

PROSPECTIVE PARENT MEETING

2024-25 SCHOOL YEAR



A TITAN'S CREED

Titans endeavor to recognize and pursue truth, beauty, and goodness.

Titans celebrate virtue in scholarship, relationship, and citizenship.

Titans take ownership of and find joy in learning.

Titans value our responsibilities above our rights.

Titans love, respect, and protect one another.

Striving to be our best, do our best,

And give our best to the world, in

Mind, Body, and Spirit,

excellence with honor

WE ARE TITANS!

The Classical Academy

PARENT LETTER OF COMMITMENT

Welcome to The Classical Academy (TCA), a community of learners – students, parents, teachers, and staff – working together toward a common mission. Our hope is that this letter will help solidify your decision to join our school community. Thank you for taking the time to read it carefully.

Since opening in 1997, TCA has become one of the largest charter schools in the state. We are a sought-after educational partner for parents in El Paso County and one of the highest performing schools in Colorado and the nation. Our tireless commitment to TCA's Mission, Creed, and Core Values creates a distinctive, classically oriented learning environment which nurtures curiosity and promotes virtue, wisdom, and a lifelong joy of learning.

The benefits of TCA are life-changing for our students and families, but there are sacrifices and challenges to consider. TCA does implement a strict uniform policy, and does not provide transportation, technology-focused learning, or some electives/activities found at other local schools.

As a public charter school, TCA receives state *Per Pupil Revenue* (PPR) as do all Colorado public schools. However, unlike other traditional public schools, our land and most of our facilities must be funded with that PPR. Thus, we have approximately \$3.5 million a year less to pay staff salaries and support our unique instructional approach – including significantly smaller class sizes, which again leads to less revenue.

Accordingly, TCA depends on the generous donations of our community, and we also ask our parents to give of their time and resources to help our children thrive, while being fully informed of our shared commitments:

TCA Commitment to Family

- Classically oriented curriculum and methods; focusing on engagement with the greatest thinkers, writers, artists, and musicians
- Partner with and support parents' role in developing students
- Professional, loving, and caring teachers and staff
- Small class sizes
- Responsive administration

Family Commitment to TCA

- To know and support TCA's Mission, Core Values, Creed, and Philosophy of Education
- To support TCA with tax-deductible donations – our goal is 100% participation
- To volunteer time, expertise, and resources to support your child's education
- To support school and classroom policies per TCA Handbooks

While we do not have annual requirements for volunteer and financial commitments, we ask that you support TCA as you and your family are able. By initialing the Parent Letter of Commitment box on the Admission Form, you acknowledge and affirm that you have read, understand, and agree to all that is contained herein.

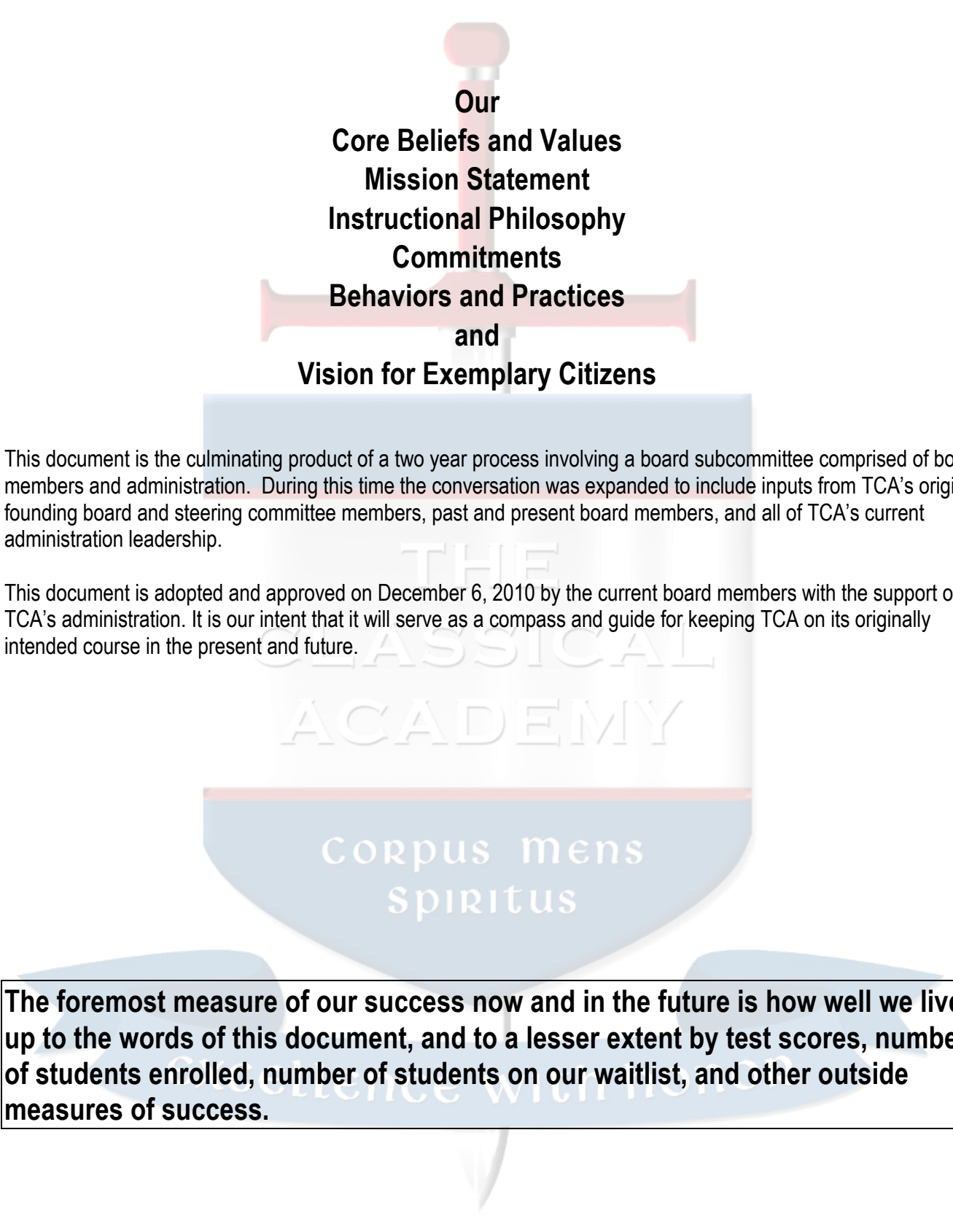
Thank you so much and welcome to TCA! I look forward to journeying with you!



Dr. Robert Thomason, President



The Classical Academy's Core Values



**Our
Core Beliefs and Values
Mission Statement
Instructional Philosophy
Commitments
Behaviors and Practices
and
Vision for Exemplary Citizens**

This document is the culminating product of a two year process involving a board subcommittee comprised of board members and administration. During this time the conversation was expanded to include inputs from TCA's original founding board and steering committee members, past and present board members, and all of TCA's current administration leadership.

This document is adopted and approved on December 6, 2010 by the current board members with the support of TCA's administration. It is our intent that it will serve as a compass and guide for keeping TCA on its originally intended course in the present and future.

The foremost measure of our success now and in the future is how well we live up to the words of this document, and to a lesser extent by test scores, number of students enrolled, number of students on our waitlist, and other outside measures of success.



Mission Statement

The Classical Academy exists to assist parents in their mission to develop exemplary citizens equipped with analytical thinking skills, virtuous character, and a passion for learning, all built upon a solid foundation of knowledge.

Core Beliefs and Values

We believe that all human beings deserve dignity and respect.

- ◆ We value children as persons and therefore will regard them as full human beings.
- ◆ We value a culture of respectful, civil interactions between adults in all situations and at all times as we seek to teach our children to do the same.
- ◆ We value the wisdom and life experience of the senior citizens in our community.

We believe in the self-evident truths as found in the Declaration of Independence "...that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

- ◆ We value the fact that *freedom isn't free* and honor the sacrifices made by the men and women who serve or have served in the Armed Forces.
- ◆ We value our responsibilities even above our rights when it comes to serving our fellow man and seek to foster a culture of service to others, both inside and outside of the TCA community.
- ◆ We value cultivating virtuous character and each citizen's responsibility to uphold the Constitution and Bill of Rights of the United States of America.
- ◆ We value personal economic liberty expressed through altruistic, free enterprise economic systems.

We believe that all students should be educated in a way that equips them to be exemplary citizens.

- ◆ We value a liberal arts education with an emphasis on the study of the Western tradition and its ideals of democracy, equality before the law, property rights, political rights, and religious freedom.
- ◆ Additionally, we recognize and value the achievements and contributions of many peoples, cultures, and nations.
- ◆ We value an education that recognizes man as spirit, mind, and body.
- ◆ We value an education that inspires and uplifts the individual through the pursuit of truth, beauty, and goodness across the disciplines.
- ◆ We will help students understand the relationships and limitations of the domains of science, philosophy and religion.
- ◆ We value an education that instills traditional values through the study of quality, time-tested history and classical literature.
- ◆ We value an education that nurtures a passion for learning that will last a lifetime through the context of human relationships and a foundational knowledge base.
- ◆ We value an education that cultivates virtuous character including excellence with honor, moral courage, compassion and relational grace.
- ◆ We value an education that fosters rich creativity, complex analytical thinking, and discernment while exploring the marketplace of ideas.

We believe that parents are ultimately responsible for the education of their children.

- ◆ We value a staff that recognizes the honor, gravity, and responsibility that has been entrusted to them by parents and respects the domain of the home in areas such as sex education and religious upbringing.
- ◆ We value parents who treat staff as our most important asset by respecting their authority in the school domain, and teaching their children to do the same.
- ◆ We will be counter-cultural where the culture encourages indulgence and will hold higher standards of civility and decency than are typical in the culture at large.

Instructional Philosophy



Classical Ideas

- ◆ Trivium – the **grammar, logic, and rhetoric** developmental stages of learning
- ◆ Lifelong pursuit of **truth, beauty, and goodness**
- ◆ Literature and ideas that have survived **the test of time**

Socratic Approach

- ◆ The teacher masterfully guides learning through **questioning**.
- ◆ The students do the **work of learning** and perform **the act of knowing**.
- ◆ **Seminar format** is also used particularly in upper level inspirational subjects such as history, literature, and science.

Charlotte Mason Philosophies

Education is an Atmosphere where all members of the TCA community will endeavor to foster and nurture a warm learning environment for children of

- ◆ compassion, encouragement, and support
- ◆ passion and interest in the material being taught
- ◆ expectation of good work with a high level of academic mastery
- ◆ intrinsic motivation where external rewards are used sparingly and with caution
- ◆ self-esteem produced through genuine accomplishments rather than trivial, artificial praise

Education is a Discipline where children acquire authentic character and freedom by learning

- ◆ the *musts* in life
- ◆ submission to authority, whether to parents, teachers, coaches, or to the wisdom of the past
- ◆ healthy habits of spirit, mind, and body formed thoughtfully and responsibly
- ◆ that correction, done with kindness, is a form of invaluable feedback

Education is a Life where inspirational ideas and truth are recognized to be the real food for the child's mind and are provided through

- ◆ “living books” written by experts with a passion for their subject matter; expansive vocabulary with complex sentence structure
- ◆ original primary and secondary source documents to gain historical and experiential perspectives
- ◆ field trips and visits by classroom guests who are experts in their field
- ◆ meaningful hands-on activities particularly in math, science, and the arts
- ◆ composer, picture, and nature studies where listening, observing, and drawing are emphasized

Education is the Science of Relationships where the teachers masterfully facilitate and support healthy beneficial relationships between the child and

- ◆ home (parents, siblings, extended family)
- ◆ teachers and other school staff
- ◆ other children
- ◆ people of the past and present through the study of history
- ◆ the text through the study of quality, classical literature
- ◆ the elderly
- ◆ nature through science and mathematics
- ◆ the arts through composer study, picture study, and applied fine arts.
- ◆ the community, nation, and world through service and current events



Commitments

As one school with multiple campuses, TCA is unified by the following commitments:

We adopt Uniform/Dress Code policies to:

- ◆ Increase safety by
 - >allowing for quick recognition of non-TCA students
 - >discouraging cliques based on attire
- ◆ Reduce distractions
- ◆ Minimize social status issues
- ◆ Foster a healthy attitude of respect and humility
- ◆ Improve academic achievement

We commit to open communication with our stakeholders.

We respect family values, faith/religion, and time.

We defer to parents for sex education of children.

We let kids be kids longer.

We commit to stay small – both class size and school size.

We strive to be a community of character by teaching and modeling virtuous character explicitly from kindergarten to graduation rather than considering ourselves to be a “school of character” or claiming that we “have great character.”

We partner with parents to recognize and embrace adversity, including struggle and even failure as healthy opportunities for each student’s growth.

We give only purposeful, measured homework, appropriate for grade level and only as needed within the specified reasonable limits (allowing for the fact that some children will need to take more time).

We provide a program of well-rounded education for all children including:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ◆ Logic instruction | ◆ An emphasis on free market economics |
| ◆ Foreign Language beginning in kindergarten | ◆ Competent self expression through public speaking skills and expressive, persuasive writing |
| ◆ The Arts | ◆ Formative and summative assessment which focus on the actual accomplishments of each individual student |
| ◆ Classical Literature | ◆ Limited group projects; when allowed, assessment should reflect individual accomplishments rather than a group grade |
| ◆ Physical Education | ◆ Appropriate handling of controversial issues respecting age appropriateness; presenting various sides while respecting family values |
| ◆ Athletics and Activities opportunities at secondary | ◆ College Prep high school graduation requirements (Core subjects of English/Literature, Foreign Language, Math, Science, History, and Social Sciences along with philosophically appropriate electives) |
| ◆ A balance of inspirational (i.e., literature, history) and disciplinary subjects (i.e., mathematics, grammar) | |
| ◆ Accurate history emphasized over social studies | |
| ◆ Mathematics | |
| ◆ Science taught as both an inspirational subject and a disciplinary subject | |
| ◆ Phonics-based reading instruction beginning with phonemic awareness | |
| ◆ Systematic grammar and writing instruction | |

We enlist parental support through giving of volunteer time, talent, and financial contributions.

We value staff members who believe in TCA’s Beliefs, Values, Mission, Instructional Philosophy, Commitments, Behaviors and Practices.

We employ staff who model professional excellence, who are coachable, and are self-motivated to improve.

We expect staff to foster and maintain positive relationships with students and parents.

We host prospective parent meetings where an honest, accurate picture of TCA and its Core Beliefs and Values, Mission, Instructional Philosophy, Commitments, Behaviors, and Practices are presented in order for parents to make an informed, thoughtful decision about the fit for their family.

We aspire to embrace one another without regard for disability, ethnicity, gender, or religion.



Behaviors and Practices

LEAVES

TCA seeks to bring its philosophy to life through:

- ◆ A healthy conflict resolution process
- ◆ Consistent discipline policies and practices
- ◆ School calendars that reflect and balance respect for student learning, staff, and family needs
- ◆ Philosophically driven compensation plans based on real performance
- ◆ A board committee focused on staff appreciation
- ◆ Periodic re-commitments before students enter 6th grade and 9th grade
- ◆ Patriotic celebrations such as the Veterans' Day Assembly
- ◆ Home support for students to complete studies in a timely and acceptable manner
- ◆ A curriculum review process which allows for parent input
- ◆ Limiting use of personal electronic devices and cautious use of internet and media in instruction
- ◆ Small group interactions such as Titan Teams, to ensure that every student has at least one key relationship with a staff member
- ◆ Intentional character conversations
- ◆ A capstone Senior year experience weaving together Rhetoric, Literature and Civics supported by a rich program of special events and traditions.
- ◆ The graduation tradition of parents handing diplomas to their own child

Vision – Exemplary Citizens

FRUIT

Throughout his or her life, the **exemplary citizen** seeks to produce fruitful work by: nurturing a **Spirit** which is:

- ◆ honorable, compassionate, humble, and full of grace and integrity
- ◆ courageous to make a stand for what is right
- ◆ desirous to serve others
- ◆ growing in virtuous character
- ◆ grateful
- ◆ “hungry” for what is true, beautiful, and good
- ◆ hopeful and optimistic
- ◆ capable of handling emotional distress
- ◆ able to give and receive love
- ◆ able to produce fruitful work

continually feeding a **Mind** which is:

- ◆ attentive, analytical and discerning
- ◆ passionate for life-long learning
- ◆ growing in its foundation of knowledge
- ◆ respectful of the rights and responsibilities of his/her citizenship
- ◆ able to recognize life-giving ideas

and caring for the physical needs of his or her **Body** through doing the “musts” in one’s life such as:

- ◆ good nutrition
- ◆ regular exercise
- ◆ other healthy habits



Kindergarten Admission FAQs

How many Kindergarten seats are available at TCA?

TCA has 318 half-day Kindergarten seats. There are 106 seats on each of the three campuses split between morning and afternoon times. TCA does not offer a Full-Time Kindergarten option.

When do TCA Traditional Kindergarten offers go out?

Within a week after the Prospective Parent meeting each November, the first round of offers will go out for firm seats. “Firm” means that your child is being offered one of the 318 seats available. The additional students on the waitlist are in a “Pending” status, meaning that your child is not in the first 318 students on the list but will be offered a “Firm” seat as soon as one becomes available. Be sure to respond and accept the seat prior to the deadline listed in the offer.

How does the “Pending” waitlist work?

When a “Firm” seat is declined, the next child on the “Pending” list will be offered a “Firm” seat. All updates are made in waitlist order and typically, all children on the list receive a “Firm” offer. Beginning in January, we will send monthly “Pending” waitlist updates, so you can track your child’s progress on this list.

Do I need to register with D20?

Students with a “Firm” seat will receive instructions to register with D20 in early January. As additional children receive “Firm” seats, they will be provided registration instructions at that time. All students must register with D20 to attend TCA. D20 does require certain documents for enrollment, including the child’s birth certificate and available immunizations.

How do the three elementary campuses differ and how can I learn more?

All three TCA campuses teach the same curriculum and follow the same instructional philosophy. The main differences are the locations and the individual staff members. In late April, all three campuses will hold Kindergarten Parent Orientations. You will hear from staff and will be able to tour the campuses. Details on these events will be sent out by late March.

How do I know which campus my child will be assigned to?

On the admission form you will be asked to complete, list your campus and time preferences in order (three campuses, AM and PM). Please provide preferences for all six (6) options. We then assign seats in waitlist order based on preferences and availability. We do our best to give you your first choice, and most families typically receive their first or second choices.

For those who receive “Firm” seats this winter, you will receive your child’s campus/time assignment in early March. As “Pending” seats become “Firm” after March, you will be notified of the campus and time placement as soon as possible. If you do not get your first choice, it is still possible you will be moved to a higher choice as the months progress. We will continue to make campus/time changes, checking with you to confirm you still want to change, until one month prior to the start of school. After that date, all assignments are final.

What does it cost to attend TCA?

TCA is a public charter school and therefore, does not charge tuition. There are fees for field trips and materials year-to-year. TCA also encourages families to give generously of their time, talent, and treasure. Students are required to wear uniforms and buy appropriate school supplies for class.

Federal assistance with TCA school fees is available for qualifying families through the Free and Reduced Lunch program at D20. See <https://www.asd20.org/nutrition-and-food-services/free-and-reduced/> for more information.

Do you offer transportation or daycare?

We do not offer transportation but encourage neighboring families to carpool together if possible. If daycare is needed, Kindercare or Lionheart Academy may offer bus drop-off/pick-up. *(Please note: TCA is not affiliated with, nor does it endorse any daycares/after school programs.)*

Can I complete a “CHOICE” application at D20 after I get an offer from TCA?

If you have a “Firm” seat at TCA, and you complete a D20 CHOICE application and you *get* your CHOICE, you will lose your TCA seat and D20 will assign you to the CHOICE school. *Only submit a D20 CHOICE application if TCA is not your most desired school.* (TCA is not a D20 CHOICE school; we are a waitlist school.)

You can submit a CHOICE application without jeopardizing your place on the “Pending” waitlist. If you get a “Firm” seat at TCA later, you can then choose your school preference. If that is TCA, you must provide written notification to TCA to complete a transfer from the CHOICE school to TCA.

What if I don’t accept the TCA Kindergarten offer?

If you decline a “Firm” seat, your child will be removed from the waitlist, and you will need to re-apply for a future year. If you notify us *before* you get a “Firm” seat, we can move your child to a future year’s waitlist. If you want TCA for the long-term, Kindergarten is your best opportunity to get in.

How does “sibling status” work and when will my other children be eligible?

Once a child is enrolled at TCA, all other children in the family receive priority status on their waitlists for the same school year. *Please note: You must add younger siblings to the waitlist for them to receive an offer.* For older siblings, the sibling status improves their places on their lists and TCA makes every effort to enroll siblings when able.

What if I receive a “Firm” seat but move out of D20 before school starts?

Students living in D20 have a higher priority on the waitlist. Moving out of district could affect your child’s “Firm” seat. Please check with us if you are considering an out of district move prior to the start of school. If you move *after* school begins, it does not affect your child’s enrollment. Once your child is attending TCA you remain enrolled regardless of your district of residency.

What if I also receive a Cottage School Program (CSP) Kindergarten offer?

Many families have their children on both waitlists. If you get a CSP Kindergarten offer, you can accept it while you wait for a Traditional “Firm” seat. If/when the Traditional seat becomes available, let us know which program you want, and we will remove your child from the other. CSP will have an information meeting in January, for those interested in this option. For info on the Cottage School Program (located at the East campus), call (719) 487-2000.

Can I tour the campuses now, before deciding on my preferences?

Look for information on the TCA website at <https://www.tcatitans.org/enroll>. Please direct any tour questions to Tisha Harris (tharris1@asd20.org), TCA Director of Communications.

TCA Registrar Contact Info: TCARegistrar@asd20.org

- Kayla Harper, Registrar: kharp@asd20.org
- Sherry Cory, Assistant Registrar (Admissions): scory@asd20.org
- Karen Lujan, Assistant Registrar (Records): klujan@asd20.org

****Please add noreply@asd20.org to your email safe senders list so you won’t miss communications from TCA!****

Kindergarten Readiness

*A Note to Kindergarten Parents
from The Classical Academy*

There is no one quality or skill that children need in order to do well in Kindergarten. A combination of factors contributes to school success. These factors include physical well-being, social and emotional maturity, language skills, the ability to solve problems and to think creatively, and a general knowledge about the world. School success also depends upon the “match” between a child’s skills, his knowledge base and the expectations of the school. The Classical Academy’s Core Values will give you important information regarding what TCA values and what you can expect for your child as they enter TCA’s K-12 program.

Skills that should be in place before starting Kindergarten:

1. Able to identify and name all 26 letters of the alphabet (upper and lowercase).
2. Able to take turns and share with peers and adults.
3. Able to dress themselves (snap, zip, tuck in shirt); these skills are very helpful for children using the bathroom independently.
4. Able to tie shoes or working toward mastery of this skill
5. Can state their name (first and last).
6. Familiar with large motor skills such as hopping, skipping and jumping.
7. Familiar with small motor skills such as using crayons, scissors, glue and proper grip with pencils.
8. Able to write first name using a capital at the beginning followed by lower case letters.
9. Able to identify numbers 0 – 25.
10. Able to count 1 – 25.
11. Able to identify colors and shapes (circle, square, triangle, and rectangle).
12. Able to sit, listen and stay focused for a period of 15 minutes at a time.
13. Accustomed to listening to books read aloud daily at home and able to handle books with care.
14. Accustomed to group experiences through Sunday school, preschool, daycare, library story times, etc.
15. Displays respect toward others.
16. Able to follow one, two, and three step directions.

Parental Responsibilities in Kindergarten:

1. Read to your child daily from Nursery Rhymes, Fairy Tales, etc.
2. Limit TV, computer and video games.
3. Practice phonograms/spelling words daily as introduced.
4. Visit occasionally to observe, help with small groups, etc.
5. Continue to give your child opportunities to follow multiple step directions.
6. Give your child opportunities to develop and build small motor skills by working with puzzles, Legos, writing etc.

Very thought provoking TEDTalk by Dimitri Christakis, Pediatrician that speaks on Media and Children:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BoT7qH_uVNo&t=11s