



**EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM SUMMARY**  
GULF COAST ACADEMY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY  
**2020—2021 SCHOOL YEAR**

**Dear Parents & Guardians,**

Thank you for your interest in the specialized educational programs offered by Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology a "No-Tuition Charter Middle School" sponsored by the Hernando County School District. The Hernando County School District is the Local Education Agency (LEA) that sponsors all of the public schools in the county. However, our charter school has a separate governing board responsible for running the schools and thus the specialized enrollment process outlined below.

The Application window for the **2020-2021** school year will open on **June 1, 2019** and **END on Wednesday, January 1, 2020 (5:00PM)**

**Pre-Application Deadline Message:**

Your online pre-application form **MUST** be completed no later than **Wednesday, January 1, 2020 (5:00PM)** to be considered for the **2020-2021** school year, please note that this is **NOT** the full application, please read the paragraphs below to learn more about the tiered application deadlines.

**Enrollment Communication:**

Please send all enrollment correspondence to the following e-mail address: [enrollment@gulfcoastacademy.org](mailto:enrollment@gulfcoastacademy.org)  
We will send all enrollment communication to the e-mail address that you used when you filled out your pre-application.

**Tiered Application Deadlines:**

Applicants that have submitted an online pre-application during the above six(6)-month application window will be considered for the **2020-2021** school year lottery, *provided:*

- 1. they LOG-IN before Monday, January 6, 2020 and**
- 2. complete the ENTIRE application by Friday, January 24, 2020 and**
- 3. attend the MANDATORY pre-application meeting or a scheduled makeup session**

IF YOU DO NOT RECEIVE YOUR LOGIN PASSWORD VIA EMAIL BY **JANUARY 1, 2020**, PLEASE NOTIFY US IMMEDIATELY ([ENROLLMENT@GULFCOASTACADEMY.ORG](mailto:ENROLLMENT@GULFCOASTACADEMY.ORG)) All applicants will receive a password through the e-mail account used during registration by **Wednesday, January 1, 2020**, **NO NEW APPLICATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER Wednesday, January 1, 2020 (5:00)PM**. If you do not receive your log in password it is imperative that you contact this office ([enrollment@gulfcoastacademy.org](mailto:enrollment@gulfcoastacademy.org)) so that we may verify your pre-application status.

**Login Passwords:**

Remember, passwords are sent electronically using the e-mail address that you used when you filed your pre-application. ***We cannot send to a different e-mail address.*** This pre-application is **NOT** the entire application process; there is a checklist that **WILL** need to be completed prior to the application deadline (**Friday, January 24, 2020**).

**Online Application Checklist:**

This checklist will include but not be limited to: A student essay with a pre-defined topic, a teacher recommendation form, a support recommendation form, FSA score record documentation, most recent report card, a parent volunteer commitment, and various other documents in support of the application.



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**Application Summary:**

NEW APPLICANTS FOR THE 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR: All NEW applicants should click the - new applicant "START HERE" button on the enrollment website. Online pre-applications will continue to be accepted until **Wednesday, January 1, 2020 @ 5:00PM**; [After this date/time this application window will CLOSE and subsequent applications will become part of the second application window](#). NO PASSWORDS WILL BE SENT FOR THE SECOND APPLICATION WINDOW. ALL APPLICANTS: In order to be considered for the upcoming lottery, all applicants must activate their account by logging-in and using the credentials provided prior to **Monday, January 6, 2020**. Only applicants that COMPLETE the application checklist before **Friday, January 24, 2020** will be entered into the enrollment lottery. E-mail the school if you do not receive your LOGIN credentials, by Wednesday, January 1, 2020; no extensions will be granted for any reason. PLEASE KEEP YOUR LOGIN CREDENTIALS IN A SAFE PLACE, YOU WILL NEED THEM EACH TIME YOU ACCESS THE ENROLLMENT SYSTEM. Direct all correspondence to [enrollment@gulfcoastacademy.org](mailto:enrollment@gulfcoastacademy.org)

**Before you invest a great deal of time in your application, please consider the following descriptors to see if the educational program offered by GCA is the best fit for your child's middle school experience.**

**PLEASE INITIAL NEXT TO EACH STATEMENT:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ The charter school employs a challenging, robust, fast-paced curriculum that emphasizes science, technology, engineering, artistic creativity, and mathematics.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ The educational program is rigorous and demanding. Your child will be expected to keep pace with an advanced curriculum that has five nights per week of homework Sunday—Thursday, thematic interdisciplinary units, multi-week projects, laboratory investigations, and field experiences. We also have an extended school day (ESD) which may be REQUIRED under certain circumstances.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ The classroom and activity program rules are strictly and consistently enforced which includes personal conduct, classroom decorum, dress code, hair styles, appropriate use of electronic devices, language, and on-line activities as they relate to school students and personnel.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ We offer enrichment opportunities along with homework-help and remediation classes during our extended school day. Examples of our CURRENT enrichment offerings include: Guitar Lessons, Violin Lessons, Art Club, Photography Club, Archery Club, Electronics Engineering Club, Reptile Pet Club, and a graded Spanish Language Class. *Extended school day clubs and classes are fee-based.*
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Students who miss a day of school due to illness are required to participate in a makeup-clinic through our extended school day . The following clinics are offered weekly: Math Clinic, Language Arts Clinic, Technology Clinic, Science Clinic & Social Studies Clinic. **We also require that students who test below grade level in reading and/or mathematics attend the corresponding, graded intensive Reading/Mathematics class which is offered outside of regular school hours through the ESD.**
6. \_\_\_\_\_ Our Language Arts/Reading program is based on popular novels; a new novel is presented every quarter and students are expected to read these novels as part of their weekly homework. Please review the list of novels that will be used prior to enrolling your child. The instructional program will not be modified. Please review the school supplies list to review the novels expected to be used for the upcoming school year.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ **Serious students who value education and have an interest in the sciences (life, earth, physical, chemical or computer), mathematics, engineering, technology, and who enjoy the experiential and physical aspect of our activity program tend to thrive. We make no pretense that this educational option is the best choice for all middle school students. We ask all students to try all activities. Please**



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**consult with your child about the challenging, physically engaging, experiential nature of the educational program before attempting to enroll him/her.**

8. \_\_\_\_ The school has an economy system that is intertwined with our system of discipline. Students earn units of currency called "credits" weekly through uninterrupted attendance. Accumulated "credits" can be redeemed throughout the year for REWARDS; however, students can also LOSE credits when they turn in work late, arrive unprepared for class, do not return forms before the announced deadline or through office referrals. Negative credit situations are not permitted and students must volunteer (outside of school hours) at preapproved locations (with their parents) to bring themselves into good standing.
9. \_\_\_\_ Many of our activities are water-based; applicants should have a high comfort level in and around the water. Alternatively, they should participate in weekly swimming lessons through the YMCA or a private instructor upon acceptance to the school.
10. \_\_\_\_ Our students take certain high-school classes for credit as part of our Middle School program. These classes WILL count toward the high-school grade point average or "GPA." Students interested in transitioning to the Springstead High School International Baccalaureate (IB) program are recommended to take the fee-based GCA foreign language extended school day class in middle school. If you are sure you and your child wish to take this path, please be sure to consult with the directors prior to the application deadline.
11. \_\_\_\_ By applying to this charter school, you agree to accept our educational program in its entirety and not try to supplement your child's middle school education through outside sources such as FLVS (Florida Virtual School). Such requests will not be honored.
12. \_\_\_\_ FACT: Every year three to five students find the program too difficult and withdraw from the program due to failing grades and re-enter their zoned middle school. FACT: One fifth of the schools' students earn straight "A"s every quarter.
13. \_\_\_\_ The charter school charges fees that are commensurate with district school fees. A schedule of fees can be found in the application packet. Non-payment of these program fees will result in the student's automatic enrollment being rescinded for the subsequent year.
14. \_\_\_\_ Parents/guardians must volunteer weekly at the charter school for at least one-hour (per week) totaling forty hours for the school year. Non-fulfillment of this contractual obligation will result in the student's automatic enrollment being rescinded for the subsequent year as well as restrictions during the current year.
15. \_\_\_\_ All charter school students are required to take the Florida Standards Assessment tests (FSA) and Florida End-of-Course (EOC) tests. While each of our courses are aligned with the Florida standards, we do not teach to the test. By enrolling your child in this public charter school you agree to have your child to participate in state sponsored standardized testing for each year they attend the charter school.
16. \_\_\_\_ The charter school offers ESE (Exceptional Student Education) services in the form of classroom accommodations and a "teacher consult model" through our Extended School Day. If your child receives ESE services in their current school or has an Individual Education Plan (IEP), the IEP team must convene PRIOR to your child's enrollment and must recommend that the charter school offers the BEST placement option from the spectrum of services offered by the LEA. As part of the consult model, you must agree to allow your child to participate in the extended school day as prescribed by the school's ESE teacher to accommodate their exceptionality.
17. \_\_\_\_ The charter school offers both an intensive reading (iREAD) and intensive math (iMATH) program for students scoring below grade level on the state standardized assessment. This will be a mandatory, graded, class held for several days during the week either before or after the regular school day.



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18. **TEACHER RECOMMENDATION**: You must secure a recommendation from your child’s current teacher using the form provided prior to the application deadline. We recommend that you give a copy of this form to your child’s current teacher as soon as possible. You may also wish to request a copy of your child’s first quarter report card and last year’s FSA scores at this time if you do not have copies in your possession. The second recommendation can be from another teacher OR can be from a non-family adult acting in a leadership capacity with your child: e.g. coach, youth group leader, scout leader, music instructor, martial arts instructor, etc.
19. **APPLICATION ESSAY**: All student applicants are required to prepare an essay in their own words. The topic for the essay and other essay details will be provided through the online application process. We strongly recommend that the essay be accomplished during the **WINTER BREAK** so as not to conflict with current homework requirements. This essay requires concentration, preparation, and sincerity on the part of the student applicant and may take several hours to properly complete. An organizational pre-writing outline is recommended and will be provided as part of the online essay preparation kit. It is likely we will discuss the content of this essay with your child.
20. **TRANSPORTATION**: Our current arrangement with the Hernando County School District provides a shuttle bus from Powell Middle School and Fox Chapel Middle School to GCA allowing students who live in the PMS or FCMS “zone” to be transported to/from the charter schools. Please consult with the school district’s transportation department to determine if you live in the PMS or FCMS zone. This information may be found online using the district’s website “hernandoschools.org” While this transportation arrangement has been in place for over seventeen years, school zones and district transportation programs are subject to the discretion of the Hernando County School Board.
21. **HOW TO REACH US**: We are here to help you with the application process! Please do not hesitate to contact us via email if you have any questions or need any type of clarification. We DO check and reply to our e-mail messages over the break. EMAIL: [enrollment@gulfcoastacademy.org](mailto:enrollment@gulfcoastacademy.org)