



st. croix preparatory academy

ACADEMICS • CHARACTER • LEADERSHIP

St. Croix Preparatory Academy will develop each student's academic potential, personal character, and leadership qualities through an academically rigorous and content-rich educational program grounded in the classical tradition.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

2018-2019

Q: What is the mission of St. Croix Preparatory Academy?

St. Croix Preparatory Academy will develop each student's academic potential, personal character, and leadership qualities through an academically rigorous and content-rich educational program grounded in the classical tradition.

Q: What grades does St. Croix Preparatory Academy serve?

St. Croix Preparatory Academy serves students in grades K-12. St. Croix Preparatory Academy opened in September 2004 with 200 students in grades K-7. During the 2018-2019 school year, St. Croix Prep will serve nearly 1,200 students in grades K-12.

Q: What makes St. Croix Preparatory Academy unique?

- St. Croix Preparatory Academy is the first public school in an eastern suburb of the Twin Cities area specifically dedicated to offering a demanding classical, liberal arts curriculum with an additional emphasis on development of each student's personal character and leadership qualities. St. Croix Preparatory Academy provides a learning opportunity that, up until now, has only been available at select private schools.
- St. Croix Preparatory Academy was founded by parents, educators, and business people who want their child to receive an education that demands their best in behavior, attitude, and effort; and an education that challenges them to achieve their highest potential. It is a college prep educational program based on true inquiry, intellect, and character.
- St. Croix Preparatory Academy also focuses on developing character and leadership qualities, with the goal of creating not just smarter students, but people who are prepared to lead abundant and responsible lives as contributing members of our society.

Q: What is the educational philosophy of St. Croix Preparatory Academy?

St. Croix Preparatory Academy is based on a classical model of education. The classical approach to education focuses on providing children with the life long educational tools to learn and think for themselves. The classical tradition is grounded in the time-tested methodology of learning called the Trivium, which recognizes that critical learning skills must precede critical thinking skills.

The Trivium

There are three phases in the Trivium methodology: Grammar, Logic and Rhetoric. Each stage of the Trivium corresponds to the general stages of a child's cognitive development as follows:

Grammar (Grade K-4)

The first phase of the Trivium is Grammar, which emphasizes the facts and rules of each subject that later learning is built upon. This stage focuses on the accumulation of knowledge and the rules related to each particular subject. This mirrors the stage of development where children love to mimic, recite, chant and memorize. The objective of this phase is to provide each child with a strong foundation of subject matter KNOWLEDGE.

Cognitive skills that are developed in the Grammar phase include:

defining	annotating	interpreting
describing	calculating	paraphrasing
identifying	changing	predicting
matching	converting	reviewing
memorizing	grouping	summarizing

Logic (Grades 5-8)

The second phase is Logic, which focuses on the students' ability to analyze and interact with the knowledge acquired in the Grammar stage. The Logic stage is the phase where understanding is grasped. This corresponds with the child's curiosity and desire to ask questions. The objective of the Logic phase is UNDERSTANDING.

Cognitive skills developed in the Logic phase include:

applying	discovering	sorting analyzing
adopting	illustrating	comparing
collecting	inferring	diagramming
constructing	outlining	differentiating
contrasting	selecting	

Rhetoric (Grades 9-12)

The final phase, Rhetoric, trains the student how to express and discuss the subject. Rhetoric is the communication stage, where students defend and refute opinions based on their understanding and knowledge of subject matter. This fits nicely with the students' affinity for contradiction and argumentation. The objective of the Rhetoric phase is COMMUNICATING.

Cognitive skills developed in the Rhetoric phase include:

blending building	planning	grading judging
changing	predicting	prioritizing
composing	producing	recommending
creating	revising	refereeing rejecting
designing	writing	selecting
formulating	criticizing	supporting
hypothesizing	defending	
	evaluating	

The result is that the teacher is “teaching with the grain.” This means students enjoy what they are doing and at the same time equip themselves with the cognitive skills that will benefit them for their entire lives.

GRAMMAR				LOGIC				RHETORIC			
K/1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
KNOWLEDGE				UNDERSTANDING				COMMUNICATION			
Knowledge – Comprehension				Application -- Analysis				Synthesis -- Evaluation			

Q: Describe St. Croix Prep’s academic performance.

Since its inception, St. Croix Prep has been one of Minnesota’s highest performing schools. Its MCA results are consistently in the state’s top 10%, usually exceeding state proficiency percentages by 20 percentage points. In addition, approximately 60% of the graduating seniors receive acceptance to a selective or highly selective college/university.

Q: Why is Latin taught?

The study of Latin fosters decoding skills that provide students with a solid foundation for reading and writing. Latin enhances students’ vocabulary, increases their understanding of English grammar, improves reading and spelling, encourages precise communication, and becomes the cornerstone for the study of other languages.

Q: Describe Faculty and Staffing information.

St. Croix Preparatory Academy currently employs over 125 personnel. Aside from over 70 licensed teachers, St. Croix Prep has an administrative staff which includes an Executive Director, School Directors (Lower, Middle, and Upper School), COO, a Facilities Director, an Activities Director, Associate Activities Director, Special Education Director, HR Manager, School Nurse, and office support personnel. In addition, the school has nearly 20 personnel serving as Educational Assistants in Grades K-5 (thus reducing the student teacher ratio significantly); and 18 personnel providing services for Special Education students.

Q: Describe St. Croix Prep’s Governance Model.

St. Croix Preparatory Academy follows the Carver governance model. This model is designed to empower boards of directors to fulfill their obligations of accountability for the organizations they govern. The model enables the board to focus on the larger issues, delegate with clarity, to control management’s job without meddling, to rigorously evaluate the accomplishment of the organization.

The St. Croix Preparatory Academy Board currently consists of 9 voting members; four are faculty members, four are parents of St. Croix Prep students, and one is a community members. These board members are the result of board elections that have been conducted in accordance with Minnesota charter school law. An Advisory Board consists of the Executive Director, School Directors and the COO. We believe this make-up reflects the partnership necessary for the success of our school.

Q: Does St. Croix Prep offer a before and after school program?

The YMCA of Shoreview provides the St. Croix Prep’s before and after school program. In the morning, YMCA programming is open from 7:00 a.m. until the first class period. In the afternoon, YMCA programming is open from the end of the school day until 6:00 p.m. The cost is approximately \$12 per session and family discounts are available.

Q: Which curriculum does St. Croix Preparatory Academy use?

St. Croix Preparatory Academy uses the Core Knowledge Sequence developed by E. D. Hirsch for grades K-5. The Core Sequence is a challenging and proven curriculum being used with positive results in over 1,500 schools across the country. To learn more about the Core Knowledge, visit www.coreknowledge.org

St. Croix Preparatory Academy uses a classical, liberal arts curriculum for grades 6-12, modeled after many of the best performing secondary schools in the country (e.g., Tempe Preparatory Academy in Arizona, Ridgeview Classical Academy in Colorado, etc.) It combines formal classes, a classical framework, and Socratic seminars to draw out each student's inner curiosity and passion. It also asks all students to aim for their highest good in everything they try, and to aspire to mirror the efforts and achievements of outstanding historical personalities. In this environment, high achievement by students will be valued, encouraged, and rewarded.

For more detailed information, please view the following:

- Lower School Curriculum webpage — http://www.stcroixprep.org/lower_school_curriculum.aspx
- Middle School Curriculum webpage — http://www.stcroixprep.org/middle_school_curriculum.aspx
- Upper School Curriculum webpage — http://www.stcroixprep.org/upper_school_curriculum.aspx
- Upper School Curriculum Guide, located on the Upper School Curriculum webpage.

Q: What are class sizes?

Grades K-4 have 30 students per class. In addition, Grades K-4 also have an Educational Assistant in the classroom to address their classroom needs. Grades 5-12 have between 27-30 students per class.

Q: What kind of communication mechanisms are in place for parents and the school community?

St. Croix Prep distributes a weekly Parent Update via email. This communication informs parents of school events, important schedule changes, school holidays, program changes and highlights from the previous week. In addition, each division (Lower School, Middle School, and Upper School) sends out regular communication to the families enrolled in their division, informing families of relevant information. Current practice is that each K-4 faculty members will send out a weekly newsletter to parents of students in their class. Finally, the School maintains a website (www.stcroixprep.org) with current information related to history, board meetings, curriculum, activities, development, and parent resources.

Q: Does St. Croix Prep offer extra-curricular activities?

St. Croix Preparatory Academy encourages students to participate in extra-curricular activities and works with parents, staff and outside organizations to develop a wide variety of opportunities for students to develop their talents and interests outside of the regular school day.

St. Croix Prep is a member of the MCAA conference and currently offers Minnesota State High School League athletic programs (e.g. varsity, junior varsity, freshman, etc.) for Boys Soccer, Girls Soccer, Volleyball, Boys Cross Country, Girls Cross Country, Archery (NASP), Boys Basketball, Girls Basketball, Alpine Skiing, Boys Baseball, Girls Softball, Girls Lacrosse, Boys Track, and Girls Track.

St. Croix Prep also offers Pep Band, Show Choir, Honors Choir, Debate, Speech, Knowledge Bowl, Math Masters, Continental Math League, Upper School Theater, Middle School Theater, Lion Cub Theater Group, Theater Club, Upper School Student Council, Middle School Student Council, National Honor Society, National Art Honor Society, Ski/Snowboarding Club, and Yearbook.

Q: Is bus transportation provided?

Stillwater School District (ISD 834) provides bus transportation to all of the students who reside within the school district (ISD 834) boundaries.

Q: What are the current school day hours?

Our school day starts at 9:30 a.m. and ends at 4:00 p.m.

Q: Are there tuition costs?

No. As a public charter school, St Croix Preparatory Academy receives state funding for its operations.

Q: What is a charter school?

A charter school is a tuition-free independent public school of choice, with the ability to select its own board, staff and curriculum. Charter schools are usually small learning communities with a particular curricular focus. In addition, charter schools must go through a rigorous state application process, as well as obtain an authorizer who will be directly involved in monitoring the school's academic results and fiscal accountability.

Q: How does St. Croix Preparatory Academy differ from a more traditional public school?

- A. St. Croix Preparatory Academy purposefully sets high expectations for all students, staff and parents. The school places more emphasis on character development, respect, self-organization, responsibility, self-discipline and leadership than a traditional public school.
- B. With a small enrollment, all students will receive personalized attention, permitting a low student/teacher ratio and membership in a mutually supportive community of learners.
- C. A streamlined and accessible administration will allow St. Croix Preparatory Academy apportion a higher percentage of public funds directly to teaching and the classroom. This will also facilitate our commitment to continual improvement by enabling staff to refine practices and innovate quickly based on student achievement results.
- D. Grades K-12 in one building, managed by one administrative team allows for a tightly integrated curriculum scripted with intentional scope and sequence, beginning in kindergarten through twelfth grade.
- E. St. Croix Preparatory Academy has the freedom to adopt the best practices utilized anywhere in the nation, rather than being required to follow the standardized curricular approach of a larger school district.
- F. St. Croix Preparatory Academy believes that quality learning begins with quality teachers and is committed to hiring educators with a passion for teaching and professional growth. Teachers and administrators will be accountable and rewarded for results. St. Croix Preparatory Academy's school board will ensure that staff is provided with the resources, training and responsibility to be successful in meeting the needs of every student.

Q: Who can I contact for more information?

For more information please contact the following:

Grades: Kindergarten through 4th Grade
Christine Mehlhorn, Office Manager
4260 Stagecoach Trail North
Stillwater, MN 55082
Phone: 651-395-5920
[Email: cmehlhorn@stcroixprep.org](mailto:cmehlhorn@stcroixprep.org)

Grades: 5th Grade through 8th Grade
Kelly Vossen, Office Manager
4260 Stagecoach Trail North
Stillwater, MN 55082
Phone: 651-395-5950
Email: kvossen@stcroixprep.org

Grades: 9th Grade through 12th Grade
Diane Runge, Office Manager
4260 Stagecoach Trail North
Stillwater, MN 55082
Phone: 651-395-5970
[Email: drunge@stcroixprep.org](mailto:drunge@stcroixprep.org)

Authorizer Information:

St. Croix Preparatory Academy is authorized by Friends of Education, EX0-01-A,
200 East Lake Street, Wayzata, MN 55391.