

GWINNETT COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS: INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES

Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS) offers K–12 students a challenging curriculum and exciting learning opportunities. The academic program includes language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. A Gwinnett education also includes instruction and experiences in art, music, foreign language, physical education, health, and technical/technology programs. What students are expected to learn in each subject area is detailed in the school system’s curriculum, the Academic Knowledge and Skills (AKS). Local schools distribute grade-specific AKS booklets to the parents/guardians of registered students. View the AKS online at www.gwinnett.k12.ga.us.

GCPS provides a variety of specialized programs for students needing support to successfully learn their grade-level AKS. The district provides Title I services, English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), and alternative education programs. For students, ages 3 through 21, who have physical, mental, or emotional impairments, GCPS provides comprehensive special education programs. Guidance, social work, and psychological services provide for students’ emotional and physical needs. Students identified as intellectually gifted by the state’s criteria receive specialized instruction in gifted program classes. *Keep reading to learn more about the instructional services offered in Gwinnett schools.*

Language Arts— The language arts program provides a balanced approach to learning the AKS a student needs to be a successful reader, writer, listener, and oral communicator. This approach includes phonics, word work, vocabulary, fiction and expository comprehension strategies, and writing and grammar components. For more information, call (678) 301-7043.

Mathematics— The goal of the K–12 mathematics program is to help all students to become mathematical problem-solvers, learn to reason and communicate mathematically, learn to use mathematics in their daily lives, and become proficient with appropriate computational tools and techniques. For more information, call (678) 301-7037.

Science— The science program is a process, inquiry-based program focused on academic success for all students. Problem-solving, inquiry, and critical-thinking skills are embedded in the science AKS at all grade levels. For more information, call (678) 301-7036.

Social Studies— Gwinnett’s social studies program prepares students to participate as constructive, productive citizens in our democratic society. The social studies AKS provide opportunities for students to relate the past to the present and to build awareness of the similarities and differences between nations and cultures of the world. Students also learn about economics and personal finance. For more information, call (678) 301-7028.

Foreign Language— All traditional Gwinnett high schools offer instruction in four languages (Spanish, French, German, and Latin). Phoenix High offers Spanish. Foreign language is part of the middle schools’ connections block, providing students with an introduction to language learning over a nine-week period. More than half of the middle schools offer a one- or two-year Level One program. The Level One program

prepares students for Level Two study in high school, allowing for a longer sequence of foreign language study. At the elementary level, some schools offer foreign language instruction. For more information, call (678) 301-7020.

Fine Arts— Students enrolled in fine arts programs receive quality instruction in dance, music, theater arts, and visual arts. The fine arts AKS build from grade to grade, ensuring that students are immersed in arts experiences.

Music and visual arts instruction is provided to elementary students on a regular basis. Certified art and music specialists direct the programs in the elementary schools. Many schools have choruses, recorder ensembles, and art clubs that provide an outlet for talented and motivated students.

Art, general music, and drama programs are part of the nine-week “connections” block for middle school students. Band, chorus, and orchestra classes are offered at the middle school level. Certified teachers direct all fine arts programs, and students are instructed based on the adopted AKS for these programs.

Dance, instrumental and choral music, theater arts, and visual arts are elective fine arts courses at the high school level. Offerings at both beginning and advanced levels are provided at all schools, based on the needs and interests of the students, with appropriate AKS instruction for each course. For more information, call (678) 301-7015.

Gifted Education— Gifted education programs provide academic challenges by extending Gwinnett’s AKS program. The gifted program is called FOCUS at the elementary school level, PROBE at the middle school level, and is referred to as gifted education and QUEST in high school. Students participating in the program receive instruction in one or more of the following forms: resource classes, cluster classes, and advanced-content classes. Students are identified and placed in gifted education based on criteria established by the Georgia General Assembly and the state Board of Education. Students who transfer from gifted education programs within the state will be placed into the Gwinnett program, providing the original placement was correctly completed. Students who transfer from out of state must meet Georgia requirements. Parents should notify the school when registering if their child was identified as a gifted education student in his or her previous school. The gifted program teacher at the local school will review the student’s educational records and discuss them with the parents. For more information, contact the local school or call the Gifted Program office at (678) 301-7020.

English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)— English instruction is available for students whose primary or home language is not English and whose lack of English proficiency limits their successful participation in the regular classroom. Instruction includes listening, speaking, reading, writing, and American cultural concepts. For more information, call (678) 301-7077.

Special Education— Special education services are provided for eligible students, ages 3 through 21, in a variety of settings. Resource and itinerant services are available in each Gwinnett school, and self-contained classes are located regionally within the county. The school system also has a center-based program for students with severe emotional and behavioral disorders. Hospital and homebound services are available to students who are confined to their homes or to a hospital for an extended time. School psychologists provide school-based psychological services which include comprehensive psychoeducational assessments,

participation on Student Support Teams, and consultation with teachers and parents regarding academic and behavioral interventions for students.

GCPS provides educational services for students who meet the eligibility criteria established by the Georgia Department of Education for the following areas of exceptionality: autism, emotional and behavioral disorders, hearing impairments, intellectual disabilities, other health impaired, orthopedic impairments, significantly developmentally delayed, specific learning disabilities, speech and language impairments, traumatic brain injuries, and visual impairments. A free, appropriate public education is the right of every child with a disability, ages 3 to 22.

Related services may be needed for students so that they benefit from their special education programs. Those offered in GCPS include adaptive physical education, assistive technology devices/service, audiological services, interpreter services, occupational therapy, physical therapy, related vocational instruction, social work services, special education nursing, and transportation. For more information, call (678) 301-7110.

Project Child Find raises awareness in the community of available special education resources for younger children (ages 3–5). Working with the medical community and service agencies throughout the county, the school system seeks to identify children diagnosed with, or in need of further evaluation for, mental, physical, or emotional/behavioral disabilities. For more information on preschool Child Find activities, call (678) 301-7126.

GCPS also has Child Find activities for school-age students (ages 5–21), including eligible private school students with disabilities. For more information on Child Find activities for older students, call (678) 301-7110.

Student Academic Support and Advisement— Every school in Gwinnett County has at least one counselor. Counselors work with the school team, helping students get the most from their education by enhancing students' skills and removing barriers to learning. Outstanding practitioners, GCPS counselors have won numerous state and national awards. Middle and high school students participate in Student Advisement Programs, which encourage school success, promote wise choices for their future education, and support effective communication and positive character development. For more information, call (678) 301-7063.

Health— Health education is available in all Gwinnett County schools and helps students to become advocates of healthy living, and to choose healthy behaviors for life. The health education AKS include studies on first aid; disease prevention; tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs; nutrition; emotional and mental health; family living; applied anatomy; and physiology. Students receive instruction every year in grades K–8. One semester is required at the high school level. For more information, call (678) 301-7040.

Physical Education— The physical education program helps students to develop a physically active lifestyle and to maintain a health-enhancing level of physical fitness during their school-age years and beyond. The physical education focus is on skill development and fitness. The AKS allow teachers to individualize instruction, based on a student's skill level. One semester is required in high school. For more information, call (678) 301-7040.

Technical Education and Computer Science Programs— The high school technical education and computer science programs include courses in business, computer science, technology education, video

broadcast journalism, family and consumer sciences, and marketing. In business information technology and computer science, students can learn programming languages and Web-page design. Computer-related certifications are offered at selected high schools. Technology education programs include engineering, robotics, computerized mills and lathes, as well as technical and architectural drafting using current versions of AutoCAD software. The high school video-broadcast journalism program consists of eight sequential courses that build theory, knowledge, and applications into college prep and technical prep programs of study. Students enrolled in family and consumer science can learn more about culinary arts, child development, and design. Marketing classes teach students essential skills about promotion, international marketing, and sports marketing. A number of GCPS technical education programs have earned industry certification. Apprenticeships, internships, and co-op work experiences are available for all high school program areas. Options are available for advanced standing at postsecondary programs through prearranged articulation agreements for many of these areas.

The Grayson High School Technical Education Program offers innovative programs geared toward juniors and seniors pursuing college-prep, technical-prep, or dual diplomas in biotechnology, commercial photography, computer network systems and support, culinary arts, digital media and animation, environmental science, horticulture, law enforcement, music recording and technology, technical theater, scenery and lighting and costume and makeup, television broadcast, travel planning and hotel management, and veterinarian technology.

The programs at Maxwell High School of Technology include auto collision tech, automotive services, commercial art, computer technology, construction, cosmetology, drafting, early childhood, electronics, graphic arts, horticulture, law enforcement, machine tool/welding, and medical services.

At the middle school level, connections courses include these programs: careers, computer science, family and consumer sciences, and technology education. For more information, call (678) 301-7050.

Other Instructional Programs and Initiatives

Dual Enrollment— GCPS high school juniors and seniors may be eligible for dual enrollment, a program in which students may earn both college and high school credit. Students may attend college classes at their high school or on campus at the dual enrollment college. Contact your high school counselor for more information.

International Baccalaureate— Offered only at Norcross High, the International Baccalaureate (IB) program provides courses defined by a prescribed curriculum to meet certain international standards. Contact Norcross High at (770) 448-3674. In addition, Pinckneyville Middle and Summerour Middle (both Norcross High feeder schools) offer the pre-IB program to provide challenging courses in preparation for IB success in high school.

Advanced Placement— Advanced Placement (AP) classes are college-level courses taught during the regular high school day. A wide range of AP courses are offered at Gwinnett high schools and through Online Campus (see below). Optional subject-specific AP exams are given at the end of the school year and graded by the College Board. Many colleges either award college credit for passing the exams or allow a student to be exempt from certain courses. (However, some colleges do not honor AP credit. Students should check with their college of choice.) The cost to take each exam is approximately \$82. However, the state

Department of Education covers the cost of one AP exam per year for each of the state's AP students. (Note: Students are required to pay a \$10 registration fee.) Students who choose to take additional AP exams are responsible for the exam fees. Students with documented need may request financial assistance to cover the additional fees.

International Newcomer Center— The International Newcomer Center (INC) welcomes new middle and high school students whose first language is not English or who have attended high school in another country. The goal of the INC is to help these students make a smooth transition into Gwinnett schools. The center assesses language and math skills, recommends placement, creates a student profile, evaluates school transcripts, and advises students on course selection. The INC also provides information on graduation requirements, available school programs, and community resources. Incoming students at the elementary level are welcomed and assessed for placement at their local schools. Contact the International Newcomer Center at (678) 985-5200.

JROTC— The Junior Officer Training Corps Reserve program or (JROTC)— designed as an introduction to the armed services and officer training— has a strong tradition in Gwinnett. JROTC in Gwinnett includes a Navy JROTC unit at Duluth High, Air Force JROTC units at North Gwinnett High and Shiloh High, and a Marine JROTC unit at Parkview High. Students attending other schools may participate in JROTC by traveling to these schools for part of each day or transferring to one of the schools full time. For more information on the JROTC program, call (678) 301-7050.

Prekindergarten— Children who enter kindergarten ready to learn are more likely to succeed in school. Georgia's lottery-funded Pre-K Program is designed to provide the state's 4-year-olds with the high-quality learning experiences they need to prepare for kindergarten. Students must be 4 on September 1 to participate in the program, which follows the regular school year calendar. In Gwinnett, the Pre-K Program is offered through private childcare providers who are approved by the state. Contact Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning at (404) 656-5957 for information, or check online at www.decal.state.ga.us.

Phoenix High— Phoenix High is designed to meet the varied needs of its students, including those who choose not to attend a traditional high school, students who must or choose to attend in the evenings, teen parents, and adults pursuing a high school diploma. Phoenix High offers a range of opportunities for students to develop knowledge and skills needed to fulfill adult goals. Students must be residents of Gwinnett County, at least 16 years old, and attend one year of high school prior to the semester they enroll at Phoenix High. Students enrolled full-time in other Gwinnett high schools may pay to take one or two additional courses at Phoenix High on a space-available basis as a 7th period class. For more information, call (770) 513-6862.

Gwinnett County Online Campus— Numerous online courses are offered as tuition-based 7th period classes, outside a student's regular class schedule. Students may take courses to get ahead or to make-up a class previously failed. Additionally, a limited number of online courses may be offered as a part of some students' regular school day schedule at the recommendation of his or her counselor and curriculum assistant principal. Online courses allow students to work at the time of day in which they learn the best and that best

fits their schedule. Although the courses offer flexibility, they are not self-paced. Students have teacher-directed deadlines, due dates, and examinations. Students must have a counselor's approval and meet the prerequisites to take each course. For more information, log on to www.gwinnettk12online.net.

Gwinnett County Public Schools

437 Old Peachtree Road, N.W. • Suwanee, GA 30024-2978 • www.gwinnett.k12.ga.us