



Empowering Unique Learners

miriamstl.org



I think the hardest part of having a child with a delay of any kind is the fight: The fight for services. The fight for people to understand who your child is and what they need. The fight for knowledge, because knowledge is power. And the quiet fight you have within yourself wondering if you've left no stone unturned.

At Miriam, you don't have to fight.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

From the Head of School	1
Why Miriam?	4
Lower/Middle School	6-9
High School	10-15
By the Numbers	18
Admissions Process	19
Administrative Team	20

Dear Community Members,

Welcome to Miriam School and Learning Center! We are thrilled that you are exploring our amazing community! Since 1956, Miriam School has sought to change the lives of children in Greater St. Louis who learn differently. We believe that all children can be independent, happy and successful in their own ways when they are given the specialized instruction, tools and strategies they need by highly qualified educators. Students who attend Miriam's K-12 School experience a personalized environment focused on helping them overcome the obstacles of their learning challenges. Unlike other schools and programs for children with special education needs, Miriam celebrates and fosters students' strengths and passions. We embrace both the need for academic growth while helping our students build the skills they need for life.

If you are able to spend time on Miriam's campuses, you will witness firsthand Miriam's beautiful, child-centered schools and the joyful sense of community and belonging. Our students learn to advocate for themselves, how to help others be successful.

We understand every student's childhood is precious. Whether a child spends three years with us or we have the privilege of working with them for their entire school career, Miriam is always working in partnership with families. We ensure our students have what they need to be successful as they transition to their next chapter of life, whether it is to college or the workforce, or back to a traditional classroom.

Please come see us, and experience the Miriam Magic in person!

With every good wish,



Meg Bamford, Head of School



Miriam Lower/ Middle School

501 Bacon Avenue
St. Louis, MO 63119

Miriam High School

1138 N. Warson Road
St. Louis, MO 63132



*Join a community where
every learning difference is
embraced and celebrated.*

Welcome to Miriam, a community that celebrates individuality.

Miriam School and Learning Center is the premier educational hub for children with learning differences in the St. Louis area. We empower each unique learner by building confidence and laying a foundation for success at our K-12 school, as well as through our outreach programs. Miriam takes students and their families on a journey to see how their differences are actually strengths.

Our students' challenges often include specific learning disabilities, ADHD, level 1 autism, speech/language disorders, anxiety and sensory processing differences.

Miriam provides truly personalized education – including academics, therapies and social skills – to ensure each student reaches their full potential. Some students are here only a few years, while others attend Miriam School for their entire educational journey. Regardless of their length of stay, students leave Miriam equipped with the skills and knowledge to succeed.



It's ok to be different at Miriam, because they embrace everyone. Miriam has not just been a game-changer, as they say, but a life-changer for my daughter.

Debbie Schwer, Miriam Parent

**SCAN THIS CODE FOR A
VIDEO ABOUT MIRIAM.**



Why Choose Miriam?

Because not all great minds think alike.

We embrace a strengths-based, whole-child approach to an individualized education.

From experiential learning to therapy services and life skills, Miriam prepares students for a productive future, however that might look like for each individual. We believe all students can find success; they just need the right support.

Personalized Education

At Miriam School, learning is intentional, collaborative and personalized, designed to meet the unique social, emotional, physical and academic needs of each student. We use various methods and instructional tools to accommodate the individual learning styles of our students. Teachers meet each student where they are in their learning journey, getting to know them and their needs.

Integrated Therapies

We understand the importance of pairing therapies with academics to equip each student with the appropriate aids and skills. Speech/language and occupational therapies are built right into each school day and are integrated throughout our curriculum to support the whole child. In addition to occupational and speech/language therapy, we have a full-time counselor at each school.

Welcoming Environment

There's something special about walking through the doors of either Miriam campus – a feeling of warmth, understanding, and comfort. Miriam fully embraces each student, celebrating the unique gifts and strengths they bring to our community and to this world. Students instinctively understand that everyone comes with their own challenges, and they quickly become comfortable among their peers. They learn to advocate for themselves and one another, and they know Miriam is a safe place to learn and grow.





“

In all these years, no other organization, school or mental health institution has provided a detailed map to support how my grandson could and would become an adult who will make a difference in his own life and in the lives of others. That is why he is at Miriam.

Jan Ford McBride, Miriam Grandma

Lower/Middle School Grades K-8

In 1956, Miriam School was established to serve children with developmental disabilities. Following the establishment of Special School District and other public school special education programs, Miriam's focus changed in 1962 to serve children with complex learning needs.

Our lower/middle school use a multi-grade classroom model. This approach allows students to be grouped with children who are chronologically, academically and socially compatible, rather than using grades as the only criteria.

Learning groups are more focused with this approach, and social relationships are more easily facilitated. This also allows each child to be included within a group of students whose needs are compatible and complementary, thereby maximizing skill development and increasing self-confidence.

The lower/middle school use a variety of curriculum tools, combining instructional methods that will benefit each student. A few of these curriculums include:

- S.P.I.R.E. Reading Program
- Step Up to Writing
- TCI Differentiated Instruction
- Math-U-See
- MySci
- Big Ideas Math:
Modeling Real Life

**SCAN THIS CODE TO
LEARN MORE ABOUT
OUR CURRICULUM.**



Integrated Services

Occupational Therapy

Every student in grades K-8 receives a sensory diet twice each day. These rotations in the Occupational Therapy (OT) room provide the sensory input students need in order to focus on their schoolwork. They swing, jump, crash and climb to start each morning and afternoon.

Our occupational therapists provide services to help improve fine and gross motor skills, as well as sensory integration. OT services are built into the educational program through small and large group environments.

Speech and Language Therapy

Communication skills are central to a student's educational experience and academic success. Miriam's speech/language therapy program plays an integral role in students' daily learning experiences. Licensed and certified speech/language pathologists (SLPs) work with individuals and small groups, as well as through classroom-based programs and consultation services.

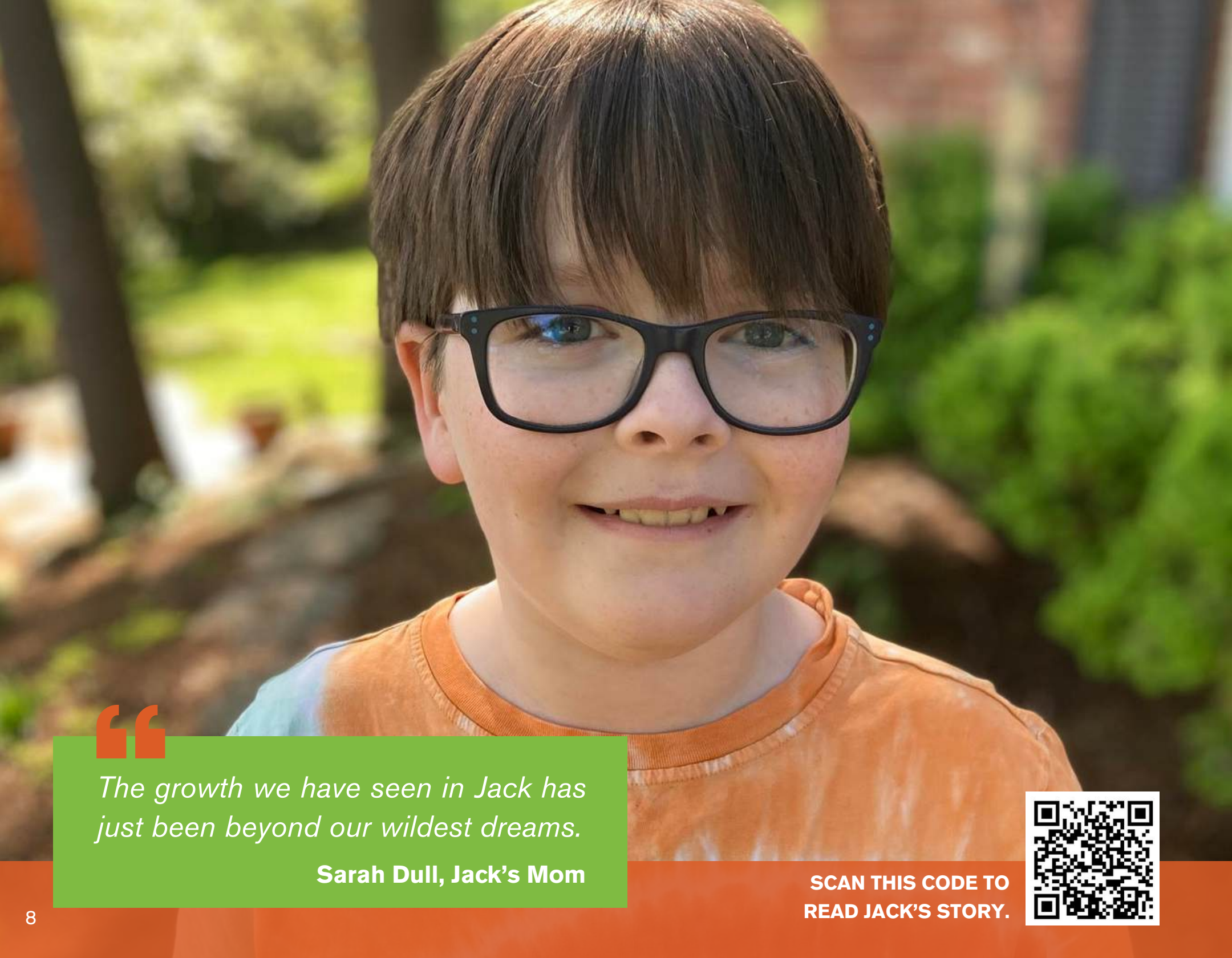
SLPs work closely with classroom teachers to facilitate the use of effective communication skills throughout the school day.

Counseling Services

The lower/middle school has a full-time counselor who works with students in one-on-one, small group and classroom settings. The counselor works on identifying and communicating feelings, social skills, coping tactics for a variety of situations, and other important skills.

Additionally, a separate counselor works with individual students who have mental health conditions or concerns.





“

The growth we have seen in Jack has just been beyond our wildest dreams.

Sarah Dull, Jack's Mom

**SCAN THIS CODE TO
READ JACK'S STORY.**



Lower/Middle School Community

Miriam fosters a tight-knit community among teachers, staff, students and families. Parents and other family members bond over a shared understanding of their children's needs. Staff members form relationships with family members to ensure the best possible support for students.

Throughout the year, Miriam School hosts numerous community events that bring families together and celebrate our students' achievements:

- Pizza Fridays
- Arts Festival
- Trunk-or-Treat
- Field Day
- Winter Wonderland
- Miriam Night at Busch Stadium
- Spring Picnic



The fact that Miriam not only addresses the unique needs of its population – but also celebrates them – is a gift to [my daughter] and all of the families who are part of this community.” **Larissa Amrein, Miriam Parent**

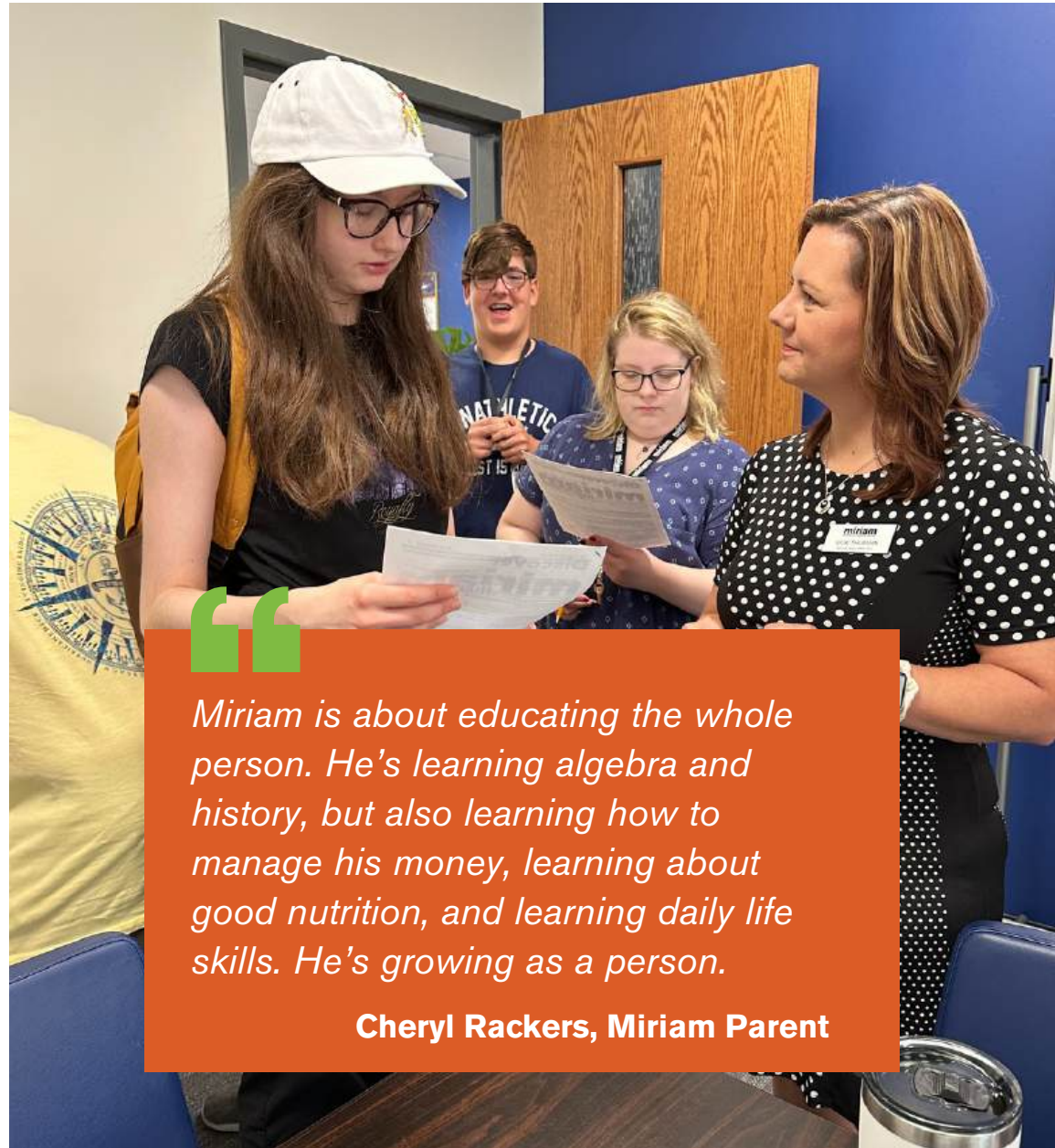


High School Grades 9-12

Recognizing the need for a high school that offers similar services to those offered in grades K-8, Miriam High School opened in fall 2016 and is now located in Olivette. It continues Miriam's tradition of focusing on the whole student through small group instruction, caring teachers and specialized curriculum.

Like at the lower/middle school, each student has an Individualized Learning Plan that includes all wrap-around services such as academics, social skills, occupational and speech therapies, and counseling.

With a low student-to-teacher ratio and a collaborative learning approach, students find an environment full of possibilities. Graduates leave with not only a transcript, but also a portfolio of skills for college, vocational training or the workforce.



Miriam is about educating the whole person. He's learning algebra and history, but also learning how to manage his money, learning about good nutrition, and learning daily life skills. He's growing as a person.

Cheryl Rackers, Miriam Parent



Curriculum Paths

Miriam High School provides three curriculum paths: Challenge, Core and Concepts. For each subject area, students are placed in a pathway that meets their needs. They can move between paths and may be working in more than one pathway at once.

Challenge: *Designed for students who are learning at or above grade level*

The Challenge curriculum prepares students for college. It includes coursework with meaningful homework assigned three to four days per week. These skills will lead to successful experiences in college or postsecondary programs. The focus is on constructive responses, critical thinking, skills/analysis and independent task completion.

Core: *Designed for students learning at or near grade level*

The Core curriculum prepares students for college. Meaningful homework is assigned two to three days per week. These skills will lead to successful experiences in college or postsecondary programs. The focus is on constructive responses, critical thinking, skills/analysis, and independent task completion.

Concepts: *Designed for students learning below grade level*

The Concepts classroom provides a functional skills-based curriculum with targeted interventions as needed per course. Homework is assigned when in-class work is not completed. These skills will lead to successful independent experiences (ex: personal finance and self care). This tier focuses on the development of independent responses, task completion and living.

Miriam Essentials

Miriam students meet in grade-level groups each day to learn the Miriam Essentials curriculum covering Academics, Life Skills, Health and Wellness, Relationships and Community, and College/Career Readiness. Each grade-level team includes three dedicated staff members who carry out the curriculum.



SCAN THIS CODE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT MIRIAM ESSENTIALS.





SCAN THIS
CODE TO
LEARN MORE
ABOUT
JONATHAN.



Miriam has been able to build the support Jonathan needed into the classroom, with teachers who could teach to him specifically.

**Angela Smith,
Jonathan's Mom**

Learning Beyond the Classroom

After nearly two years of limited socializing during a pandemic, and in the age when any answer is just a Google search away, many teens haven't had the real-world experience needed for after graduation.

At Miriam High School, we give our students hands-on, out-of-classroom experiences through our Experiential Learning Program, setting them up for success when they graduate.

Students in math and personal finance classes visit a local grocery store to shop - on a budget - for the school's Friendsgiving feast. They study recipes, make shopping lists, learn to navigate the store and use a credit card at the checkout counter. Those taking Child Development pay a visit each year to Miriam's youngest students, reading to the kindergarten and first-grade students in Room 1.

The "Explore Your Future" class gave students a first-hand look at career options in the field of construction through a Build My Future event from AGC of Missouri at St. Louis Community College. Students were able to talk with professionals in the field and try their hands at various tasks.

All students participate in community service projects throughout the school year, working with animals at the APA, putting together food and care packages, volunteering at the Miriam Switching Post and more.

A group of students even went to take their driver's permit test at a nearby license office after studying for a few weeks in their Miriam Essentials class.





Student Life

Miriam High School is dedicated to providing students with not only robust academic instruction, but also enriching social opportunities. These include clubs, athletics, spirit days and special events and are shaped by students' interests and preferences.

After-school clubs offer students an excellent opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities according to their interests. Clubs not only promote social interaction but also give students the chance to gain leadership skills. Miriam partners with several organizations to offer these activities.

After-school activities may include:

- Student Council
- Cross Country
- Bowling
- Dungeons and Dragons
- Jazz StL Music Program
- E-Sports
- Book Club
- Board Game Club
- Miriam Makers

Miriam's high school community is close knit, fostering student friendships, parent bonding and the welcoming environment Miriam is known for.

Special Events

- Fall Festival
- Miriam Night at Busch Stadium
- Socials with other schools
- Prom





Transition Services

As a part of each student's personalized learning experience at Miriam High School, preparation for life after high school begins as early as freshman year. Administrators and staff work with each student individually, along with their parents, to determine their interests, needs and dreams.

Some students plan for four-year or community college and others want to explore job training, internships and life-skills preparation. Miriam High School's unique programming is designed to support both types of learners and set students up for success in their postsecondary endeavors.

Miriam staff connect students and their families with work programs, skill-based opportunities, colleges and universities, and agencies like Vocational Rehab. We support students in pursuit of the A+ program through area community colleges, and link students with internship opportunities.

Every high school graduate has a plan for the next step in their journey.



During spring semester, Miriam hosts a Next Steps Fair, welcoming representatives from a wide variety of colleges, employment agencies and organizations to talk with students and families.

**SCAN THIS CODE FOR
INTERNSHIP STORY.**





“

As you embark on this new chapter, know that you take a piece of our hearts with you. Carry the love, support and best wishes of everyone here as you move on to even greater things in life. And remember that you always have a home at Miriam.

Vicki Thurman, Principal of Miriam High School



In 2024, Miriam ushered 21 seniors and 17 eighth graders off to new adventures. Each of the graduating seniors left with a plan for their next steps - and yet all of these students will forever share the bond that is Miriam.

**SCAN TO READ THE
GRADUATION STORY.**





Miriam by the NUMBERS

164

K-12 Students



38%

of students represent minority groups

4:1

Student-to-staff ratio

96%

of high school students say they feel welcome at school

68%

of teaching staff hold advanced degrees

1:1

Devices provided to students



Admissions Process



INQUIRE

Family inquires about Miriam via phone or video call. After a conversation, families receive the intake application.



TOUR

Family schedules a tour and meets with a member of the Admissions team.



APPLY

Family completes the Miriam application. All financial questions are addressed at this time.



SHADOW

The prospective student is invited to attend our two-day shadow process.



ACCEPTANCE

Family completes the enrollment agreement, and the student becomes officially enrolled and a member of the Miriam community.



VARIABLE TUITION

Financial assistance is available for those who qualify. Please see our website for more tuition and affordability information.



Meet our Administrators



MARY COGNATA

Head of Lower/Middle School

Mary Cognata has been the Head of Miriam Lower/Middle School since July 2018, serving as Associate Head for eight years prior to that. Mary came to Miriam in 1999 and served as a classroom teacher for 11 years while also tutoring community students and leading social skills groups through Miriam Learning Center. Before coming to Miriam, Mary taught grades 4 and 5 in the St. Louis Archdiocese for 13 years.



VICKI THURMAN

High School Principal

As Principal of Miriam High School, Vicki Thurman oversees the education of our students in grades 9-12 and works with Miriam's transitional services team to provide support for our graduates. Vicki brings more than 22 years of educational experience to this position. Before joining the Miriam team in July 2023, she worked as director of student support services at MICDS. She has also previously worked as a school psychologist and counselor at private and public schools.

Admissions Team

Caryn McFerren

cmcferren@miriamstl.org

314-962-4177



Emily Manninger

emanninger@miriamstl.org

314-968-5225

miriam
SCHOOL and LEARNING CENTER

miriamstl.org



Miriam has an entire community of teachers and staff dedicated to the students. The staff recognizes and honors the goodness of human differences, and offers acceptance and affirmation of the child's true self.

Anneliese Flynn, Miriam Parent



miriam
SCHOOL and LEARNING CENTER

miriamstl.org

