

## *The OPUS Project*

*The OPUS Project* is an innovative arts and technology integration program which began its first year of life at The Mountain School at Winhall in the 2005-2006 academic year. *OPUS* is the result of a sustained effort on the part of the Board of Trustees, Head of School, faculty, parents and community to create an enhanced and integrated arts program within The Mountain School to compliment our existing curriculum. This effort is grounded in the mission statement of The Mountain School:

*The mission of The Mountain School at Winhall is to provide an exceptional educational experience for students in grades K-8. We strive to offer a curriculum that integrates all subjects, maintains high standards for student performance, nurtures an enthusiasm for life-long learning, and both values and celebrates the uniqueness of each learner.*

The Latin word *opus* refers to an artistic work, and is an apt name for this intensive, integrated program because it is a process- and product-based program that focuses on experiential student learning in developmentally appropriate activities. The hope is to instill in Mountain School students the notion that making art of any kind is *work*. However, this work, although hard at times, is good, even joyous. We additionally hope to instill the idea in our students that they are the creators of their own lives, not merely passive consumers of the cultural output of others.

Instruction for *The OPUS Project* is conducted by professional artists in collaboration with The Mountain School at Winhall's faculty. Integration and *Opus* consist of two main basic parts. The first is a multi-disciplinary, thematic-learning approach that weaves all subjects of a grade cluster, both the classic disciplines (Language Arts, Mathematics, etc.) and the related arts (foreign language, physical education, etc.) around a specified learning theme (from 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> grade's study of China to 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> grade's unit entitled Underground to 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> grade's research of the Vermont Progressive Era). These themes follow the students from class to class and subject to subject. The second is the integration of five main areas of art and technology into all areas of instruction. These areas include: Visual Arts (2-D, 3-D), Performing Arts (music, movement, drama), Language Arts (literature, poetry, technology), and Living Arts (cooking, sewing). Skilled artists work directly with students on specific

skills and work closely with faculty to create meaningful learning opportunities to apply those skills to academic projects in-class.

A culminating event occurs at the end of each *OPUS* unit, which typically last 12 weeks. These three culminating celebrations per year include displays and performances from the aforementioned areas of art based upon the varying themes drawn from The Mountain School's curriculum.

Attached are various documents about integration at The Mountain School. Please feel free to contact the office and/or schedule a visit should you have further questions about our integration program and *The OPUS Project*. Our integration is...*Beyond the Ordinary!*