



Traditional Academies

PreK-6th Grade

Student Handbook
2025-2026





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GILBERT

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Traditional Academies

PHILOSOPHY

Gilbert Public Schools (GPS) Traditional Academies are founded on the principle that parents and staff shall work together as partners to provide an education that encourages students to pursue academic excellence to the best of their abilities. The curriculum, pace of studies, and specific behavior expectations require a firm commitment from every parent, student, and teacher. By selecting a Traditional Academy, parents, students, and staff are responsible for and committed to supporting the campus programs, upholding standards, and following the rules and policies of the school.



CURRICULUM

GPS Traditional Academies develop a solid foundation of fundamental and higher level thinking skills through a structured curriculum that is consistent with each grade level and sequential throughout the grades. The kindergarten through sixth grade curriculum is taught using direct teaching techniques, whole class instruction, small group instruction, and has minimal interruptions for non-curricular programs/activities. The phonics-based Spalding method is the foundation for the language arts curriculum. The traditional math program is advanced one grade level across the school. Special area classes, such as library, music, and physical education are included in the curriculum. Technology is incorporated throughout the curriculum as aligned with state standards and district guidelines.

TRADITIONAL ACADEMIES

- Neely Traditional Academy
- Canyon Rim Elementary
- Spectrum Elementary

KEY COMPONENTS

- Direct instruction for phonics, reading, and math
- Daily reading (adjusted per grade level)
- Parental Agreement Commitment – all parents must sign handbook awareness
- Daily Homework – Teachers will assign relevant homework Monday through Thursday (time varies by grade level).

Our Traditional Academies are schools of choice within GPS and the purpose of this handbook is to provide details to help you choose the best fit for your child and your family.

Please be sure to review the GPS Elementary Handbook and sign the required agreements in the annual update. This Traditional Academies Handbook is a supplemental Procedural Manual for students enrolled at a GPS Traditional Academy.



ADMISSIONS

GPS Traditional Academies accept students within district boundaries, as well as students from outside of GPS boundaries in accordance with GPS open enrollment policy.

Priority admission is based upon:

1. Currently enrolled Traditional students (including preschool)
2. Siblings of current/enrolled Traditional students
3. Children of a district employee (cap of 20%)
4. Residents of Gilbert Public Schools
5. Non-residents of Gilbert Public Schools and space available in the grade level.

Applications for the upcoming school year are accepted beginning November 1st of the prior school year.

CURRICULUM PROCEDURES

The following curriculum procedures are established as a guide for classroom organization and planning to ensure that GPS Traditional Academies will continue to meet the expectations of parents, teachers, administration, and the Gilbert Public Schools Governing Board.

- Students' desks shall face the teacher's primary instructional area.
- Alternative desk arrangements may be used when it is more suitable for the content area or objectives being taught.

DELIVERY OF INSTRUCTION

- Each teacher shall utilize whole class instruction, direct teaching, and other approved methods with an emphasis on meeting individual needs.
- In order to maximize instructional time and students' time on task, classroom activities not directly related to academic tasks are kept to a minimum in all grade levels.
- Teachers shall strive to provide academic challenges and interventions, as needed for all students. Parents will also be encouraged to provide extended learning activities for their children.
- Teachers shall help students gain the necessary skills to become productive citizens by modeling and discussing positive character traits and expect students to follow their example.



CURRICULUM OBJECTIVES

GPS Traditional Academies shall meet or exceed all curriculum objectives established by GPS. A sequential curriculum is utilized in the areas of language arts, math, and reading. Quality teaching strategies blend the relationship of the subject matter to real world application. Curriculum materials selected for each subject area will reflect the Traditional Academies philosophy and the importance of basic skills acquisition.

Language Arts: Language is taught using the Spalding Method. Spalding is a multi-sensory language arts program that integrates direct instruction in listening, speaking, spelling, writing, and reading. Spalding is phonics-based with an emphasis on daily written and oral phonics drills. In conjunction, teachers also utilize the district adopted ReadyGen language arts curriculum. A strong emphasis shall be on listening and reading comprehension, literary appreciation, passage structure, and mental actions. Daily reading will be required in homework for each grade level.

Accelerated Reader (AR): Classroom teachers may use AR, incorporating Traditional Academy modified goals and certifications, to encourage reading, and students will be given at least 15 minutes of AR time each day to read silently and take AR tests. The program incorporates fiction and nonfiction requirements. The librarian provides open checkout time so that students have adequate time to obtain reading material.

CURRICULUM OBJECTIVES

Mathematics: Mathematics includes the mastery and practical application of basic mathematical principles. Students will understand mathematical problems have absolute answers and that precision and accuracy are required. Students use higher-level thinking to solve conceptual problem-solving applications. Traditional mathematics follows the belief that learning basic math facts and standard processes to the point of automaticity frees the mind to explore more abstract concepts. The math program shall be advanced one year at all grade levels in GPS Traditional Academies, utilizing Math In Focus.

Social Studies: GPS Traditional Academies utilize social studies materials adopted and approved by the district. Social studies is taught through direct instruction and the use of inquiry techniques to meet the state standards.

Science: GPS Traditional Academies utilize the science materials adopted and approved by the district. Science instruction is taught through direct instruction, hands-on application, and the use of discovery approach to mastering the state standards.

Technology: Technology is integrated into the GPS Traditional Academies curriculum as an additional resource that offers the student quality practice or for reference or communication as related to a specific subject. Computer skills, such as keyboard are taught where developmentally appropriate. Students enhance the writing process using Google Applications and other programs to create documents.

Gifted Education: GPS Traditional Academies use the district approved cluster and replacement models to serve gifted students in grades kindergarten through six. Students enrolled in first or second grade are screened for gifted potential and further gifted testing unless parents/guardians elect to opt out of this blanket screening. GPS currently utilizes the state approved CogAT Form 7 computer-based assessment to identify students for Gifted Services. Students who score in the 97th percentile are eligible for GPS Gifted Services.

Gilbert Public Schools offers the following Special Area classes taught by highly qualified teachers.

Library: Library instruction is provided weekly and shall be provided by a highly qualified librarian. Instruction correlates library skills for each grade level with classroom curriculum. The librarian is aware of classroom lessons that relate to specific library skills and reinforces those skills. The librarian provides adequate checkout time so that the students have time to maintain reading material.

CURRICULUM OBJECTIVES

Art: Art instruction is provided for grades kindergarten through six every other week and is provided by a qualified art teacher. Students use various art media and techniques, as well as learning design concepts, art appreciation and history. All students have the opportunity to display their artwork at campus based events and potentially other district art events.

Physical Education: Physical Education (PE) is provided each week for grades kindergarten through six by a qualified PE teacher. The program instructs each student in various physical skills to promote good health and lifelong involvement in physical activities. Students participate in activities such as Field Day and Fun Runs. Appropriate athletic/PE (tennis/running/basketball) shoes are required to participate in class.

General Music: General Music is provided for grades kindergarten through six and shall be taught by a qualified music teacher. The music program emphasizes music appreciation, music history, note reading, composition, rhythm, instrument identification, and choral skills. It also includes the opportunity for students to perform during music instruction and once a year at an evening performance.

Band & Orchestra: Students in grades five and six may choose band or orchestra in place of general music. Students attend band or orchestra two to three times a week.

CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

GPS Traditional Academies occasionally conduct school-wide or classroom activities or events that enhance the school experience for students, foster community, or celebrate students. Specific activities may include author visits, field trips, Spelling Bee, Battle of the Books, Science Fair, Field Day, Celebration of Learning, and other teacher directed activities.

Field Trips

- Field trips shall be related to the curriculum and appropriate to students' grade level.
- Each grade level previews the material and provides clear objectives for the field trip.
- Activity fees may be assessed and vary by grade level.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

School related extracurricular activities are an integral part of our Traditional Academies. These activities may include Student Council, National Elementary Honor Society, Ambassadors, Garden Club, Walk/Jog/Run Club, and other clubs. The extracurricular activities shall be conducted before or after school hours or during lunch and will not be graded. Staff will sponsor all clubs. Activity fees may be charged according to the GPS guidelines. Contact the school for specific clubs being offered each school each year.

HOMEWORK/ ASSIGNMENTS

Homework is assigned to aid each student in time management, personal responsibility, skills practice of concepts taught in class, developing study skills, developing initiative, and fostering independent learning. The homework policy will further keep parents involved in their child's academic progress and the Traditional curriculum. Daily homework will be due at the beginning of the next school day. Friday homework may be given to finish long-term assignments in the upper grades. In addition to specific homework assignments, students are expected to spend 15-30 minutes in additional reading. In primary grades, the student may be read to, may read silently, or may read to others in the home. Your child may experience difficulties if they have excessive absenteeism, are new to Traditional, or during new or difficult concepts, requiring more time to complete assignments. Please contact your child's teacher with specific concerns.

TRANSPORTATION

Gilbert Public Schools may provide bus transportation for Traditional Academy students currently living within GPS District bus boundaries based on the number of students and the availability of transportation resources. Regional bus stops are pre-designated through district transportation on a yearly basis. Parents must request bus transportation annually through GPS.

GRADING AND REPORT CARDS

Grading and report cards shall be given in accordance with GPS guidelines for elementary schools. Achievement Letter Grades (A-F) are reported for Traditional classrooms.

Traditional Grading Scales

(Grades K-6):

A = 90%-100%

B = 80%-89%

C = 70%-79%

D = 60%-69%

F = 59% and below

PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent-Teacher conferences are scheduled each fall, and attendance is required. Teachers will contact parents with concerns as needed if students are not meeting grade level expectations.



CLASSROOM PARTIES

Classroom parties can be limited throughout the school year. Birthday recognitions need to be pre-arranged with the classroom teacher with a minimum of 48-hour notice. Birthday recognitions take place outside of instructional time: afternoon recess or within the last hour of the school day.

PARENT GUARDIAN VOLUNTEERS

GPS Traditional Academies encourage each family to volunteer a minimum of four (4) hours during the school year. We welcome and appreciate the time our families devote to their child's education, but also understand the time available is different for each individual parent. Volunteering your time can be accomplished in a variety of ways, either in the classroom, at school-wide events, or at home.

BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS AND DISCIPLINE

Gilbert Traditional Schools are intended to have a highly structured, calm, and orderly atmosphere. Respect and courtesy shall be exhibited at all times. School rules shall be consistent with Gilbert Public Schools Governing Board policies.

DRESS CODE

Gilbert Traditional Schools follow the same dress code as the GPS District, as set out in the Board Policy and Parent Handbook.

STUDENT & PARENT HANDBOOK SIGNATURE DOCUMENTATION

Thank you for taking the time to read through the GPS Traditional Academies Student & Parent Handbook. The parent/guardian and student must sign this agreement, which will be kept on file in the school office. Please electronically sign it via email.

GPS STUDENT HANDBOOK

For full details of all Gilbert Public Schools policies and procedures including student behavior and dress code, please reference the Gilbert Public Schools Student Handbook.

www.gilbertschools.net/handbook

