

# What Makes MMS Unique

## **Small Class sizes and Low Student-Teacher Ratios**

There are currently 12 full-time Teachers, 1 Master Teacher, and 1 Mentor Teacher to educate 165 sixth, seventh, and eighth graders from up and down the valley. (11.78:1 ratio if 14 teachers, 13.75:1 if 12 teachers)

## **Location, Location, Location**

Minturn Middle School is an Expeditionary Learning school of choice located in beautiful Maloit Park, just south of Minturn.

## **Guiding Principles**

Our mission is to help all students achieve and recognize excellence. We are here to engage students in compelling learning through expeditions, fieldwork, and service. Our character traits for the 2006-2007 school year will be: *Compassion, Honesty, Courage, and Craftsmanship.*

## **Learning Expeditions**

The curriculum at our school is organized into Learning Expeditions. Learning Expeditions are long-term, in-depth studies of a single topic that explore vital guiding questions. The Learning Expeditions incorporate standards; involve fieldwork, service, and adventure; and culminate in a project, product, or performance. Expeditions require students to cultivate strong habits of work, thinking, and judgment that come through the daily rituals of reading, writing, problem solving, and discussion. Individual and group projects are designed to unify and ignite student learning by calling for concrete products or actions that address authentic problems.

## **Rigorous Academics**

Our school has a rigorous curriculum and promotes a high level of student engagement through real-world learning focused on issues of concern to young people. All students will be proficient in the core subject areas of Literacy, Math, Science, and Social Studies as well as Health/Fitness, Art, Industrial Arts, and Computers.

## **Building Character and an Ethic of Service**

Service to the community is an ethic that permeates our school. Students will experience authentic service to the community as an important element of their academic work. They learn that values such as collaboration, perseverance, and craftsmanship are essential for the production of high quality work. At our school we are all crew, not passengers.

## **Student Work and Student-Led Conferences**

Students at our school collect and organize their work and reflect on their progress. For conferences, students select examples of their work to discuss their academic and character accomplishments and goals. It is our goal to have each student complete a unique individualized learning plan, if not in the current year, then in the 2007-2008 school year.

## **Fieldwork**

Learning extends beyond our school's walls; it connects to the world. Students at Minturn Middle School learn from fieldwork, experts, and service in addition to learning from texts. Attendance is required for fieldwork as much as it is in the classroom. The field may be a forest, a theater, a ghost town, a hospital lab, a courtroom, a museum, a classroom panel of experts, etc. Students working in the field are active investigators using research tools, techniques of inquiry, and standards of presentation used by professionals in the field. In addition, by going to a particular field site, students acquire a sense of place that furnishes context for the investigation and brings the "story" of the investigation to life. In addition to having students conduct research outside the school, teachers bring experts from the community into the classroom. These experiences maximize students' motivation to learn.