

Blessed Maria Assunta Pallotta Middle School



Course Overview 2022-2023

Blessed Maria Assunta Pallotta Middle School provides students the opportunity to become the best version of themselves as they develop in faith, knowledge, discipline and service. Our school is founded on the belief that every student is a leader and has gifts and talents that can be used for God's kingdom. Through our Standard Based grading model, we stand firmly behind our vision that every student can learn, grow, and set goals for themselves. We seek to create students who are prepared for high school and to become Christian leaders in the modern world.

Religion

As adolescents grow in their journey of faith, Religion integrates their social, intellectual, and spiritual needs. Religion class utilizes various religious texts and resources, as well as prayer services, liturgies, and regular Eucharistic adoration to guide students in this faith journey. The Archdiocese of Dubuque religion standards require students to demonstrate knowledge of the message taught, to reflect Christian involvement in service, and to show evidence of Christian relationships as we build Christian community. Students at Blessed Maria Assunta Pallotta have the opportunity to attend Mass weekly with their peers and to celebrate the Sacraments of the Catholic Church throughout the course of their academic experience in Middle School.

English Language Arts

English includes the integration of the key components of reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Students at Blessed Maria are able to reflect on the literary pieces through both written and oral responses as well as collaborative opportunities. Students are guided to analyze, critique, and evaluate various works for which they are exposed throughout the course of the academic year. Effective communication through both the written and spoken word will be emphasized, including teaching grammar and spelling tools and strategies. Various genres of writing are incorporated throughout the curriculum. Students participate in theme driven units and work with the Iowa Core ELA standards to uncover the skills and dispositions of a successful reader.

Science

Science education is a journey of discovery about the world. Science education includes both content and inquiry through experimentation. The students explore science concepts and content through the exploration using the OpenEdScience curriculum. Students utilize a variety of manipulatives and experience related science methods to help them uncover the important understandings of the Next Generation Science Standards.. Students learn process skills, such as observing, classifying, experimenting, describing, measuring, inferring, predicting, and evaluating. The acquisition of these skills makes it possible for students to discover and learn a body of scientific knowledge through the four strands of science: earth, life, physical, and environmental.

Social Studies

The Social Studies curriculum focuses on the historical, political, geographic, cultural, economic, and religious influences of various areas and time periods. Through their experiences in Middle School social science the students will learn about the global society, the impact of geography and climate and culture on various civilizations. The students will interweave Iowa and American history throughout their social science experiences and build connections between the history of Iowa and that of the broader United States. The students will also learn important skills of critical analysis of texts, argumentation and organizing informative and opinion based writing.

Physical Education / Wellness

Students attend Physical education every day for the entire school year. Life is about making healthy choices from a Christian perspective. Physical education class involves studying health and safety issues that may affect the choices students make for their well-being. The physical education courses interweave physical activity and healthy lifestyle choices with health concepts which are important to developing not only physically, but also mentally and spiritually. Students utilize various health related resources, such as heart monitors, to learn more about physical fitness and healthy life choices related to physical activity.

Art

Students will attend Art class every other day for one semester. In Art class students will explore various art techniques and media such as drawing, painting, printmaking, and the use of technology. They will use different techniques and media to generate artwork to demonstrate their knowledge of what they have learned throughout each lesson. The students will also be completing written critiques of some of their works. This will help them understand how to view their work critically. Being able to critique one's own work to recognize areas that need improvement is important for future success. Students will be working on projects to develop their creativity, which will help them in their future endeavors. Additionally, study and critique of Art History is incorporated into each unit. Students culminate their learning through the use of pottery and learning about the techniques of pottery and using the kiln to finalize a product of art.

Spanish

Students will attend Spanish class every other day for one semester per year. Class activities will be centered on students learning to communicate (speaking, listening and writing) in the Spanish language. Students will build a working vocabulary and use the language to express their own ideas to others and also to obtain information from others. Class activities will also focus on specific cultural aspects of the Hispanic world as well as building a solid foundation of Spanish language concepts and vocabulary. By comparing the history and traditions of their own families and cultures to the history and traditions of Hispanic cultures, students will become more aware of their own significance in the world.

Math

The Blessed Maria Math program utilizes the Illustrative Math curriculum resource to fully align to the focus, rigor, and coherence of the Iowa Core State standards. This curricular resource helps to guide student learning to ensure students are exposed to the rigorous challenges of the 21st Century math concepts and has been given the stamp of approval by EdReports, earning perfect scores in the areas of Focus & Coherence and Rigor & Mathematical Practices. The scope and sequence of units, activities, and representations are designed to help students develop a deep understanding of mathematical concepts, build mathematical and numerical fluency and guide student learning to ensure a coherent math experience through the middle school years.

STEM

The STEM course is offered for students every other day for one semester with additional opportunities for students to participate in competition focused teams building on STEM related concepts and opportunities. The STEM course aligns student work with the computer science standards and offers students the opportunity to build, collaborate, recreate and analyze different challenges and products within the STEM fields. Students are able to code and produce robots, build paper roller coasters and utilize the 3-D printer to successfully design products that come to fruition.

Band

Students at Blessed Maria are able to participate in Band as an elective course. Band is a year-long course which is scheduled every other day. Students in band participate in large group lessons as well as individual lessons which support their individual development over the course of the school year. Additionally, students in the band participate in multiple performances throughout the course of the year to showcase their learning in the large group and individual lessons.

Guidance

Blessed Maria has a school counselor that supports student social-emotional well being through the use of 1:1 sessions, small group sessions as well as opportunities for whole class lessons. In addition to classroom guidance, the counselors will be available for referrals for individuals as well as group counseling as those needs surface during the school year. The school counselor works with students and families to support the various needs and experiences of our students throughout the course of the school year.

Music

Music is taught for one semester every other day. Students in music