know – that Missouri Academy students receive high quality foundational education at Northwest Missouri State University.

For more information about the Missouri Academy, visit [www.nwmissouri.edu/MASMC](http://www.nwmissouri.edu/MASMC) or contact Dr. Cleo Samudzi at [samudzi@nwmissouri.edu](mailto:samudzi@nwmissouri.edu) or 660-562-1077.