

Discovery School at Four Corners

Community Information Booklet

“How our school works”

2017 - 2018



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SCHOOL HISTORY

Four Corners School was built in the 1950s as a neighborhood elementary school for students in grades pre-kindergarten through fifth grade. The gymnasium and “mushroom” additions were built in 1991. In 2007, due to district budget concerns, a decision was made to close the school. In the spring of 2009, Four Corners was reopened by five classroom teachers and an administrator as a kindergarten through third grade elementary school. These educators and the Superintendent shared a vision for a small, child-centered school, and were committed to becoming an Innovation School through a state initiative. In the spring of 2011, the Superintendent, Greenfield School Committee and Massachusetts Department of Education approved Four Corners as an Innovation School with a new name, *Discovery School at Four Corners*. In the Fall of 2015, a district-wide decision was made to move fourth grade from the middle school back to the elementary schools, including The Discovery School at Four Corners.

Innovation School

An Innovation School is a public school established for the purpose of improving school performance and student achievement through increased autonomy and flexibility. The innovative practices at the Discovery School at Four Corners include:

- Uninterrupted instructional time through the morning, with specials (Art, Music, Physical Education, Technology, etc.) in the afternoon.
- An Individual Learning Plan for each student.
- School-wide themes that bring the whole school together for instruction and exploration.
- Environmental Studies and gardens as a signature program, using the school’s nine-acre school site for gardening and woodland studies.
- Extended school year for teachers, to allow for fluid, collaborative curriculum planning.
- Additional school-wide planning time for classroom teachers during the school year.
- Cross-grade-level and cross-curricula learning opportunities.

ARRIVAL AT SCHOOL

Students arrive at school by bus or car, and on foot. If you drop your child off by car in the morning, take the driveway down to the front door and pull up as far as you can along the front of the building. Children should only exit on the school side of the car, between the cones, onto the sidewalk. If you plan to enter the school with your child, pull into a parking space so that the traffic flow along the sidewalk is not destructed.

Before School Childcare: Before School Care is available for working parents beginning at 7:30am. Prior to this time there is no coverage for students at the school. You must fill out a registration form, available at the school office, for your child to attend the program. The program supervisor will greet your child and take attendance. **There is no cost for this childcare.**

7:30 The Building Monitor will be at the front door to greet students.

8:00 Breakfast is served in the cafeteria. **Breakfast is free for all Greenfield students.** Parents and guardians are welcome to come in and sit with their child during breakfast. To help with morning transitions, please say goodbye at the cafeteria before your child goes to recess or to class. Children who do not eat breakfast at school will line up to go to recess upon arrival.

8:00 Supervised morning recess outside, or indoors on inclement weather days.

8:30 Students are walked to classrooms. The academic day begins at 8:30 with a Morning Meeting in each classroom. This is an important time for the classroom community to begin the day together, attend to morning routines, and review the daily schedule. Students who arrive at class after 8:30am are listed as TARDY and must get a slip from the office or Building Monitor.

DISMISSAL FROM SCHOOL

It is IMPERATIVE that we know your child's plan for the end of the day. Please complete and return the dismissal plan form at the beginning of each school year, and notify the office if there are any changes to your child's plan during the year. If your child's plan is different on different days of the week, please explain that in detail on the form. If you have a change for just one day, send a note to your child's teacher that day, and he/she will forward it to the office. You may also call the school office and speak to the administrative assistant.

We can only dismiss a child to an adult who is listed by the parent as someone authorized to take the child from school. If someone other than a parent/guardian is picking up your child, provide written authorization by note or email. The adult picking up your child may be asked for identification if he/she is not familiar to the office staff. We do this to insure your child's safety.

If your child is always picked up in a vehicle, the driver will join the line in the driveway and **stay in the vehicle**. Vehicles will be queued to pull up to the end of the sidewalk in front of the gym. A staff member will see which children are needed, and call the child(ren) to exit the back gym door and enter the vehicle. Once that vehicle has pulled away, the next will pull up and those child(ren) will be called. It is important that drivers stay in their cars to keep the traffic flow moving. Our staff will assist with getting children safely into the vehicles.

If you pick up your child on foot OR park on the street and walk down the sidewalk to meet your child(ren), the children will exit the front door with their teachers. You will go to your child or make sure your child's teacher is aware that their adult is there (High Five!) before walking off. The children and teachers will be grouped by grade levels on the sidewalk. If you would like your child(ren) to walk home unescorted, please provide a note stating they have permission to walk home on their own.

Children who ride the bus go to the library for dismissal, where attendance will be taken. Bus lines will be escorted by staff to the buses in the upper parking lot.

Children who go to the Greenfield Recreation After School Program (GRASP) will go to the cafeteria for dismissal. Any questions regarding GRASP should be directed to the Greenfield Recreation department at 413-772-1553.

VISITING/VOLUNTEERING AT OUR SCHOOL

We encourage volunteering in our school as part of our collaborative learning community. If you are interested in volunteering in your child's classroom, attending a field trip, participating in a special event, or helping in another area of the school, please let us know! By law we must require a CORI check and finger-printing from all volunteers who will supervise children without the presence of a staff member. Information about each of these processes is available from the administrative assistant in the school office and on the www.gpsk12.org website.

Parents, guardians, grandparents and caregivers are welcome to visit the school to share something with a class. All visits should be planned in advance with the teacher. No CORI check or fingerprinting is required if the teacher will be present and responsible for the children throughout the visit.

ALL volunteers and visitors are required to sign in at the office, wear a Volunteer/Visitor badge while in the building, and sign out before leaving.

We encourage family members and community members to be involved in our school programs through participation in our Parent-Teacher Organization or School Council, and by attending All School Meetings and other school-wide events. There are also opportunities for volunteers to help with our programs by doing tasks at home, contributing needed materials or assisting at weekend events. Please complete the volunteer form sent home at the beginning of each school year to share your talents, willingness, and availability with us.

EATING AT SCHOOL

BREAKFAST is free every day for every child. Lunch has a cost unless your family qualifies for free meals. Full price is \$2.25 per day and reduced cost is \$.40 per day for eligible families. Milk costs 55 cents.

SNACK policy is determined by each classroom teacher each year, depending on the needs of their students, and will be communicated to families within the first week of school. All students are encouraged to bring a healthy snack and drink to school every day. Depending on the lunch schedule, your child may have a morning or an afternoon snack. Due to food allergies, some teachers will use a shared snack format and will ask parents to contribute to the snacks from an acceptable food list.

LUNCH is served daily at school, **including early release days.** Your child may purchase school hot lunch or an alternate lunch, or bring a lunch from home. Peanut products **are** allowed in the cafeteria. There is a designated nut-free table in the cafeteria. Hand washing and table washing protocols are in place to prevent cross contamination of potential allergens.

APPLICATION FOR FREE AND REDUCED LUNCH

We encourage all families to file a confidential application for free or reduced cost meals. A portion of our school funding and grant eligibility is based on the number of our students who qualify for free and reduced meals. The program is available to help individual families and the community as a whole. The application is posted online at www.gpsk12.org. It is also available in every school office or the Central Food Services office. You may fill out an application at any time if your financial situation changes during the year. Free or reduced lunch status does not carry over from year to year, so you **MUST** complete the application each year.

PAYMENTS FOR LUNCH

Payments can be made in advance, by cash or check, on a daily, weekly or monthly basis. When sending in lunch money, please use a sealed envelope with the child's name, grade and classroom teacher on the front of the envelope. Lunch money is collected by the classroom teacher and sent unopened directly to the cafeteria. Payments can also be made at www.gpsk12.org, following the Food Services online payments link. You can set up an account with www.mytrikids.com for easy online payments, as well as email reminders when the account balance is low. It is best to pay in advance so children's lunches are always covered. We will serve children a cheese sandwich if there is a balance of -\$10.00 in the account until money is added.

WELLNESS POLICY

The Greenfield Public Schools has an established Wellness Policy which addresses the subject of food in school. Due to nutritional value and food allergies, treats such as candy, cookies and cakes are not to be brought to school for snacks or celebrations. Alternative choices such as fruit or vegetables are always welcome. A copy of the Wellness Policy is available at the school office and at www.gpsk12.org.

DRESSING FOR SCHOOL/PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Your child should be dressed comfortably and appropriately for school and the weather. Dressing in layers will allow children to stay comfortable, as the temperature may vary inside the school. Hats and hoods should be removed before entering the school.

WARM WEATHER MONTHS

- Shoes: Wear sneakers or sandals fastened with ties or back straps. Flip-flop shoes can cause slips and falls. If a child wears flip-flops to school, they will not be able to participate in gym class that day and will be required to stay on the blacktop during recess.
- Clothing: Simple, comfortable clothing is appropriate for elementary school activities. Children should be able to self-dress (with some assistance in certain grades and cases). All clothes should be suitable for school and not distracting to self or others (well-fitting and not revealing, no inappropriate graphics or language, no disruptive accessories).

COLD WEATHER MONTHS

- We advise that your child wear gloves, hat, winter jacket, snow boots and snow pants.
- If there is snow on the ground, a child without snow boots and/or snow pants will be required to stay on the blacktop during recess if there is snow on the ground. This will help children stay dry.
- Children should have an extra pair of shoes with them so they do not have to wear snow boots all day.
- Packing an extra pair of dry socks in your child's bag is very helpful. Students in kindergarten should keep an extra set of clothes at school in case of emergency.

If you need assistance providing the right clothing for your child, please contact our school nurse or school adjustment counselor.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

To provide a distraction-free learning environment and protect your child's belongings, children should **leave the following items at home:**

- Toys and stuffed animals
- Trading cards (such as Pokemon)
- Electronic devices
- Distracting accessories
- School supplies beyond teacher requests

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN HOME AND SCHOOL

We intend to keep our families informed, and believe in open communication and problem-solving. If you have a concern about your child, the first thing to do is to contact the child's teacher. If the concern is unresolved, it is appropriate to contact the building principal. Following that, you may decide to contact the Superintendent. This chain of communication helps us resolve issues in a productive way.

TEACHER CONTACT/CONFERENCES

There can be no substitute for firsthand student/parent/teacher communication. Teachers welcome your input at any time. We will hold parent-teacher conferences in October/November and March/April to discuss progress and set goals. Teachers also communicate with parents and guardians through face-to-face meetings, telephone calls, text messages, and email. We make an effort to send notices and newsletters through email when possible. Please provide your child's teacher with your email address at our Meet-and-Greet Night before school begins, or as soon as possible afterwards.

GREEN HOME-SCHOOL FOLDERS

Each child is given a plastic folder that is used for important notices and schoolwork. This folder will be sent home each time there is important information to share. Please look for this folder each day and review the contents with your child. Return the folder the next day, even if it is empty, so it can be filled again.

CONNECT-ED PHONE CALLS

ConnectEd is a phone call program that calls all parents at the same time with a recorded message. We call parents using ConnectEd for school closings and important events/reminders. **Please make sure that parent/guardian phone numbers and email addresses are updated in our school office if your contact information changes during the school year.**

**SCHOOL CANCELLATIONS, DELAYED OPENINGS
AND WEATHER-RELATED DISMISSALS**

In the event of inclement weather, Greenfield Public Schools will use the following communication methods to provide up to date information regarding cancellations/delays:

CONNECT-ED CALLS

Every family registered with Greenfield Public Schools will receive an automated telephone call (via Connect-Ed) with information regarding closings, delays, early dismissals, or other urgent weather and safety-related information. **Please make sure your phone number is up to date at all times.**

LOCAL NEWS MEDIA (TELEVISION & RADIO)

The School Department updates local radio (WHA1 98.3 and 1240 AM) and television stations (News 40, 22 News, and CBS 3). They will have up-to-date notifications about school delays and cancellations. Cancellation information can also be checked at their websites: <https://wggb.com> and <https://wwlp.com> and www.cbs3springfield.com

DISTRICT WEBPAGE

The District updates emergency information on their webpage: <http://www.gpsk12.org/>

SOCIAL MEDIA

Real-time information regarding cancellations, delays, and/or early releases is available on Twitter by following @Super_GPS. If you do not have a Twitter account, you can still view the updates at: https://twitter.com/Super_GPS

IN CASE OF A DELAYED OPENING

TYPICAL DAY

At the Discovery School at Four Corners our start time is 8:30am. Further, *on a typical day*, children of working parents who have signed up for Before School Childcare may be dropped off at 7:30am. Breakfast begins at 8:00am followed by morning recess at 8:00am.

1-HR DELAY

School will start at 9:30am, one (1) hour after the regularly scheduled start time. Children of working parents who have signed up for Before School Childcare may be dropped off at 8:30am. Other students may be dropped off after 9:00am . For bus routes, please add one (1) hour to your regular pick up time. Please note that inclement weather may cause slight delays in bus schedules.

2-HR DELAY

School will start at 10:30am, two (2) hours after the regularly scheduled start time. Children of working parents who have signed up for Before School Childcare may be dropped off at 9:30am. Other students may be dropped off after 10:00am. For bus routes, please add two (2) hours to your regular pick-up time. Please note that inclement weather may cause slight delays in bus schedules.

On days when school is delayed, breakfast will still be available to students, and school lunch will be ravioli or a sunbutter and jelly sandwich.

IN CASE OF A WEATHER-RELATED EARLY DISMISSAL

Please fill out the Emergency Dismissal Plan form for your family at the beginning of the school year, even if it will be the same as your regular plan. We will follow this Emergency Plan to send your child home during a weather-related early dismissal. Dismissal *procedures* will be the same as on a typical day.

ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL

By law, all children in the state of Massachusetts must be in a school program by the age of six. Regular attendance is the best way to ensure success in school. With 95% attendance, students have the best chance of earning a diploma and graduating high school. Attendance habits start in elementary school. Regular attendance gives students the most exposure to academic content, the most direct instructional time, the most opportunities to apply new concepts and skills, and the most opportunities to ask questions and seek assistance to ensure they understand what they are being taught in school.

We ask families to support our expectation of a minimum of 95% attendance at school. In a 180 day school year this equals 171 days present and 9 days absent. When a child is absent for more than 10 days, the parent/guardian will receive a letter from the principal stating the importance of regular attendance in school. If attendance becomes a chronic issue, the family will be referred to our school social worker and School Resource Officer/Truancy Officer. While we want to be sure that children are healthy when they come to school, we also recognize that consistent attendance has a direct impact on positive student achievement. Parents can positively influence attendance by making sure children go to bed early, get adequate rest and eat a healthy diet.

ABSENCE NOTICE

If a student will be absent, parents must call the school before 9:00 AM. Please state the reason for and estimated length of the absence. If we do not receive a call confirming your child's absence, you will be called by the school staff to confirm that your child is at home. We do this to ensure student safety.

FAMILY VACATIONS

Families are encouraged to take trips during the scheduled school vacations.

MAKE-UP WORK

While there is no replacement for direct learning at school, a parent/guardian may request make-up work for a child after two days of absence. The child will have as many days to complete the work as the number of days missed. Work will not be sent home in advance of an absence.

HEALTH SERVICES AND STUDENT SAFETY AT SCHOOL

The nurse's office is staffed by a registered nurse who is available during school hours to meet with students in case of accident or illness, and for those who have health-related or other problems. The nurse encourages families and students to share any health concerns the child may have (short- or long-term), and any medications being taken that may impact the child's school day. By law, the nurse maintains records on student immunizations and physicals. The school nurse also conducts yearly screening exams for eyesight, hearing, and body mass index (BMI). It is very important to us that you complete the forms regarding your child's health history that are sent home from our health office at the beginning of each school year. Please update information that changes during the year. Parents may call the school nurse directly at any time, at 413-772-1375, ext. 202.

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

It is extremely important that our school has accurate and up-to-date emergency contact information for each child. We must be able to reach parents/guardians promptly should illness or accident occur. Provide names of alternates so if you cannot be reached we have someone else to contact. Please make sure the person you name is willing and able to serve in this capacity.

BULLYING

In 2010, Massachusetts passed the Anti-Bullying law, requiring each school system to have guidelines in place to prevent bullying. Greenfield's complete anti-bullying plan is posted on the Greenfield Schools website at www.gpsk12.org.

(Excerpt from the GPS Statement of Purpose:)

The Greenfield Public Schools are committed to providing students with equal education opportunities and a safe learning environment free from harassment, bullying, discrimination, and hate crimes, where all student community members treat each other with respect. This Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan is an integral part of the Greenfield Public Schools comprehensive efforts to promote learning; eliminate all forms of violent, harmful, and disruptive behavior; and enable students to achieve their personal, academic, and citizenship potential in our increasingly diverse society.

Greenfield Public Schools will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of harassment, bullying, cyberbullying, and discrimination, retaliation, or hate crimes in our schools or at school-related activities. Greenfield Public Schools will promptly investigate all reports and complaints of harassment, bullying, discrimination, and hate crimes and take prompt action to end that behavior and prevent its reoccurrence. Action will include, where appropriate, referral to a law enforcement agency. Greenfield Public Schools will support this plan in all aspects of its activities, including its curricula, instructional programs, staff development, technology programs, extracurricular activities, and parental involvement.

For any concern, students and/or families should notify their teacher or principal. Every principal will ensure that any incident in their school is investigated. A parent may also notify Jordana B. Harper, Superintendent of Schools.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS AT OUR SCHOOL

STUDENT STUDY TEAM (SST)

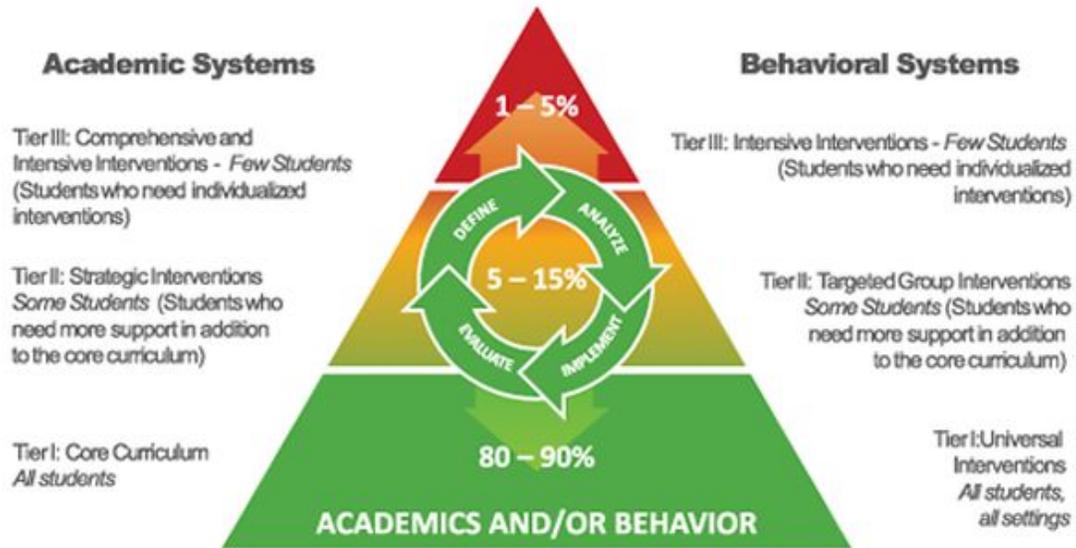
Teachers may at times discuss a child's progress with colleagues through the Student Study Team. This group is made up of the classroom teacher, Special Education teacher, elementary school psychologist, school adjustment counselor, principal and any other teachers who participate in the child's program. The purpose of the SST is to address the teacher's concerns for the student (academic, behavioral or emotional), and offer strategies to help the child be more successful. Data is gathered over a short period of time, and the team meets again to discuss progress. At that time, the SST process may be closed, or the team may determine that additional information is needed (an educational assessment). Parents will be notified by the classroom teacher prior to the first meeting and will be informed throughout the process.

RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION (RTI)

Response to Intervention is a way to deliver academic support services to students in the classroom or in a pull-out format. There are three tiers to RTI, which indicate the level of support needed. The diagram below shows the tiers and explains what each level may look like. At our school we use an RTI approach to help children "catch up" to grade level expectations in the least restrictive and most inclusive way possible before moving on to more intensive intervention approaches.

Rtl: Instruction and Targeted Support for All Levels of Need

Three Tiered Model of School Supports: Example of an Infrastructure Resource Inventory



TITLE I

Title I is a federal grant program that supports the provision of remedial services to students in school. Our school is a school-wide Title I school, which means that any of our children can qualify for this support based on academic need. Title I services are offered in reading and math, both in the classroom and in small group pull-out sessions, with highly-qualified, licensed teachers. Parents/guardians will be notified if their child(ren) receive Title I support.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Since 1975, Massachusetts has had comprehensive law requiring a free and appropriate education for any student, including students with a disability for whom services are needed beyond what the general education program can provide. To implement state and federal law and provide every student with an appropriate education, Greenfield Public Schools have qualified evaluators, teachers, and support personnel assigned to each school and program.

If a parent suspects a child may have a disability, they have the right to request a school-sponsored evaluation, and to receive a response to this request within five school days. The complete guide to special education is available at any school's administration office. Questions regarding your child's progress should first be directed to the child's classroom teacher. Further conversations may include the building principal and the Director of Student Support Services.

BEHAVIOR AT SCHOOL

In order to maintain a safe and productive learning environment, *all members* of our school community will adhere to these expectations:

1. **We respect ourselves** by keeping our bodies safe, trying our best on our schoolwork and accepting help when needed.
2. **We respect each other** by using kind words and calm problem-solving strategies, and by maintaining personal space.
3. **We allow others to have a disruption-free learning environment.**
4. **We respect our building and materials** by cleaning up after ourselves and using materials correctly.
5. **We respect the environment** by caring for our school gardens and schoolyard,
6. **We *always* try our best.**

Sometimes students may need reminders to follow these rules. In the case of repeated offenses or dangerous or destructive behaviors, the progressive consequences used at our school include the following:

TAB (Take a Break) Chair – This is a Responsive Classroom strategy that gives a child the chance to stop what they are doing, take a break within the classroom but aside from the activity, calm down, and be ready to return to the activity. Every learning space in the school has a TAB chair.

Cafeteria Manager:

“Miss Lori” Poremba ext. 204 lorpor1@gpsk12.org

Custodians:

Mr. Bill Cardaropoli (days) and Mr. Denny Phillips (afternoons)

Teachers can be contacted through email or by calling our main office number to connect with their classroom phone or leave a message during class time.

Superintendent of Greenfield Public Schools

Jordana Harper 413-772-1300 supergps@gpsk12.org

Director of Student Services, Greenfield Public Schools

Dianne Ellis 413-772-1300 diaell1@gpsk12.org

PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN THIS FORM WITHIN THE FIRST WEEK OF SCHOOL.

_____ *I have reviewed and understand the contents of this Discovery School at Four Corners Community Information Booklet.*

Parent/Guardian signature: _____

Printed name: _____

Date: _____

Child(ren) names:

Grade/teacher:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____