



Frequently Ask Questions 2017

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 2018 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 2018.

Q: What happens to students once they complete 6th grade at Decatur?

A: Once in 6th grade, students can elect to apply for seats in other schools or attend their neighborhood school. The process is similar to the application process for Kindergarten in that you can apply several schools such as magnet clusters, regional gifted centers, academic centers, etc. We work closely to support and help families through the application process for academic centers and other choice schools. For more information you can visit the [Office of Access & Enrollment](#).

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: 31.6%, Black: 4.3%, Hispanic: 12.4%, White: 45.7%, Other: 6% , Low Income: 16.3%, [Diverse Learners](#): 3.9%

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 twice a week as part of our classical model. Students also have classes in music and dance. Our classroom teachers also partner with teaching artists to offer various art residencies to students.

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 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 to developing students into confident mathematicians. Our mathematics include [Go Math!](#) in grades K-4 and Engage New York in grades 5-6th. We use a workshop 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 [ScienceFusion](#) and the Full Option Science System ([FOSS](#)) Curriculum. Both are aligned to Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). Teachers strive to engage students in exciting, investigation-based learning where students have the chance to explore through hands on learning.

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.

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.