



MAHTOMEDI
PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Nick Merges



OHA Staff Recognition

Nov. 12, 2024

2024-25

Experience Excellence



Meet Mr. Merges

Mr. Merges has been teaching for 10 years.

He was a 5th grade teacher in Utah for 5 years prior to coming to Mahtomedi.

He has been working in the Mahtomedi School District for 4 years as a 4th grade teacher at OHA.



Lives the Strategic Plan

- ❑ **Helps students pursue passions.**
- ❑ **Relevant learning experiences**
- ❑ **Values and respects each person.**
- ❑ **Innovative instructional practices as a technology leader.**
- ❑ **Joy and celebration is a part**
- ❑ **Collaborates with family and the community**
- ❑ **Teacher Leader**

Mission

The mission of the Mahtomedi School District, the diverse Zephyr community setting the standard for academic and personal excellence, is to ensure each student is equipped with a world-class education to lead and thrive in a dynamic world, pursue their passions, and impact their community through learning environments distinguished by

- A foundation of rigorous academics and real-world skills
- A community where each person is valued, respected, seen, and heard
- Innovative instructional practices and exceptional learning opportunities
- A commitment to personal growth and celebrating the success that comes in many forms
- Curiosity, engagement, and joy



Relevant Learning Experiences

Classroom Economy w/ Mall Day



Snow Plow Math Lesson to determine area

Well this is a complicated question:

Southern Minnesota		Northeastern Minnesota	
Days	Place	Days	Place
22.8	Albert Lea	39.5	Duluth
20.7	Fairbault	43.3	Grand Marais
22.5	Mankato	38.7	Grand Portage
38.2	Minneapolis	51.2	Grand Rapids
20.6	Pipestone	39.6	Gunflint Lake
19.4	Redwood Falls	43.6	International Falls
38.4	Rochester	53.1	Two Harbors
17.6	St. Paul	40.4	
18.6	Winona	37.6	
7.2	Worthington	43.2	

Additional data from the table:

Years	Inches	Centimetres
96.0	229.1	
50.9	129.3	
55.2	140.2	
59.8	151.4	
65.3	165.9	
73.0	185.4	
61.0	154.9	

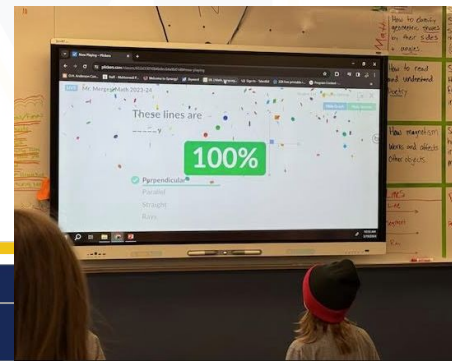
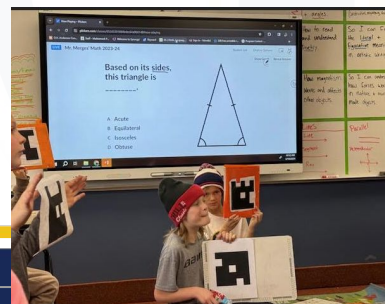
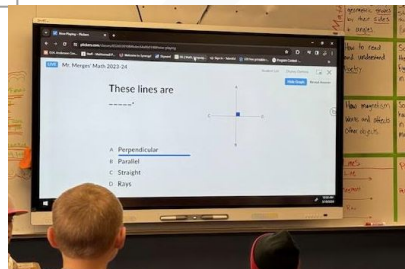


Technology to increase engagement

Virtual Field Trips to travel in the different regions of the US



Assessments



Small group instruction and personalized learning



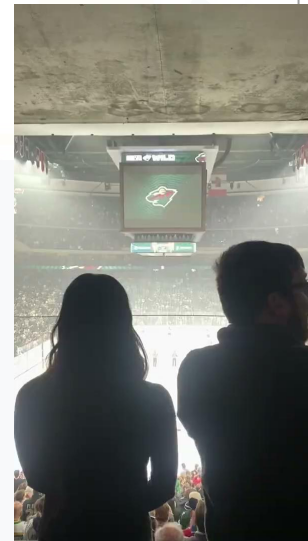
Microphone balls



Down Syndrome Day



Other



Virtual Showcase of Learning

AI Podcast of Virtual Learning Showcase

Classroom Culture

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We strive to create a strong, positive classroom environment in which each student feel joy, self-esteem, and the ability to make mistakes to learn.

We try to do this with day to day interactions, positive affirmations, and games.

Here is an example of a fun game we play during the first few weeks of school to make sure everyone knows each other's names.



Collaboration

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Another cool element of our literacy curriculum is how much collaboration is involved in the learning, which is very aligned to our classroom culture of teamwork and helping our classmates out! Here are a few examples of us collaborating on our learning beginning with a form of class discussion/debate called a "Socratic Seminar." We had some amazing conversations that built off of each other's knowledge!



Coffeeshop Time:

You may hear students refer to "coffeeshop time." Don't worry, your students are not being served espresso ☺

During independent work time, we try to set a calm, productive environment for students to work. I find it is helpful to have a sort of mental cue for students to base their actions on, so we call this calm work time "coffeeshop time" to try to replicate that type of environment.

Now if only we did have fresh brewed coffee and treats!

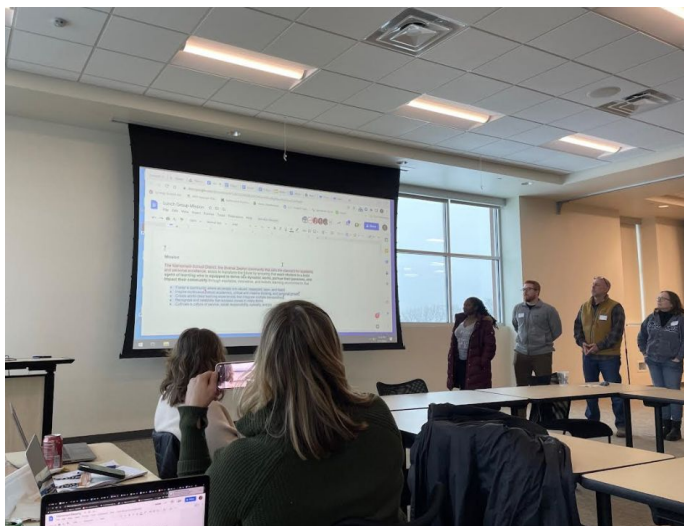


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Teacher Leader

Member of Strategic Planning Committee

**District Literacy Committee,
OHA Instructional Leadership Team,
OHA Technology Team**



Organized a MN Wild Visit to teach about healthy habits



Small group instruction



What Students Say about Mr. Merges!



“He is a fun teacher. In literacy because we get to make posters and do Gallery Walk’s to see our friends work.”

Jaiden Bethke, 4th grader



“He makes the class really fun with dad jokes and playing 4 square with us. He is really supportive.”

Clara Whitson, 4th grader



“He is a fun and funny teacher. I liked feeding the birds.”

Lily Hammel, 5th grader



“I like Mr. Merges because he is kind, fun, respectful, and a good teacher”

George Herschbach, 5th grader



What Colleagues Say about Mr. Merges!



“Mr. Merges has this way of lifting everyone’s spirits – even on tough days, he brings a positive vibe that energizes the whole team. He’s always coming up with new ideas that get us thinking differently and trying fresh ways to improve our teaching. Plus, he makes learning genuinely fun for the kids.”

Sydney Samson



“Mr. Merges is an innovator - he is always looking for clever ways to improve his instruction *and* that of others; he shares the great ideas he has with his colleagues so that *all* students at OHA benefit. Not only does Nick’s others-focused mindset make OHA a better place for students to learn, but his positivity, welcoming demeanor, and joy for teaching make our school a better place to work!”

Kelsey Geis



What Families Say about Mr. Merges!

“Nick Merges is a phenomenal educator who takes the time to truly get to know his students, connect with them on an individual level, and create opportunities for them to shine. My daughter, Sasha, had Mr. Merges last year for 4th grade and it was a wonderful year of growth, confidence building, and academic success for her. She loved his classroom economy and took pride in all of her jobs, from whiteboard marker manager to banker. She appreciated how he used a “cafe atmosphere” to encourage his students to both work hard and still be social... at an appropriate volume of course. I was fortunate enough to attend one of the class’ mall days. I witnessed first hand how the students’ excitement and preparedness translated into a one-of-a-kind learning experience that they will never forget. Mr. Merges knows how to engage his students in meaningful work and gets them to take pride in and ownership of what they create. What he is able to accomplish with his students is truly remarkable”.

Lindsey Tjernlund, parent





Mr. Merges

**Thank you Mr. Merges for
all of your contributions to
O.H. Anderson and the
entire Mahtomedi School
District!**