



# ASPEN ACADEMY

*A 2019 National Blue Ribbon School*

*Exemplary Award Winning Education*



**A Tuition-Free Public Charter School  
Grades Kindergarten - Eighth**

**[AspenAcademyMN.org](http://AspenAcademyMN.org)**

## The Aspen Academy Difference

Thank you for your interest in Aspen Academy! Aspen is a **free** public charter school serving families in the South West Twin Cities Metro. Our mission is to provide students with a well-rounded, Core Knowledge-based education which meets the **intellectual, creative** and **social** needs of each child. We prepare our students for future educational opportunities and life in a global society by creating an **academically rigorous, literature-rich environment** where **class sizes are small**, and a strong **sense of community** is built and **valued**. Our curriculum follows the Core Knowledge Scope and Sequence for K – 8<sup>th</sup> grade, which includes:

- Reading, Phonics Spelling, Grammar
- US and World History and Geography
- Physical and Natural Sciences
- Music, Band, Orchestra, Art
- Singapore Math
- Physical Education
- Spanish and Latin
- Electives for 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grades
- Advanced options for English and Math starting as early as 3<sup>rd</sup> grade

## Why Aspen Academy?

Families choose Aspen Academy for:

- Small class sizes
- Strong sense of community
- Uniforms
- Hands-on, engaged learning opportunities
- Character development
- Foreign language starting in kindergarten
- Latin starting in 4<sup>th</sup> grade
- Diversity
- Academically rigorous curriculum
- Three movement breaks during the day including two scheduled outdoor recesses

## Awards:

- ✓ 2021 Minnesota STEM Innovation Award (MESPA)
- ✓ 2021 Edtech Award: Finalist “Trendsetter in Education”
- ✓ 2019 National Blue Ribbon Award
- ✓ 2019 High-Quality Charter School
- ✓ Top 5% North Star Award Recipient:  
(Top 5% of schools in MN)
  - ✓ Excellence in Reading
  - ✓ Excellence in Attendance
- ✓ #1 Elementary School in Scott County (Niche.com) for 2020 and 2021!
- ✓ #1 Best Middle School Teachers in Minnesota (Niche.com)
- ✓ A+ Rating for teachers



## What is a Charter School?

- It is a public school funded with public money—there is no tuition.
- Must be non-sectarian, non-religious, and may not discriminate in its admission practices.
- It is its own school district—not part of the ‘resident district.’
- Has a school board comprised of teachers, parents and community members.
- Is held to the same standards as all other public schools.

## Aspen Beginnings:

**Founders:** Aspen Academy was founded by a group of parents from the Savage/Prior Lake community in order to provide an academically rigorous educational option in this area.

**Authorizer:** Aspen Academy is authorized by Friends of Education—a non-profit, secular organization that is dedicated to assisting Core Knowledge Schools. They provide oversight to ensure quality.

- Approved by the Minnesota Department of Education in October 2007 after an extensive training and application.
- Granted a K – 8 charter from the Commissioner of Education in December 2007.
- Received a 5-year charter renewal from Friends of Education in 2016.
- Moved to new site in January 2013.
- Completed expansion in November 2018.

## Enrollment

Aspen Academy serves grades Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup>. We are a growing school and have added classes based on increased demand. Please note, we never have overcrowding in the classes. Elementary class size average is 21 scholars and middle school ranges from 18-25 scholars/class.

- Grades K; 4 sections
- Grades 1-2; 5 sections
- Grades 3 – 5; 4 sections per grade
- Grades 6 – 8; 2-3 sections per grade
- Enrollment for 2021 – 2022: est. 700

## **A Day at Aspen (2020-2021 school hours)**

- 8:35 – 8:55am: Student Drop-Off
- 9:00am: School Starts
- 50 Minutes of specialists on a 5-day rotation (Music, Art, PE twice per week and Spanish)
- A 30-minute lunch/recess period and an additional recess throughout the day
- 3:55pm—Buses Depart, Car line pick-up begins
- 4:15pm – All students picked up

## **Transportation**

- Partner with Prior Lake-Savage Bus Service
- Busing is available in-district and out-of-district using Prior Lake-Savage school district lines.
- In-district bus times are averaging about 25-35 minutes. (subject to change). Bus stop locations follow Prior Lake-Savage Bus Guidelines.
- Out-of-district: Aspen is hiring 2 extra buses to serve out-of-district students. Each bus will make 3-4 large bus drops within a community or business parking lot. Out of district scholars selecting to use bus transportation will have a fee of \$250 per scholar for the school year.
- Car Line—parents use School Dismissal Manager System. Morning drop-off begins at 8:35 am. Pick-up begins at 3:55 pm.

## **Middle School**

- Aspen utilizes a typical middle school model of transitioning to each period.
- 8 periods within each day
- Math, English, Social Studies, and Science are daily periods.
- Advanced courses offered in Math and English
- 5-day rotation of Spanish, PE, Health, Art and Latin.
- Choice of Electives
- Choice of Music: band, guitar, choir



## Lunch

- Students bring a bag lunch or order hot lunch
- We cater with a food service company, for hot lunch or milk only
- Various lunch menus available: traditional, gluten-free or vegetarian—We have a peanut-free table.
- No snacks with nuts allowed in classrooms for morning/afternoon snack time.
- Lunches and milk must be prepaid in advanced and can be ordered monthly.
- Aspen participates in the Free and/or Reduced Lunch program.
- Information is available from the office about online ordering system

## Uniforms

- Aspen Academy prides itself on the conduct of its students. A well-disciplined, neat and clean atmosphere provides the best learning environment for students to take full advantage of their educational opportunities.
- Student uniforms contribute to this environment.
- Uniform ordering information is available at front office or website.
- Aspen Spirit Wear orders occur in the fall.
- The PTO organizes a used uniform sale in August.

## Before and After School Care (Eagle's Nest)

- Eagles Nest is available before and after school
- Pre-pay program
- Billed by the "block of time."
- Starts at 7:00am in the morning.
- Ends at 5:30pm in the evening.
- Only pay for days your child attends
- Snack, homework time and activities such as playground, quiet games and crafts.
- Not open during no school days.
- Business office – [diane.hummel@aspenacademymn.org](mailto:diane.hummel@aspenacademymn.org) for information.

## Parent Involvement

- Parental involvement is a priority. Parents and teachers should have open communication to ensure that children are succeeding and enjoying their academic experience.
- Families are asked to volunteer 40 hours with the school throughout the year, either on site or through some other means.
- Volunteer Training is available online.

## Academics

### **Core Knowledge:**

- Is based on work by E.D. Hirsch, Jr. and the series “What your First/Second/ Etc./Grader Needs To Know”
- Helps develop culturally-literate students through its many cross curricular connections.
- The content-based approach provides a strong academic foundation.
- The coherent, sequential plan avoids curricular gaps or overlaps.
- For more information, check out: [www.coreknowledge.org](http://www.coreknowledge.org).

### **Solid:**

- Building on a body of lasting knowledge that should form the core of a Pre K-Grade 8 curriculum.
- Example: It does not teach the latest curriculum fad. Instead, it delivers what we believe will be important content 5 years from now, 10 years from now.
- All state standards are addressed.

### **Shared:**

- Literacy depends on shared knowledge. To be culturally literate means, in part, to be familiar with a broad range of knowledge taken for granted by speakers and writers.
- **Example:** If a newscaster refers to a sporting event as an example of David and Goliath, will your child know what this means?

### **Sequenced:**

- Core Knowledge Sequence provides a clear outline of content to be learned grade by grade. This sequential building of knowledge not only helps ensure students enter each new grade ready to learn, but also helps prevent the many repetitions and gaps prevalent in much current schooling curriculum.
- **Example:** Each grade level has a unit on the human body. Kindergarten does an age-appropriate unit on the 5 senses. First grade builds off this and introduces students to the fact that the body has organ systems. Second grade studies the digestive system. Third grade covers the skeletal system, and so on.



### Specific:

- A typical state or district curriculum says, “Students will demonstrate knowledge of people, events, ideas and movements that contributed to the development of the United States.”
- But, what which people and which events? Core Knowledge specifies content to be learned in each subject area.
- **Example:** Core Knowledge doesn’t just say “World History” in 4th grade. It specifies the Norman Conquest, Chinese Dynasties and Conquerors, the Church’s impact on Europe, the Holy Wars, Charlemagne and African Kingdoms.

### Focus on Early Literacy:

- We identify students’ individual instructional level in our phonics program and teach them to read using simple phonics primers and guided reading books.
- We start them reading in authentic books as soon as possible.
- We provide students with content of the Core Knowledge literature and additional literature that challenges them at their individual reading level.

### Singapore Math:

- Using concrete examples and pictures, Singapore Math introduces students to a few key concepts in the early years. Through hands-on manipulatives and model drawing, the students work towards mastery and is led progressively and logically to understand abstract concepts.
- This is a direct inverse to many other curricula where several concepts are touched on briefly and repeatedly ‘spiraled’ back to during the early years, progressing to just a few key concepts by the upper elementary and middle school years.

### Data Driven Instruction (DDI)

- Determine which MN State Standards will be taught every six weeks.
- Creative formative assessments to measure student progress.
- Review the data: Where do students need more challenge? Where do they need re-teaching and why?
- Start the cycle over again

## **Second Language Instruction**

- Spanish instruction begins in Kindergarten
- Latin instruction is introduced in 4th grade
- Latin increases grammar, spelling and decoding skills
  - It's basic to the study of biology, medicine and law
  - It increases verbal portion of SAT/ACT

## **Character Development**

- We focus our character development around our school wide THINK values.
- T.H.I.N.K. - Tenacity, High Expectations, Integrity, No Excuses, Kindness
- This is recognized with our posters around the school you will see on the tour.
- Classroom teachers teach these traits explicitly and dean of students leads ongoing monthly assemblies.
- Addressing behavior is organized around THINK and putting it into action or not - we teach as we go.

## **Special Education**

- We are required by law to follow the IEP if a student has one.
- If students are referred for services, we have a process in place for interventions, evaluations and development of IEPs, and provision of services.
- We have licensed Special Education teachers on staff.
- We contract through Creatively Focused and individually licensed professionals for speech, OT, DAPE etc.

## **Student Support**

- SST
- Title 1
- EL
- School Nurse
- School Counselor/Social Worker
- After School Tutoring
- After School Activities

## Technology

- Smart Boards in every classroom
- United Streaming (online service with over 80,000 video clips, virtual labs, interactives, audio files and lesson plans)
- Laptops for student use - all levels
- Computer lab with technology teacher
- Moving to increased technology responsibilities with Chromebooks
- Mobile Carts

## Application Process

- Applications are open for 2021-2022 school year starting October 1, 2020. Each student must have a separate form. Forms available at <https://aspenacademymn.org/future-families/enrollment/>
- Once students are enrolled, they do not have to re-enroll for future years.
- New enrollees, a public lottery is held if more applicants are received than space available. You do not need to attend the lottery and all families are notified of the results.
- The **application deadline for the lottery is December 22, Noon** for the following school year. After the lottery, new applicants will be placed on the waiting list by the date and time they apply (families applying on Monday are higher on the wait list than those on Tuesday).
- Following the lottery, you will be notified of your place on the waitlist and update you when you have moved into the top three.
- Siblings of enrolled students are given preference for enrollment provided there is space in their grade.
- We do not know the likelihood of acceptance since our waitlist depends on families' private decisions and is beyond our control.
- Please email Ms. Martini at [enroll@aspenacademymn.org](mailto:enroll@aspenacademymn.org) for questions on openings and waitlists.

# January



## Traditional Menu

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
<b>Traditional Meal</b> \$3.50 <b>Gluten Free Meal</b> \$4.00 <b>Vegetarian Meal</b> \$4.00 <b>Chef Salad</b> \$4.55 <b>Garden Salad</b> \$4.25 <b>Taco Salad</b> \$4.55 <b>Extra slice of pizza</b> \$1.00 <b>Individual Milk</b> \$0.40	No lunches will be ordered if they are not paid for when the online system closes.  For lunch questions please contact the lunch program at:  952-226-5945 or <a href="mailto:lunchprogram@aspennacademymn.org">lunchprogram@aspennacademymn.org</a>	<b>1st</b>  No School  <b>HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!</b>	<b>2nd</b>  <b>Beef Meatballs in Marinara Sauce</b> Glazed Carrots WG Hot Dog Bun Shredded Mozzarella Zucchini Pineapple	<b>3rd</b>  <b>Papa John's</b> Cheese Pizza or Gluten Free Cheese Pizza Fresh Vegetable Fruit
<b>6th</b>  <b>Chicken Patty</b> Vegetarian Baked Beans WG Hamburger Bun Baby Carrots Apple Mayo	<b>7th</b>  <b>Beef Nachos</b> Cheese Sauce WG Corn Chips Shredded Romaine Banana Salsa Ranch	<b>8th</b>  <b>Chicken Drumstick</b> Vegetable Brown Rice Zucchini Chopped Romaine Diced Peas French Dressing	<b>9th</b>  <b>Cheeseburger</b> Potato Wedges WG Hamburger Bun American Cheese Slice Broccoli Mandarin Oranges Ketchup & Ranch	<b>10th</b>  <b>Papa John's</b> Cheese Pizza or Gluten Free Cheese Pizza Fresh Vegetable Fruit
<b>13th</b>  <b>Chicken Flatbread Gyo</b> WG Flatbread Cucumber Diced Tomatoes Diced Peas Sour Cream	<b>14th</b>  <b>Chicken Tacos</b> Seasoned Black Beans WW 8" Tortilla Cheddar Cheese Shredded Romaine Banana Taco Sauce	<b>15th</b>  <b>BBQ Turkey Burger</b> Loaded Mashed Potatoes WG Hamburger Bun Baby Carrots Fresh Cut Melon Ranch BBQ Sauce	<b>16th</b>  <b>Beef Hotdog</b> Sweet Potato Cubes WG Hotdog Bun Broccoli Apple Ketchup	<b>17th</b>  <b>Papa John's</b> Cheese Pizza or Gluten Free Cheese Pizza Fresh Vegetable Fruit
<b>20th</b>  <b>No School</b>	<b>21st</b>  <b>Beef Tacos</b> Refried Beans WW 8" Tortillas Shredded Cheddar Shredded Romaine Banana Taco Sauce	<b>22nd</b>  <b>Popcorn Orange Chicken</b> Fried Brown Rice Zucchini Broccoli Tropical Fruit Orange Sauce Ranch	<b>23rd</b>  <b>Early Release</b> No Lunch	<b>24th</b>  <b>No School</b>
<b>27th</b>  <b>Turkey Cheeseburger</b> Vegetarian Black Beans WG Hamburger Bun American Cheese Slice Carrot Sticks Apple	<b>28th</b>  <b>BBQ Chicken Meatballs</b> WG Teabiscuit Broccoli Banana Ranch Loaded Mashed Potatoes	<b>29th</b>  <b>Beef Chili Cheese Fries</b> Potato Wedges WG Cookie Shredded Cheddar Pea Pods Diced Peas	<b>30th</b>  <b>Cheese Stuffed Breadsticks</b> Green Beans Sliced Iceberg & Romaine Diced Peaches Marinara Dipping Sauce Italian Dressing	<b>31st</b>  <b>Papa John's</b> Cheese Pizza or Gluten Free Cheese Pizza Fresh Vegetable Fruit

**MILK VARIETY SERVED AT EVERY MEAL, 1% and Chocolate flavored**

Lancaster does not use any products that contain pork, peanuts, or peanut oil. Products are baked or steamed, never fried.

**Menu Subject To Change**



# Winter 2020

Week of January 13th - March 9th

Registrations due by January 2

Please contact Ms. Peterson at [stephanie.peterson@aspenacademymn.org](mailto:stephanie.peterson@aspenacademymn.org) with any questions.

## Open Gym (Grades K-8)

Mr. Fritze (Monday-Wednesday) and Ms. Peterson (Thursday)

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, 4:15-5:15

(Meeting dates: Jan 13,14,15,16,21,22,27,28,29,30, Feb 3,4,5,6,10,11,12,13,18,19,20,24,25,26,27, Mar 2,3,4,5,9,10,11,12)

Release all that after-school energy while playing at Aspen. On nice days, we may go on the playground as well. Scholars can run and get their energy out before heading home. You can sign up your scholar for one, two, three, or all four days each week. Open gym will be free-play time, just playing and running.

Minimum/Maximum: 10/none

(Mondays only: 7 meetings, Tuesdays only: 9 meetings, Wednesdays only: 9 meetings, Thursdays only: 8 meetings, all days Monday through Thursday: 33 meetings)

Cost per meeting: \$10

## Planes, Trains, and Automobiles (Grades K-5)

Mrs. Woodward

Monday, 4:15-5:15 (Jan 13,27, Feb 3,10,24, Mar 2,9)

We will be creating all sorts of different moving and flying objects. We will make cars, helicopters, parachutes, and more! This club will be exciting and fun as we build and test our creations. Have an open mind and be patient. You will need to be a good listener. Get ready to have lots of fun!

Minimum/Maximum: 6/20

Seven meetings: Cost: \$63

## "Duck" Tapers (Grades 2-5)

Mrs. Woodward

Tuesday, 4:15-5:15 (Meeting dates: Jan 14,21,28, Feb 4,11,18,25, Mar 3,10)

This club is for everyone who loves to use duct tape and make crafts! Every week we will use duct tape in a new way to make useful and exciting items. Some weeks you will get to choose what you would like to make from specific options. These are just some of the ideas: wallet, hair bows, bookmarks, flowers, boats, zipper pouches, bracelets, water bottle holder, and more.

Minimum/Maximum: 6/none

Nine meetings: Cost: \$90

## Confetti Throwers (Grades K-4)

Mrs. Woodward

Wednesday, 4:15-5:15 (Meeting dates: Jan 15,22,29, Feb 5,12,19,26, Mar 4,11)

We will be throwing kindness around like confetti! We will spread kindness to others through different projects and activities. We will also have some projects and activities that focus on being kind to ourselves. We will make kindness rocks, read stories about what kindness is, do a school wide kindness project, and much more!

Minimum/Maximum: 6/20

Nine meetings: Cost: \$90

## Science Explorers (Grades 2-5)

Mrs. Woodward

Thursday, 4:15-5:15 (Jan 16,30, Feb 6,13,20,27, Mar 5,12)

Do you love to experiment? Do you like to see things change and react? We will conduct a variety of experiments that involve many materials you may already have around the house. Who doesn't want to see something possibly erupt? You will need to be a good listener and follow directions very carefully. It is okay if our experiment doesn't always work. Remember that this is all about having fun and learning about new things.

Minimum/Maximum: 6/20

Eight meetings: Cost: \$80

**Looking for Ski Club?** We are looking for a parent or two who would be willing to chaperone and stay with the skiing scholars on ski nights until everyone is picked up. If you're interested, email Ms. Peterson for details.



#### **Homework Club (Grades 4-8)**

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, 4:15-5:15

(Meeting dates: Jan 13,14,15,16,21,22,27,28,29,30, Feb 3,4,5,6,10,11,12,13,18,19,20,24,25,26,27, Mar 2,3,4,5,9,10,11,12)

If homework at home is difficult, frustrating, or just hard to fit in before dinner, sign up for homework club to get it finished here at school!

Scholars will meet in a classroom with a teacher, get help with homework and hopefully head home with their work finished for the night!

The club is not tutoring, so scholars will share the teacher and work together when able.

Minimum/Maximum: 6/none

(Mondays only: 7 meetings, Tuesdays only: 9 meetings, Wednesdays only: 9 meetings, Thursdays only: 8 meetings, all days Monday

through Thursday: 33 meetings)

Cost per meeting: \$10

#### **Eagle's Speech and Debate (Grades 5-8)**

Mrs. Carlson

Mondays and Wednesdays 4:15-5:15 (Meeting dates: Jan 13,15,22,27,29, Feb 3,5,10,12,19,24,26, Mar 2,4,9,11)

Do you like to talk to walls? Join Mrs. Carlson's speech and debate club! In this club you will learn about speech as a team activity. You will select a category: Informative, Original Oratory, Creative Expression, Humorous, Duo Interpretation, Drama, Poetry, Extemporaneous Speaking or Extemporaneous Reading, and then you will write, practice and perform a Speech. Must attend at least half of the practices and one speech night.

Minimum/Maximum: 6/30

Sixteen meetings: Cost \$144

#### **ASL—American Sign Language (Grades 5-8)**

Mrs. Parker

Mondays, 4:15-5:15 (Jan 13,27, Feb 3,10,24, Mar 2,9)

Students will be introduced to American Sign Language, including conversational signs, structure, and grammar of the language.

Students will also learn about Deaf culture. Students will be expected to practice the signs learned each week.

Minimum/Maximum: 6/16

Seven meetings: Cost \$56

#### **Victorian Literature (Grades 5-8)**

Mrs. Carlson

Tuesday, 4:15-5:15 (Meeting dates: Jan 14,21,28, Feb 4,11,18,25, Mar 3,10)

This club is for people who love to read! We will read three novels written in the Victorian Era (1837-1901), as well as several short stories! We will discuss and enjoy these beautiful books, as we travel back in time! Bring book to each meeting and read up to the assigned chapters.

Minimum/Maximum: 6/10

Nine meetings: Cost: \$90

#### **The Penguin Corps (Grades 5-8)**

Mr. Keroff

Wednesday, 4:15-5:15 (Meeting dates: Jan 15,22,29, Feb 5,12,19,26, Mar 4,11)

The purpose of this club is to educate students in the foundations of Linux and open source software and have fun doing it. Kids will learn about the insides of computers, how to install all of the software, including the operating system, and will apply that knowledge by refurbishing used computers for people in need. This is only the second middle school Linux club in Minnesota, and one of only a handful in North America. Students taking part will not only have fun, but also learn the basics of an "in demand" field of computing that most major companies are looking to hire in. Kids will be expected to attend with a willingness to learn, experiment, and try something new. Regular attendance, good behavior, and a good attitude are expected.

Minimum/Maximum: 10/none

Nine meetings: Cost: \$90

#### **D&D Club (Grades 6-8)**

Mrs. Zoromski

Wednesday, 4:15-5:15 (Meeting dates: Jan 15,22,29, Feb 5,12,19,26, Mar 4,11)

Dungeons and Dragons Club is all about storytelling! It will be a place for members to practice improv and role-playing, improve their creative writing and character development skills, build teamwork, group collaboration, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills.

Members will grow socially as they practice listening and speaking and develop interpersonal skills. There will be opportunities for research, art, communication, imagination, and creative problem-solving. D&D Club will be an environment of collaboration and support. It is a place to get creative and tell a collective story. D&D requires positive thinkers who are ready to be team players and work for the good of the whole group.

Minimum/Maximum: 6/none

Nine meetings: Cost: \$90



## Sample Kindergarten Schedule

8:35-8:55 Arrival/Morning Journals

9:00-9:25 Morning Meeting

9:25-10:25 Math & Math Workplaces

10:30-10:50 Being A Reader

- Shared Reading
- Handwriting
- Independent Work
- Learning Letter Names



10:55-11:15 Lunch

11:15-11:35 Recess

11:40-12:00 Making Meaning & Vocabulary Lesson

12:00-1:05 Small Group Reading Groups & Independent Learning Workplaces

1:15-2:05 Specialists – 50 minute block, 25 min. per class; switch at 1:40

- Cycle Day A: **Phy Ed** with Mr. Jiskra/**Music** with Mr. Gross
- Cycle Day B: **Music** with Mr. Gross/**Spanish** with Ms. Christensen
- Cycle Day C: **Spanish** with Ms. Christensen/**Phy Ed** with Mr. Sickmann
- Cycle Day D: **Phy Ed** with Mr. Sickmann/**Art** with Ms. Meyer
- Cycle Day E: **Art** with Ms. Meyer/**Phy Ed** with Mr. Jiskra

2:10-2:25 2<sup>nd</sup> Recess

2:25 – 2:35 Snack

2:35-3:05 Being A Writer

3:10-3:30 Core Knowledge/Social Studies/Science

3:40 Dismissal

\*Times are subject to change slightly throughout the year.