



GPS Junior High Offering Comparison

Given the increase in options for the gifted junior high student, the Gifted Education Parent Council has developed a tool to assist you in making the best decision for your child.

SCHOOL/PROGRAM INFORMATION

[Neighborhood Junior High Schools' Honors Program](#): Junior High Honors Courses are designed to provide academic acceleration and enrichment for the academically able and ambitious student. Students who have not participated in the Accelerated Learning Program at the elementary level will need to qualify for the junior high program. [GPS Junior High Course Description Book](#)

GPS Neighborhood Junior High Schools:

- [Desert Ridge Junior](#)
- [Greenfield Junior](#)
- [Highland Junior](#)
- [Mesquite Junior](#)
- [South Valley Junior](#)

[Gifted Talented Creative Program \(GTC\)](#): Offers a differentiated learning experience addressing the individual needs of gifted students. The classrooms will offer enrichment experiences and a more rapid learning pace in an environment where curricula matches the gifted child's unique learning style. Their curiosity, creativity, intensities, sensitivities, and advanced learning styles will be embraced and appreciated by their teachers.

A classroom of like-minded peers with teachers who understand and enjoy the gifted learner will result in a healthy atmosphere where a child can flourish intellectually, socially, and emotionally. Students will be with other gifted peers for the core subjects of language arts, social studies, math, and science. *For additional details, see the GTC quarterly newsletters posted on the GTC page.*

[Gilbert Classical Academy \(GCA\)](#): A nationally-ranked college preparatory academy offering rigorous academics, athletics, and clubs. Utilizing the Socratic method of instruction, students are empowered to think critically, work collaboratively, and prepare for lifelong learning. By fostering the development of each student's academic and social potential, they are better prepared for success in high school and university. Latin language provides a solid foundation in history, culture, vocabulary, and grammar.

The six year curriculum (grades 7-12) encompasses honors level curricula and students are required to take AP classes for their upper class core subject areas. GCA is a small school, which embodies a strong unity amongst students and the community. All students are required to perform 80 hours of community service in order to graduate, thus building a strong sense of responsibility to one's community.

COMPARISON CHART:

Area of Consideration	Neighborhood Junior High	GTC	GCA (7th & 8th grade)
Classes offered for gifted students:	7th grade Honors classes in Math, English & Science. * 7th grade Honors Social Studies class varies by school. 8th grade Honors classes in Math, Science, English & Social Studies.	Honors classes designed specifically for gifted students in all 4 core subjects for both grades 7 & 8.	See link for Jr High Curriculum. GCA Curriculum
Class size:	Average class size is 27 or more	The class size is capped at 25 students	Average class size 28
Location:	See GPS' website for exact locations	SE corner of Power and Guadalupe	North of Guadalupe between Gilbert and Lindsay
Overall homework load and daily homework:	Light - Moderate. Varies by subject and school.	Light - Moderate. Projects and unfinished classwork. Varies by student and teacher.	Moderate - Heavy. Varies by subject and teacher.
Electives offered:	Varies by school. Click here for a link to the junior high course description book. Contact each junior high for details.	Students in the GTC have the same election options as students of Highland Junior High. Click here for GTC course descriptions	Click here for a link to the GCA course description book. Students are required to take a music class (band/ orchestra/ choir) in the 7 th & 8 th grade.
Consequence for being unprepared for class?	After school detention with transportation home provided by district bus	Lunch detention or after school detention, depending on whether or not the student lives within the school boundary.	Saturday school. Parents are to provide transportation for their student.
Campus Population:	Varies by school: Desert Ridge Jr: 1376 Highland Jr: 1250 South Valley Jr: 1250 Greenfield Jr: 950 Mesquite Jr: 1050	Highland Junior High population is 1,300, GTC program is capped at 125 students	Grades 7-8: 289 Grades 9-12: 387 (2019/2020)
Transportation Options:	Walking, bike, neighborhood bus stop, etc.	Regional bus stops at neighborhood junior highs, high schools, and Boulder Creek Elementary, Carpool or Parent drives student	Bus stops at selected GPS high schools, Carpool, or Parent/Student drives
Assigned High School:	The neighborhood high school	Highland High School	Gilbert Classical Academy <i>All cohorts advance to High School</i>

Area of Consideration	Neighborhood Junior High	GTC	GCA (7th & 8th grade)
Application process required:		 Depending on available space, a lottery may be held. Priority is given to those 6th grade students coming from the SCG program, SCG siblings and GTC siblings.	 Depending on available space, a lottery may be held. Priority is granted to siblings, children of GPS employees & in district students.
Prerequisite for enrollment:	 3 of 4 items: Teacher recommendation, AZ Merit scores, Grades, gifted testing	 Gifted testing From any state approved test (ie.: CogAT, IQ, etc.) with qualifying scores. Click here for more information.	 Neither a teacher recommendation, nor qualifying test scores are required.
Honors classes exclusive to gifted-identified students:			
Take a mixture of regular and gifted courses in the 4 core subjects:			
Teachers required to be gifted endorsed:			
Cross-curricular honors courses (teachers collaborate on lessons across subject areas):			
Counselor available who has been trained in the needs of gifted students:			
Staff who work with gifted students trained in the social/ emotional needs of gifted students:			
2e/ special education support on campus:			
Chromebook issued to students:			
Student uniforms:			
After school clubs:			
Open house for incoming students:	Depends on campus. Contact school for details	 details on GTC website	 October each year
Extra curricular sports offered:			
Latin Offered			 required in 7 th /8 th , optional in high school.

SO NOW WHAT?

Below is a series of questions to ask to help you weigh the options available in Gilbert Public Schools.

First, create a mental or paper/pencil inventory of your child's strengths and challenges (for your own information only) to help anticipate your child's questions or areas of concern.

Second, have a neutral conversation to gauge how your child feels about their school options. Try to ask open-ended questions without expressing your own opinion. Cookies and milk may encourage a positive atmosphere and open communication.

Third, create a Pro/Con list with your child, preferably limited to two schools under consideration.

AREAS TO CONSIDER WHEN CREATING PRO/CON LIST:

- Your child's personality, e.g., do they get excited and look forward to new beginnings, and change?
- Consider how your child handles stress and what strategies he/she uses to manage stress.
- Will your child look forward to moving to a large high school following Junior High, or prefer a smaller High School setting? Does your child hope to pursue a course of scientific study for which the Latin language will lay the foundation in comprehending scientific terminology?
- Curriculum – Does the curriculum provide continuity of study or is there a potential risk of repeated coursework? How well will the Junior High curriculum prepare them to be successful in high school?
- Electives - Are there opportunities for development and exploration of your child's talents?
- Distance/Transportation – How will travel time impact the family schedule, including travel to/from regional bus stops, extra-curricular activities and music concerts?
- Social – Are appropriate frameworks in place to help your child make friends at the schools under consideration?
- Staffing – Who will be your child's teachers and principal?
- After-School Clubs and Sports – What locations have extra-curricular offerings that align with your child's interests?
- Special Education -- Does your child need supportive services from Special Education? If so, are they offered at the schools you are considering?
- High School Transition – What High School does this Junior High typically feed into?

Fourth, turn the lists associated with the choices into bubble maps and attach a feeling to each item. Help your child articulate their emotions. Then color code the feelings as positive or negative. For each positive or negative feeling, answer the question: Is it temporary or permanent? [i.e. School A has a STEM weekend trip. This makes me happy (positive) because I love STEM – permanent. School B has Armageddon (Olympic-style events). This makes me feel excited (positive) because I enjoy light-hearted competition with my Legion (homeroom) and friends – permanent].

Before finalizing the decision, check the school website or contact the school to inquire about Open House dates or to request a tour with your child. The school may have a Student Ambassador who can answer your child's questions from a student's perspective. The school may also have a parent representative on the Gifted Education Parent Council that you may wish to contact for a parent perspective. Lastly, you may wish to allow your family to think about it for a day or two before making your decision.