

Gwinnett's curriculum for grades K–12 is called the Academic Knowledge and Skills (AKS) and is aligned to the state-adopted Georgia Standards of Excellence in Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies for elementary school students. Gwinnett's AKS is a rigorous curriculum that prepares students for college and 21st century careers in a globally competitive future.

The AKS for each grade level spells out the essential concepts students are expected to know and skills they should acquire in that grade or subject. The AKS offers a solid base on which teachers build rich learning experiences. Teachers use curriculum guides, technology, and instructional resources to teach the AKS and to make sure every student is learning to his or her potential.

The Academic Knowledge and Skills curriculum was developed by our teachers, with input from our parents and community, in response to Gwinnett County Public Schools' mission statement:

*The mission of Gwinnett County Public Schools is to pursue excellence in academic knowledge, skills, and behavior for each student resulting in measured improvement against local, national, and world-class standards.*

Read on to find out more about what your child will learn during 2nd grade and how you can support your child's learning at home. We encourage you to talk to your child about what he or she is learning.

**WELCOME TO 2ND GRADE!**



## 2ND GRADE

2020–21 PARENT AKS BROCHURE



ACADEMIC KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS  
GWINNETT COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Learning to read and write is the basis for *all* learning. In 2nd grade, students work on reading and writing skills that will lead to success in subsequent grade levels. Specifically, the focus is on reading with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension. Students use reading and writing skills throughout the school day as part of Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies classroom activities. The AKS emphasizes literacy skills across the content areas. Activities include interactive read-alouds, shared reading and writing experiences, small-group guided reading, and independent reading and writing times— all within the context of a balanced literacy classroom.

By the end of 2nd grade, all students are expected to:

- Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words;
- Apply grade-appropriate language and word study skills in writing;
- Self-select books, self-monitor to correct errors when reading and writing, and talk with and listen to peers about one's reading and writing to become lifelong readers and writers; and
- Use listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills to communicate throughout the day.

## Balanced Literacy

Teachers follow these principles to determine the best teaching methods, strategies, and materials to meet the needs of our students:

- Learning to read and write is a complex process with many facets.
- Reading and writing are about experiencing language, not merely practicing isolated skills.
- Reading and writing are interconnected forms of communication that emerge from listening and speaking.
- There is no “one way” to teach reading or writing. Teachers will incorporate a wide variety of strategies to teach every student.
- Learning to read and write occurs along a developmental progression of stages.
- All children can learn to read and write along this developmental progression with modeled and guided instruction.
- Knowing where each child is developmentally enables teachers to plan, teach, and evaluate appropriately.
- Children should be immersed in a print-rich environment.
- Reading and writing to, with, and by children should occur daily.
- Each day, children should have opportunities to read fiction and non-fiction materials they select themselves and write on self-selected topics.
- Reading and writing are integrated into all subject areas.

## Speaking and Listening

2nd graders listen to and write about a variety of literary forms, such as stories and poems, in a variety of fiction and informational (non-fiction) genres. These include poetry, fables, folktales, biographies, and reports. They learn to listen attentively in order to ask and respond to questions and directions. Students communicate in conversation with descriptive language by asking and answering questions— such as *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *why*, and *how*— to show understanding. They discuss various fables and folktales to determine a central message, lesson, or moral. They also read informational text to identify the main topic of a multi-paragraph text.

## Reading

2nd graders read texts with photographs and illustrations to summarize, compare and contrast, evaluate, and develop inferences based on what they read. Students read a variety of texts for both pleasure and purpose. They distinguish between literature and informational text. 2nd graders read and discuss their own writings in conversations with adults and peers. They are expected to read grade-level texts with accuracy and fluency in order to effectively comprehend what they read.

## Language (Phonics, Spelling, Vocabulary, Grammar, and Handwriting)

By the end of the year, 2nd graders should be able to read and spell words with selected patterns and common high-frequency words. During the year, teachers assess students' ability to use these words correctly in reading and writing. Students also practice clear and legible handwriting.

## Writing

Students write opinion pieces to connect opinions and reasons and write informational pieces to explain with facts and definitions. They write personal stories (narratives) in which they recount a well-elaborated event or short sequence of events. They are continuing to develop a sense of their audience and their own voice. 2nd graders are learning to write for a specific purpose. Students use grade-appropriate grammar, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation in their writing. They are able to share their writing with others.



### Literacy Tips for Parents

- Help your child build his personal library. Visit the used book store, garage sales, book swaps, and school book sales.
- Set aside daily reading time at home. Read aloud a chapter or two together each night.
- Be a good example. Let your child see you reading.
- Visit the library regularly.

## Mathematics



In the Mathematics classroom, students grow into confident, competent problem-solvers. They develop their understanding and use of numbers as they explore how mathematics connects to the real world. As they apply their learning in context, students develop their ability to think critically, reason mathematically, and communicate effectively.

Learning in 2nd grade focuses on developing number sense, understanding and using numbers through mathematical operations, geometry, measurement and data, and algebraic thinking. By the end of 2nd grade, students should be able to do the following:

- Extend understanding of base ten notation;
- Represent and solve problems involving addition and subtraction within 20;
- Build fluency with addition and subtraction;
- Work with equal groups to gain foundations for multiplication;
- Measure and estimate lengths in standard units;
- Describe and analyze two-dimensional shapes and their attributes; and
- Work with time and money.

2nd grade students use a number of strategies and tools as they learn math. Students work together in solving problems. They use hands-on manipulatives and technology. Students use data, graphs, symbols, charts, rulers, and problem-solving strategies.



### Math Tips for Parents

- Look for and talk about patterns. They're all around us... Think walkways, wallpaper, tiles, and windows.
- Estimate measurement in inches, feet, and yards.

## Social Studies



GCPS' Social Studies program prepares students to participate as constructive citizens in a democratic society. Students understand their role and responsibility as citizens. They discover America's heritage and its role and responsibility in the world. Students relate the past to the present. They learn the similarities and differences between nations, cultures, and peoples of the world. Students interpret maps and globes, process information, and solve problems. Students will learn how beliefs and ideas influence decisions and laws, how conflict causes change, how actions affect society, and how the movement of people and the spreading of ideas affect everyone.



### Civics Tips for Parents

- Compare and contrast family rules and privileges with laws that everyone must follow and rights we have as U.S. citizens.
- Discover Georgia together. In Gwinnett, Atlanta, and around the state, you can visit historic homes and sites, battlefields, forts, local museums, and cemeteries to bring history alive.

## Science



In 2nd grade, children investigate the world around them and learn to ask questions and construct explanations about their observations. Through inquiry-based exploration, students learn content in the earth, life, and physical sciences. They use scientific tools to collect data and begin to practice proper processes and lab techniques used in the study of science.

### Science and Engineering Practices

Students in 2nd grade recognize the value in repeating steps in a scientific investigation and begin to conduct multiple trials of experiments to collect data. Children explore the multiple parts that make up a larger object and plan and carry out investigations into science concepts. They discuss the life cycles of plants and animals.

### Types of Science

#### Earth Science

2nd graders describe the universe—the moon, sun, planets, and stars. They discuss the physical attributes of objects in the sky. Students investigate the position of the sun and moon at various times of the year. They recognize how the lengths of day and night change as the seasons change.

#### Life Science

Children investigate the life cycles of different organisms and illustrate the life cycle of common animals. Students relate seasonal changes to observations of how trees change during the school year.

#### Physical Science

Children explore properties of matter and the changes that matter undergo. Students learn to sort samples based on their state of matter at room temperature. They learn how to observe the physical properties of matter. 2nd graders identify sources of energy and how energy is used in the world. Children explore speed and changes of speed as a result of force acting on an object.



### Science Tips for Parents

- Stand outside with your child one evening a week and observe the position of the moon. Keep a record of the moon's position in the sky over several months to see how the position changes.
- Record how long it takes for a glass of ice cubes to melt. Discuss with your child why the ice stays frozen in the freezer and melts on the counter.

### Where We Live/Personal Finance/Civic Engagement

2nd grade students use grid, scale, and key/legend in identifying features and using maps. They locate topographical features of Georgia on a map. Students construct charts and tables and analyze artifacts. They use primary and secondary sources of information. 2nd graders learn about allocation of goods and services.

### Our Nation

In the K–5 Social Studies program, students focus on Our Heritage, learning about Georgia in 2nd grade. Students learn about the state's beginnings and the history of native Georgians of the Creek and Cherokee cultures. Children learn about leaders in government, rules and laws, and the role of elected officials. Lessons about the Civil Rights and Human Rights movements illustrate positive character traits. (*See the section on Character Education to learn more about this area of emphasis.*)

## Fine Arts



Students in elementary school are at a critical age to develop the creative skills that will set the foundation for successful careers. In fact, creativity is ranked as one of the top skills sought by employers. The 2nd grade student is a “natural” artist and musician. Teachers encourage children’s natural enthusiasm for the fine arts.

### Visual Arts

Teachers emphasize joyful exploration and discovery in the Visual Arts program. Through repetition in the elementary grades, students master art concepts. Elementary students learn the elements of art and the principles of design that are found in all artworks. Students are introduced to artists and artworks from around the world and across the centuries. As students learn about art, they will create works of their own, such as drawings, paintings, and sculptures. They use imagination in creating art.

2nd grade students create works of art using balance, texture, and primary and secondary colors. They use a variety of materials and techniques in composing original art. 2nd graders compare similarities, differences, themes, and mood in artworks. They distinguish between different kinds of artwork from many cultures.

### General Music

The processes of learning, creating, performing, responding to, and understanding music are the primary goals of the elementary school General Music program. Through singing, playing instruments, creating, moving to music, guided listening, and other involvement, young children discover and develop their musical abilities. Students learn to recognize and demonstrate the basic musical elements of rhythm, beat, melody, harmony, texture, tempo, dynamics, timbre, and form. Children learn to distinguish between selected orchestra instruments.

2nd grade students participate in musical activities that represent a variety of time periods and cultures. They accompany music with classroom instruments and body percussion. Children identify repeating and contrasting sections in music. They have opportunities to develop their creative skills. Students perform with increasing accuracy in pitch by singing songs in a limited range.

### Theatre and Dance

A number of our elementary schools offer theatre and dance programs.

The essentials and foundations of literacy start at an early age and theatre programs support these skills through the use of the individual and expressive voice of the student.

Dance courses support the study of music as well as movement and exercise which is imperative for young bodies and minds to develop.



- Embrace your child’s creativity. Take your child to the park with a sketch pad. Ask your child to draw what she sees.
- Visit the children’s art museum at the Hudgens Center for the Arts. Family “passes” are available for checkout from the county library.

## Health and Physical Education



### Health

In Health, students learn how to live a healthy lifestyle and reduce the risks linked with illness and injury. They also learn the consequences of unhealthy behaviors. Students learn to be responsible for their decisions and actions, and to understand the influence they have on others. Each year, students learn grade-appropriate lessons about emotional health, relationships, nutrition, the benefits of physical activity, substance abuse prevention, basic human anatomy, personal health, and safety.

2nd grade students learn what to do in an emergency. They learn to prevent injuries related to unsafe situations. Children recognize unhealthy situations and how to choose health behaviors and nutrition practices that promote good health. They learn about maintaining healthy respiratory and circulatory systems and preventing illness. 2nd graders recognize the harmful effects of tobacco, alcohol, and drug use and abuse. Students explore coping strategies in family life. The integumentary system (skin, hair, nails, and glands) and dental structures are part of the 2nd grade curriculum.

### Physical Education (PE)

Physical Education emphasizes lifetime fitness, physical activity, and skill development. Through carefully planned classes, students learn the importance of physical activity—for their health and for their success in school. The curriculum promotes increased fitness as students acquire skills and develop physically.

In PE, students learn about physical activities that enhance their health. Students develop skills such as throwing, catching, and striking a variety of objects with a body part and with other equipment. 2nd graders learn to move in a variety of patterns and directions at different levels, practicing balance and weight transfer. They develop awareness of personal space, practice fitness assessments, and set goals.



### Health & PE Tips for Parents

- Plan family trips that include movement activities, such as hiking, biking, or swimming.
- Establish a family emergency plan. Practice an evacuation.
- Serve a balanced diet with lots of fruits and vegetables, especially dark green, red, and yellow vegetables, and a variety of fruits.

## MYeCLASS Student Portal Information

Gwinnett County Public Schools’ Student Portal is MYeCLASS. The Student Portal is an online environment that gives students access to their online course pages; a selection of digital textbooks that correspond to the individual student’s class schedule; additional resources, such as the Student/Parent Handbook; links to websites that support what students are learning; the online research library; a media catalog; databases of general reference materials; eBooks; and the student’s grades.

Students log into MYeCLASS using their GCPS student number and the password they create at the beginning of the school year.

MYeCLASS is available around the clock, from any device with an Internet connection. Find a link from the GCPS home page at [www.gcpsk12.org](http://www.gcpsk12.org).



## Specialized Programs and Services

The school system provides a variety of specialized programs and services, including Title I, English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), Special Education, Gifted Education, and alternative education programs. Guidance, social work, and psychological services provide for students' emotional and physical needs, along with limited clinic services for all students and specialized nursing support for medically fragile children. The School Nutrition Program operates cafeterias in every GCPS school. Some programs and services have eligibility requirements and require testing for admission. On this page, learn more about some of these programs and services.

## Gifted Education



The GCPS Gifted Education program, called FOCUS at the elementary level, provides academic challenges for children who are intellectually advanced. The program offers valuable learning opportunities that are advanced in content. Gifted education classes offer experiences that extend GCPS' AKS curriculum, and develop students' thinking strategies and processes. Classes are taught by teachers with gifted certification. Students served through the Gifted Education program meet eligibility requirements set by the state. Both student performance and results on national assessments are used to determine a child's participation in the program.

## Special Education and Psychological Services



GCPS' Department of Special Education and Psychological Services focuses on meeting the educational needs of students with disabilities, beginning at age 3. They must meet the eligibility requirements set by the Georgia Department of Education. GCPS provides comprehensive special education programs and services, including assessment and interventions.

## English to Speakers of Other Languages



Students whose primary or home language is other than English and who are not yet proficient in English are provided with support services through the English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program until they attain proficiency. ESOL instruction develops skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in social and instructional language as well as in the academic language of language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Students learning English are taught by highly qualified teachers who are fully certified experts in their field.

## Character Education



The school system supports a mandate from the Georgia General Assembly requiring all schools to teach character education. Society and culture are tied together through common threads that guide the way we live, work, and learn. These common beliefs are taught at home and reinforced by the community, schools, religious institutions, and youth service groups. These basic tenets guide the way Gwinnett County teachers teach and the way the school system conducts the business of teaching and learning. Character education is thoroughly embedded in the AKS curriculum.

## Advisement and Counseling



Through a collaborative partnership with administrators, teachers, and families, school counselors design and deliver a comprehensive, data-driven, and developmentally appropriate program that promotes a positive learning environment for students. Counseling activities and interventions support all students in the areas of academic achievement, career development, and social-emotional development. Through core lessons in the classroom, small-group counseling, and individual counseling, school counselors build strong relationships with their students.

## Technology/Information & Media Literacy



The school media program contributes to your student's academic achievement and provides the tools necessary to successfully navigate our information-rich society. All GCPS media centers are staffed with a full-time, state-certified media specialist who supports instruction and promotes reading as a foundational skill for learning, personal growth, and enjoyment. Media collections contain current, high-quality materials in multiple formats that are relevant to the community they serve. Students learn the importance of digital citizenship and are provided with home and school access to online resources aligned with GCPS standards. Media center spaces are designed for flexibility to accommodate large-group instruction, small-group collaboration, and individual exploration and discovery.



Tips for Parents on 10 Things You Can Do to "Be There" for Your Child

### BE...

- **An Involved Parent...** *Be attentive, aware, together*
- **A Role Model...** *Be caring, engaged, influential*
- **A Cheerleader...** *Be supportive, positive, fun*
- **A Partner...** *Be encouraging, working together*
- **Their Favorite Teacher...** *Be there for teachable moments*

- **A Friendly Critic...** *Be patient, accepting, flexible*
- **An Advisor...** *Be ready to help, share your experiences*
- **A Good Communicator...** *Be a talker, a listener, stay connected*
- **A Lifelong Learner...** *Be inquisitive, share, read together*
- **An Advocate...** *For your child, school, community, public education*

*Research shows that when parents are involved in their children's education at home, their children do better in school. When parents are involved at school, their children's achievement increases and the schools they attend become even stronger.*



Be There is a national movement that inspires parents to become more involved in their child's education and their public schools. Teachable moments are everywhere. You can be your child's favorite teacher by connecting in meaningful ways as you go through the ordinary routines of the day... driving in the car, preparing a meal, shopping, or doing chores. Below and throughout this brochure, you will find tips for helping your child have a successful 2nd grade experience. Look for more helpful tipsheets and other resources on the school system web site and your local school web site.



**Tips for Parents on Helping Your Child Have a Successful 2nd Grade Experience**

- **Read, talk, and listen to your child** often and about a variety of subjects.
- **Encourage your 2nd grader's natural love for learning** with praise. Recognize your child's curiosity and hard work. Let your child know that her academic success is important to you.
- **Stay in touch with your child's teacher.** Participate in parent-teacher conferences— in fall and in spring— to discuss your child's progress.
- **Talk to your child about what he is learning at school.** Use this brochure as a reference. You can find a complete listing of the 2nd grade AKS on the school system's website ([www.gcpsk12.org](http://www.gcpsk12.org)).
- **Promote the importance of regular school attendance** and being on time. Stress that school is a family priority and being in class each day is very important.
- **Stay informed** on school and class happenings. Read newsletters and reports that come home. Check the school website and district website for updates.
- **Ask to see your child's work.** Keep samples so you can see and celebrate the growth your child makes this year.
- **Become involved** in the PTA and attend school events. Be a school volunteer if you are able.
- **Encourage healthy habits**, such as eating nutritious foods, getting ample rest, having a regular bedtime, waking up on time, and being physically active.
- **Set expectations for appropriate school behavior.** Children love to move and enthusiastic learners like to share what they're learning. However, it's important to know *when* to move and share. Make sure your child understands the importance of following classroom rules, and knows that you expect good behavior throughout the school day.
- **Give your child daily responsibilities**, such as choosing which clothes to wear to school, setting the dinner table, or making the bed.
- **Visit local points of interest**, including parks, museums, and the public library. Library cards are free for county residents.
- **Help your child develop important observation and conversation skills.** During errands, talk about what you see and do at the post office, grocery store, or bank. Share family stories. Make the most of time on the road. Point out words and symbols on signs. Sing songs together. Keep his favorite books in the car.



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## About Testing

Gwinnett County Public Schools measures student achievement in a number of ways to ensure students are learning the AKS curriculum. Students participate in classroom, district, and state assessments. Our assessment program helps teachers monitor students' academic progress. Assessment data and information pinpoints students' strengths and weaknesses. This focus allows teachers to plan targeted instruction that promotes each student's success.

## Testing in 2nd Grade

All 2nd grade students participate in the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) and the Iowa Tests in the fall.

CogAT provides information related to skills that are important for learning and problem-solving, both in and out of school. This test gives teachers details on how students learn so that teachers can develop appropriate learning objectives for each child.

The national, norm-referenced Iowa Tests provide information on student achievement based on common knowledge and skills. Norm-referenced tests allow scores to be compared to other students who took the same test following the same testing procedures. This test identifies strengths and weaknesses in basic skills so teachers can provide support.