

The Academic Model

Each class is 65 minutes. Each grade level also goes to advisory three times per day (beginning, middle, and end of day).

6th	7th	8 th *
English Language Arts	English Language Arts	English Language Arts
Math	Accelerated Math or Algebra	Algebra or Geometry
Science	Science	Physics
Creation Station	U.S. History	Seminar
Physical Education	Physical Education	Physical Education

All 8th grade classes, as well as 7th grade Algebra, take place at a high school level (either 9th or 10th grade).

GCMS also offers an array of academic interventions as needed including Math Lab, Office Hours, LaSalle, Saturday Academy, and Summer School.

Academic Results

GCMS scholars experience far more growth than their peers throughout the nation when it comes to NWEA MAP. Our data has consistently shown that we close the achievement gap in 6th grade and we work to flip it in 7th and 8th grade. This allows the overwhelming majority of our scholars to enter high school above grade level.

NWEA Growth Spring-to-Spring			
GCMS Historic Results			
		National Average	GCMS
Reading	6 th	3.8	7.5 (95 th percentile)
	7 th	2.4	8.6 (99 th percentile)
	8 th	2.0	4.3 (76 th percentile)
Math	6 th	4.0	11.5 (96 th percentile)
	7 th	3.1	9.5 (98 th percentile)
	8 th	2.2	6.9 (83 rd percentile)

The upshot of all this? Scholars enter GCMS at an average of 1.5-2 years BELOW grade level and graduate at an average of 2-3 years ABOVE grade level. This means they take advanced classes in high school right from the start, and they take AP classes earlier and more frequently. It means they are on a pathway to excellence.

Honor

At GCMS, we put an emphasis on the *well-rounded* component of our vision. While it is vital that our scholars experience ridiculous academic growth, we find it equally imperative that they develop the strength of character that will allow them to flourish outside the classroom.

1. **Advisory** – At GCMS, we love advisory. Advisories are named after the undergraduate or graduate school of the advisor, and scholars remain in their advisory until graduation. Advisory consists of the following:

- **Non-Cognitive Skills:** These skills are associated with higher achievement and college persistence but cannot necessarily be measured by test scores. These include academic behaviors such as punctuality, preparation, following directions, organization, and doing homework. They also include academic mindsets including self-efficacy and growth mindset.
- **Character:** Our seven school-wide character strengths are grit, zest, optimism, self-control, curiosity, gratitude, and social intelligence. While we focus on our character strengths throughout the day, advisory is where they are most strategically developed.
- **Teambuilding:** Advisory is the home away from home for our scholars. Advisors serve as “helicopter parents”, as they are hovering over their advisees about their constant improvement in both academics and discipline. They also build a strong advisory culture through building relationships outside of school. Advisory trips have included sporting events, roller rinks, restaurants, and movie theaters.

2. **College Exploration** – Each scholar completes a college exploration event each year. We have toured universities such as Northwestern, UIC, University of Illinois, University of Wisconsin, and Notre Dame.

3. **Community Service** – Scholars complete community service each year. We have various partnerships throughout Chicagoland and our advisors serve alongside their advisees as we serve the community together.

4. **Extended Day Programming** – The majority of our scholars attend the Gary Comer Youth Center, where they have access to a rooftop garden, dance studio, recording studio, two-story art studio, game room, library, fitness room, culinary arts workshop, and state-of-the-art gymnasium.

5. **Extracurricular Activities** – GCMS offers many sports including cross country, flag football, basketball, cheerleading, baseball, track and field, and volleyball. In addition, we’ve offered various clubs including gaming club, chess team, black history exploration, writing workshop, Harry Potter club, yearbook club, debate team, spoken word, theater, and choir. Most sports and clubs are led by GCMS staff.