Mission Statement
“At Renaissance Public Academy, we strive to develop the academic potential and personal character of each student. We seek to empower each student by employing challenging, well-defined educational programs based on core knowledge and classical principles.”

Classical Pedagogy
At Renaissance we take a deliberately classical approach to education. We adhere to an ancient model of learning that dates back to Socrates and we employ traditional, tried-and-true teaching methods. Through our focus on rigorous academics, high standards, and character education, our ultimate goal is to create philosophers, that is by definition, lovers of learning. We believe that all students have an innate wonder and desire to learn which we foster through discussion, the Socratic method of inquiry, and providing a firm foundation in western civilization and the liberal arts.

A classical education stresses the importance of providing tangible models of excellence that students strive to emulate. In Literature classes, our students read from the canon of great works, participate in text-based discussion and learn to write based upon the models provided by the renowned authors. Grammar and vocabulary lessons are pulled directly from the texts that are being studied. Math students are encouraged to explain and question their own reasoning and experiment with trying to find new ways to approach a problem. Science classes recreate famous experiments to gain a first-hand understanding of the conclusions that were drawn. Our history curriculum allows students to draw their own conclusions by using primary texts rather than secondary source textbooks. As a musician learns to play an instrument by replicating accomplished performances, our students learn to think by emulating the great thinkers and entertaining their thoughts as a means of formulating their own perspectives.

Character Development
Character development is a central component in this style of education. We set high expectations of our students, not only to strive for their best work in class, but to be upstanding, good people. Our eight “Pillars of Character,” citizenship, courage, honesty, humility, integrity, perseverance, respect and responsibility, are modeled by our teachers and referenced daily in our classes. In Literature classes, we praise the integrity of Piggy in Lord of the Flies, the courage of Atticus Finch in To Kill a Mockingbird and the honesty of Pride and Prejudice’s Elizabeth Bennet. We question the Beowulf’s lack of humility and the responsibilities of Victor Frankenstein. Through class discussion, students draw these examples off the page and into their daily lives.

5-8 Curriculum
From fifth through eighth grade, RPA students follow the Core Knowledge sequence, as developed by E.D. Hirsch. The sequential model builds successive skills and equips students with a broad inter-disciplinary foundation and the ability to think critically. Each year contains certain immersive themes which are studied across disciplines. For example, when our fifth graders study the Renaissance, they do so as a part of their history, visual arts, and literature classes simultaneously.

Below is a representation of the topics which are covered in each grade as a part of the Core Knowledge sequence.

**Fifth Grade:**
- *Language Arts:* Grammar and usage, poetic terms, myths and legends, rhetorical speeches, idioms and phrases.
- *History and Geography:* Early American civilizations, European exploration and Colonization, the Renaissance and Reformation, English Golden Age and Glorious Revolution, Early Russian Expansion, Feudal Japan, American Western Expansion and the Civil War.
- *Science:* Classification, plant and animal cells, life cycles and reproduction, matter and change.
- *Mathematics:* Ratio, percent, fractions, decimals, computation, measurement, geometry, probability.
- *Visual Arts and Music:* Art of the Renaissance, 19th century American Art, Art of Japan, Element of Music, Composers, American musical traditions,
Sixth Grade:

- **Language Arts:** Continued development in grammar and usage, vocabulary, poetic terms, myths and legends, classical literature, rhetorical speeches, idioms and phrases.
- **Science:** Plate tectonics, Oceans, Astronomy, Energy and Heat, Lymphatic and Immune Systems.
- **Latin:** Introduction: Roots and Phrases
- **Mathematics:** Continued development of Ratio, Percent, Proportion, Measurement, Geometry, Probability and Statistics, Pre-Algebra
- **Visual Arts and Music:** Ancient Greek and Roman Art, Gothic Art, Renaissance Art, Baroque, Rococo, Neoclassical, Romantic and Realism.

Seventh Grade:

- **Language Arts:** Survey of Literature, Writing and Research, Grammar, Spelling, Vocabulary, Short Stories, Essays, Plays/Drama, Speeches, Autobiography, Literary Terms, Poetic Terms
- **Latin:** Basic declensions and grammar.
- **History and Geography:** America Becomes a World Power, World War I, The Russian Revolution, Roaring 20s, The Great Depression, The New Deal, World War II.
- **Science:** Atomic Structure, Chemical Bonds and Reactions, Cell Division and Genetics, Paleontology, Geologic Time.
- **Mathematics:** Pre-Algebra, Real Numbers, Polynomials, Equivalent Equations and Inequalities, Integer Exponents, Geometry, Probability and Statistics
- **Visual Arts and Music:** Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, Expressionism, Abstraction, Modern American Painting, Romantic Composers, Music and National Identity, American Musical Traditions (Blues and Jazz)

Eighth Grade:

- **Language Arts:** Survey of Literature, Continued Development of Writing and Research, Grammar, Spelling, Vocabulary, Short Stories, Drama/Plays, Novels, Essays, Speeches, Autobiography, Literary Terms, Poetic Terms, Foreign Idioms
- **Latin:** Continued Development of Grammar and Vocabulary, Building Complex Sentences, Parsing, Declensions, Irregular Verbs
- **History and Geography:** Decline of European Colonialism, Creation of the People’s Republic of China, Creation of China, The Cold War, Communism/Socialism, The Civil Rights Movement, Breakup of the USSR, China under Communism, Contemporary Europe, Principles of American Democracy
- **Science:** Physics, Electricity and Magnetism, Electromagnetic Radiation and Light, Sound Waves, Chemistry of Food and Respiration
- **Mathematics:** Algebra, Relations, Functions, Graphs, Two Variable Linear Equations, Rational Expression, Quadratic Equations, Analytic Geometry, Introduction to Trigonometry
- **Visual Arts and Music:** Post WWII Painting, Photography, 20th Century Sculpture, Architecture after the Industrial Revolution, Non-Western Music, Classical Music, Opera, American Musical Theater

High School Curriculum:

Our high school curriculum follows that of our model school, Ridgeview Classical, which has been ranked as the 4th best open-enrollment high school and the 4th best charter school in the country by the US News and World Report. Below is a basic description of the focus of each year.
Ninth Grade: Classical and Ancient Civilizations
Students read and discuss the *Odyssey*, *Iliad*, and *Aeneid*. The corresponding history course is Western Civilization I, which begins with the Greeks and Romans and the expansion of their civilizations and philosophies in the ancient world. Students take Biology during this year and are placed into the appropriate math level, which is often Algebra I.

Tenth Grade: Development of Europe and England
Sophomores study British Literature, which is a survey of the very earliest works of old English, through Romanticism and into 19th and 20th Century British authors. The corresponding history course is Western Civilization II, which picks up after the fall of Rome and discusses the development of Europe, the Crusades, the French Revolution, and European colonization. During this year, students take Chemistry and are frequently placed in Geometry.

Eleventh Grade: The Founding and Development of America
The junior year of this progression begins with the American colonies and the founding fathers. American Literature is a survey that begins with the essays and short stories by the earliest American authors and continues with novels and non-fiction through the Civil War and Reformation, to include 19th and 20th century authors. The social studies component has a dual focus that includes the founding fathers and documents, principles of American government and a study of micro and macro economics. Physics is offered as a science course and most students place into Algebra II.

Twelfth Grade: The Modern Era
In her senior year, a student takes Modern Literature, which spends half of the year in a survey of the most profound modern and post-modern works of literature and philosophy. The second half of the year in Literature is spent developing, writing and presenting the student’s personal thesis, which is an impressive and lengthy capstone project. 20th Century History is offered to cover the World Wars, The Cold War, Vietnam and modern global relationships. Earth Science and Pre-Calculus will be offered to those students who are seeking extra credits in the interest of obtaining our “advanced” diploma.