



Integrated curriculum helps students make meaning and build deep understanding. It helps them understand connections across disciplines, time and cultures, and how they, as young citizens, fit into an increasingly complex world.

For example, all students master English Language Arts standards. But one group might practice writing standards when they compose a report to be submitted to the E.P.A. about a stream study they have completed; another group may demonstrate mastery of the same standards when they create brochures on works of art.

Student-designed gardens that feature both sculptures and planting areas might be used to teach science, math, art and social studies concepts.

How does the community support-DVA?

Parents of DVA students volunteer at least 20 hours of service each year. This service comes in the form of school beautification and maintenance, chaperoning special events and sharing their expertise in the classroom.



Officer Huckabey talks about her job in law enforcement.

Professionals from the community collaborate with students to create museum exhibits. Students work independently and with professionals in their fields of study to develop expertise and communication skills.

How is DVA different from traditional programs?

All Hall County middle schools offer excellent programs that meet diverse learners' needs. DVA differs, however, in its special focus on art, science and technology and its totally integrated curriculum. Interactive learning focuses on the strengths and interests of each student.



A student exhibit from the Wild China museum.

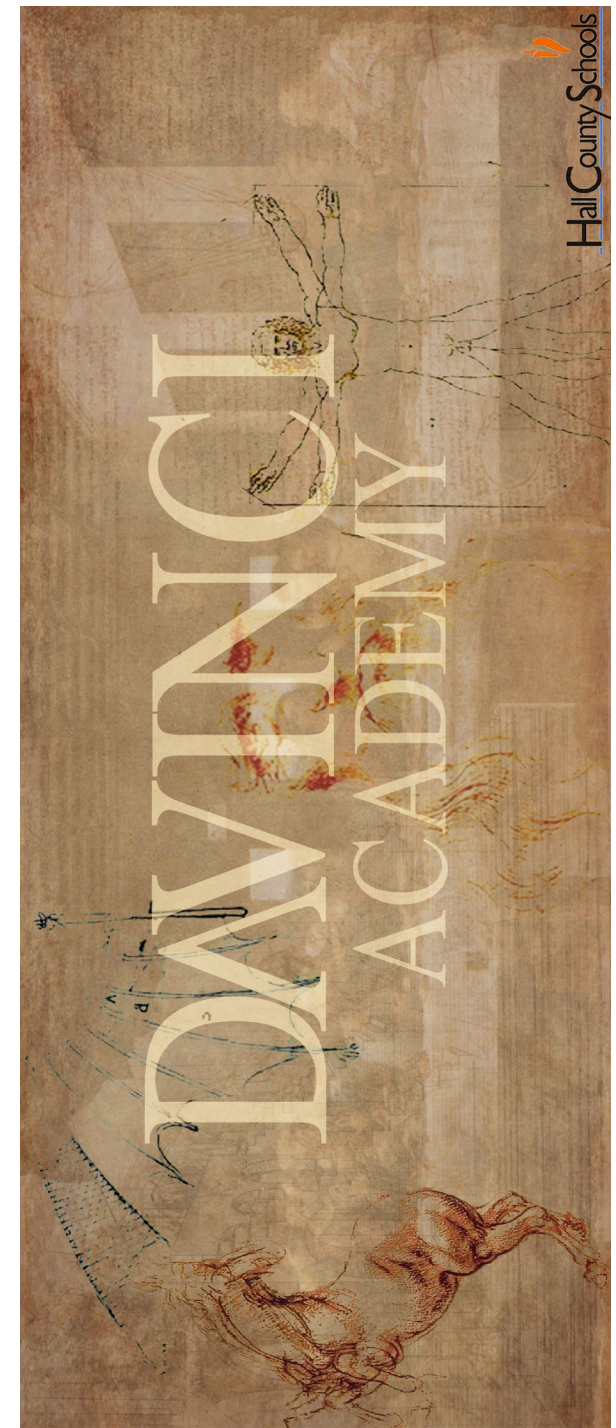


6th graders participating in the French Salon.

DVA was designed by inventive Hall County educators to meet the unique needs of creative and highly motivated middle school youth. DVA is a timely response to rising interest in alternative educational models.



Students selected to attend DVA display intrinsic motivation, resourcefulness and a problem-solving disposition. They have intense interest and advanced ability in the arts, sciences and/or technology. Creativity and the ability to work well independently and in small groups are also important traits of the DVA student.





What is the Da Vinci Academy?

The Da Vinci Academy is a program of choice that uses student interest in the arts, sciences and technology as the foundation for advanced learning in all content areas. Selected students in grades six to eight work closely with multi-talented, creative teachers who guide students in developing deep understanding of subject matter through direct instruction, collaborative exploration and discovery.

Instruction is interdisciplinary. There is a strong emphasis on technology across the curriculum and the study of world languages. Georgia Performance Standards are integrated into thematic units centered on issues of importance to adolescent learners: my place in a global society, resolving conflict in the 21st century, environmental stewardship, etc. Emphasis for all students is on applied learning experiences that help them function with increasing competency as researchers, creators, problem solvers or practitioners. Problem-based study using a variety of research strategies, group activities and independent work allows students to pursue their individual interests in depth.

It is the goal of DVA to instill in young people the Seven Da Vincian Principles: Curiosita, Dimostrazione, Sensazione, Sfumato, Arte/Scienza, Corporalita and Connessione. These principles build lifelong intellectual curiosity and commitment to learning based on students' strengths and interests. The dual emphasis on rigorous academic standards and creative productivity creates a dynamic learning environment that inspires authentic learning, motivation, innovation and enjoyment!



Curiosita

An Insatiably Curious Approach to Life and an Unrelenting Quest for Continuous Learning

Through authentic intellectual work, DVA students grapple with important concepts that are important to *them*. They are engaged in sustained inquiry as they work with one another, with teachers and other adults. The Museum of Inspired Learning is the heart of DVA because our integrated curriculum, creativity and technology are spotlighted there.

Dimostrazione



Students who are curious and who learn best in a creative educational setting make up the student body at DVA. Intrinsic motivation, resourcefulness and a problem-solving disposition are characteristics that all students must possess. From revision of writing to completion of science experiments and creation of museum exhibits, students are always learning from mistakes and overcoming obstacles in order to be successful learners.

Sensazione

The Continual Refinement of the Senses, Especially Sight, as the Means to Enliven Experience

Our surroundings are used to enliven the learning experience. Murals on the wall spotlight the Da Vincian principles units of study. Exhibits in the Museum of Inspired Learning give visitors the chance to experience our learning visually as well.

Corporalita

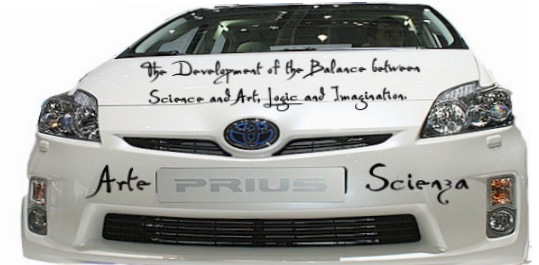
The Cultivation of Grace, Ambidexterity, Fitness, and Poise. Physical development, so important during the adolescent years, focuses on lifetime fitness and wellness through activities such as interpretive dance in drama and running in P.E. DVA students may also participate in all extra-curricular activities at SHMS.

With poise, students lead visitors through the museum and discuss their learning with visiting educators who come through the school on a regular basis.

Sfumato

A Willingness to Embrace Ambiguity, Paradox, and Uncertainty

Daily "hands-on, minds-on" learning allows students to work through the intellectual dissonance they experience when presented with new information and skills. Students ask questions, conduct research and consult experts in order to make uncertainties more certain.



The Museum of Inspired Learning offers students opportunities to research and create museum-quality projects in art, science, mathematics, social studies and language arts.

Upon completion of a museum exhibit, students serve docents in service to the entire community, sharing their findings with others. In this way, student learning expands beyond the classroom, leading to real-world applications and connections.