DECATUR
CLASSICAL
SCHOOL

Infinite Learning

Frequently Ask Questions 2018:

Q: What are your hours?
A: Decatur's school day is from 7:45-2:45. Earliest drop off for students is 7:30 a.m. The 'J at School' provides after school care on-site from 2:45-6:00 p.m.

Q: What is a classical school?
A: Decatur is one of five classical schools in CPS. Classical Schools provide a challenging liberal arts centered program. Our teachers provide accelerated instruction in science, mathematics, language arts, Latin, and the humanities. On average, students are working one grade level above their current grade.

Q: What is the enrollment process?
A: All enrollment and testing is conducted by the Office of Access & Enrollment. Families can apply for Decatur and other schools by following the steps outlined on the OAE website and utilizing the new online application system GoCPS.

Admissions testing is required for the Selective Enrollment Elementary Schools (Regional Gifted Centers, Classical Schools, and Academic Centers). All age-appropriate students applying to grades K-4 will be tested. Families are notified by CPS in April 2019 of any offered seats at select schools. Applicants for the Regional Gifted Centers and Classical Schools are selected based on their admissions exam score.

Q: What is the difference between the regional gifted centers vs classical school exams?
A: The classical school exam assesses a child's current abilities in reading and math. The exam evaluates reading comprehension, fluency, problem solving, reasoning, and understanding of mathematical patterns. The gifted exam focuses on spatial, logic, and reasoning. The exam resembles that of an I.Q. test. All testing is completed before March 2019.

Q: What is your school profile?
A: Decatur is a kindergarten through 6th grade building with 282 students enrolled. We are a level 1+ school and our student attainment is in the 99th percentile for both reading and math. Our demographics are: Asian: 31.0%, Black: 4.2%, Hispanic: 14.8%, White: 43.7%, Other: 6.3% , Low Income: 14.1%, Diverse Learners: 4.2%

Q: Who qualifies for busing services?
A: Students who live over 1.5 miles and north of Fullerton Avenue qualify for bus service. Students are picked up and dropped off at designated locations throughout the city based on address. Busing policies and procedures can change from year to year and are determined by the CPS department of Transportation. For more information on transportation you can visit http://cps.edu/Programs/Pages/Transportation.aspx

Q: What other programming is offered to Decatur students?
A: We believe in giving our students many platforms to grow and succeed outside the traditional classroom setting. In addition to core subjects, our students have physical education every day. We offer Latin to all students as part of our classical model. Students take classes in art, dance, and makerspace as part of their weekly programming.

Q: What standardized testing takes place at Decatur?
A: All students take NWEA MAP tests in Reading and Math (online). This test is given two times a year. (40-60 minutes per test). Students in grades 3-6th also take PARCC Assessment in Reading & Math (420 – 630 minutes) in the spring. Primary grades (K-3rd) take leveled reading tests each quarter to assess their current reading levels (10-30 minutes).

Q: What curriculums do you use?
A: In reading, teachers use the Common Core Standards to engage students in high quality accelerated instruction that enriches and supports the comprehensive development of all students. Students read a variety of quality literary and informational text for for both understanding and enjoyment. Our teachers in 4th-6th grade implement a novel based curriculum that encourages analysis, critical thinking, and application of literary tools.

Decatur Classical's mathematics program provides many different tools and strategies for developing students into confident mathematicians. Our mathematics include [Go Math!](#) in grades K-4 and Illustrative Mathematics in grades 5-6th. We use a Problem based Learning model approach to foster a deep understanding of the relationships between mathematical concepts and real world situations. Teachers use data to provide students with meaningful feedback to focus on strategies and justification for math rather than explicit procedures.

Teachers use the CPS Science Instructional Framework, which includes [Amplify Science](#). This is a robust, multimodal, hands-on program made to fulfill 100 percent of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). It emphasizes students exploring phenomena in order to answer authentic questions while using evidence to support their thinking and encourages students to read, write and argue like scientists. Teachers strive to engage students in exciting, investigation-based learning where students have the chance to explore through hands on learning. Our Makerspace uses [Project Lead the Way](#) and project based learning to not only teach students STEAM skills, but also how to solve problems, think critically and creatively, communicate, and collaborate.

Q: What after school options do you offer families?
A: We have many after school options at Decatur Classical School. J at school offers child care each school day from 2:45-6pm. We also have fee-based classes offered throughout the week such as Dream Big Drama, We Got Game, Band, Robotics, Coding, Chess, Mission Propelle Yoga, etc. Students can also sign up for teacher created clubs and sports for a small fee.

Q: Do you have recess?
A: Yes! All students have 60 minutes total for lunch and recess each day.

Q: Can I volunteer at Decatur?
A: Yes! Decatur has a volunteer coordinator, Maria McCaffrey, (decaturvolunteer@gmail.com) and there are many opportunities to get involved. All volunteers must have a background check completed before volunteering by applying on the [CPS website](#).

Q: What are your class sizes?
A: It varies by grade level, but next year we anticipate full Kindergarten classes of 28-29 students.

Please contact Ms. Branch clbranch@cps.edu or Ms. Luna yeluna@cps.edu with additional questions.