



# PROSPECTIVE PARENT

## Frequently Asked Questions

Lowry Elementary is an ECE to 5<sup>th</sup> grade school located in the Southwest neighborhood of Lowry in East Denver. Lowry serves 425 students in 21 classrooms representing a diverse cross-section of Denver. Our focus is on academic excellence and meeting the needs of the whole child. This allows our students to experience a school community that is both caring and compassionate. We value the hard work that is necessary to build lifelong learners and great citizens of our community. Our expectations are high, our limits are endless, and together we are unstoppable.

### **What is Lowry's philosophy or mission?**

The mission of Lowry Elementary is to foster a joyful school family that is committed to authentic belonging and personal excellence in our diverse global community.

Our vision is to create unstoppable learners who embrace inclusion and achieve their full potential.

At Lowry Elementary, every student SOARs – we are **S**afe, **O**pen-minded, **A**ccountable and **R**espectful

### **What makes Lowry unique?**

At Lowry, our diversity is our superpower! Lowry families value and appreciate the true diversity that is Lowry Elementary. Students come from all over the world with 25 languages spoken by families. With no racial majority and students from a variety of economic backgrounds, Lowry students gain a larger perspective on life that helps prepare them for the real world.

Lowry is committed to social-emotional learning. We utilize a full suite of tools to ensure that students understand their emotions, develop a strong sense of self-regulation and how to problem solve when conflict occurs. The Conscious Discipline program is woven throughout the day and offers a variety of routines and rituals to help students feel connected to their school family and learn how to identify and process their emotions in a safe and productive way. Staff values restorative justice processes and work closely with students to identify the root cause of problems and seek productive solutions rather than doling out punishment. We are fortunate to have Connect Us facilitate a safe and inclusive playground time while guiding students through negotiation and conflict resolution strategies.

Lowry's teachers are top-notch and truly dedicated to helping students develop and learn. They put students first each and every day and truly care about your child. Our families regularly identify Lowry teachers as the best part of Lowry.

## **What is the academic program at Lowry?**

Lowry uses an integrated and standards-based curriculum that allow our teachers to receive support, high quality resources and evidence-based practice to help all our students succeed.

Specifically, our ECE/Kindergarten teachers utilize Tools of the Mind, which is an adaptive program based on the research of how early learners grow and are rooted in dramatic play. Learning focuses on developing foundational cognitive, social and emotional skills.

We really like the hands-on applied learning from Bridges Math, which is used at all grade levels. Currently Lowry utilizes Benchmarks Advanced for Literacy for 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> grade students and Expeditionary Learning Literacy for 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade. Amplify Science is used for Science and Teacher Curriculum Institute – Social Studies Alive! is used for Social Studies.

Lowry staff is committed to meeting the needs of all learners. Instruction is focused on small groups of students with similar skill levels, so each student receives instruction to meet their unique level. Teachers use a data driven approach to developing lessons. Students are regularly assessed, and teachers plan their lessons based on specific outcomes and goals and a keen knowledge of where individual students are at.

Students in ECE to third grade spend the entire day with one teacher. Students in fourth to fifth grade follow a platooning model. This means that each class has a homeroom where they start and end their day and then move to other classroom for the afternoon. This approach allows our teachers to become more specialized in their content area, allowing them to differentiate for students more effectively. Each pair of teachers work together and share the same group of students. One teacher teaches Literacy and Social Studies and the other teacher teaches Math and Science.

## **Tell me about your Teaching Staff.**

We have a total of 21 Classroom Teachers, four Specials Teachers, 16 Specialized Teachers, 5 Student Support Professionals (Counselor, Therapists, Psychologist), one Librarian and 20 Paraprofessionals. Two teachers are nationally board certified and many have Masters Degrees. Several teachers have been at Lowry since it opened in 2002.

## **Who are the Support Staff at Lowry?**

Lowry has a four person Behavioral and Mental Health Support team including a Psychologist, Counselor and Restorative Justice Coordinator. These staff members help students with behavioral and emotional support. Students who need immediate support may have a staff member work alongside them in the classroom or take them to an alternative environment (low sensory room, outside, etc.) for a “break”. Staff also works with students on a scheduled basis.

Intervention staff supports students who need extra support to come up to grade level or the extra challenge above grade level. Intervention staff works with students in a co-teaching model in their homeroom and pulls students out for work in small groups. Math, Literacy and Gifted Talented staff provides intervention support to students.

Our three person English Language Development team works with students who need support in learning English as a second language. They work with students on a daily basis.

Speech, Physical and Occupational Therapists are available to work with students with an identified need. Lowry has both a Mild/Moderate and Affective Needs Special Education program to support students with identified needs.

Six Instructional Coaches support teachers in professional development, co-teaching, curriculum planning and data analysis.

### **What are typical class sizes?**

Our goal is to have our classes around 25 students. We are proud that we are almost always able to make that happen, and we aim to have a lower class size than the district maximum which is up to 34 students. Our ECE4 classes are capped at 16 students per class.

### **Tell me more about Conscious Discipline.**

Conscious Discipline is our school-wide social emotional program. Rather than being a discrete curriculum taught at a certain point of the week, facets of Conscious Discipline permeate every part of Lowry. Conscious Discipline focuses on developing students' emotional self-regulation skills. It emphasizes that students cannot reach their Executive Functioning state where learning and productivity is optimized unless they are in a good emotional state. Conscious Discipline provides our staff and students with resources, techniques, routines and rituals for our Brain Smart Starts, conflict resolution, calming techniques, managing feelings, self-control, Safe Place, Safekeepers, and connection tools. A huge part of Conscious Discipline is the School Family and our staff and students work hard to model and live a healthy family structure at their home away from home.

### **What specials or enrichment programs occur during the school day?**

Students rotate through Gym, Art and STEM on a daily basis and spend 45 minutes per day (30 minutes for Kindergarten) in Specials. They also have a 45 minute block of music (30 minutes for Kindergarten and First Grade) once per week. ECE participates in Gym and Art.

### **Lowry emphasizes connections to outdoor learning, tell me more.**

We have a Victory Garden, where students start seeds inside under grow lights and then plant outside. Students harvest produce from garden for use in the Cafeteria and for sale at our Farmer's Market. We have two designated Outdoor Classroom spaces for teachers to use, the Victory Garden and Serenity Garden. Teachers are encouraged and supported to take their lessons outside, tweaking and adapting to fit the unique outdoor environment and receive ongoing professional development and support on how to work with students outside.

## **How is the Library utilized?**

Lowry is fortunate to have a full-time library technician supporting the library, Students have 30 minutes of Library time every two weeks and can check out two books at a time. In addition, we have a robust professional development resource section for teachers to use.

## **What does technology use look like at Lowry?**

Every Lowry student has a Chromebook that can be used to assist their learning. As one component of their small group work, students use their computers to gain extra practice in literacy and math. In addition to a rich school and classroom library, students can check out ebooks on their computer. Students from grades 1-5 occasionally use their computers for writing, but handwritten assignments are still prioritized.

## **Do students take field trips?**

All grade levels take field trips throughout the year. Field trips are paid for by a field trip fee, which varies by grade level, that is paid at the beginning of the year. Families unable to cover this fee are still eligible to attend field trips. Some field trip highlights include: Kindergarten to Denver Zoo and Denver Museum of Nature and Science, First Grade to the Children's Museum, Second Grade to the Stock Show, Third Grade to Colorado Symphony, Fourth Grade to History Colorado Center, Fifth Grade to Young Ameritowne and overnight to Balarat.

## **What is the start and end time?**

School runs from 7:30 am - 2:30 pm. Students can begin lining up at 7:20 am. We have two Kiss and Go lines for parents to drop off students. First to Fifth grade is on Maple Avenue and a Kindergarten and First Grade drop off on Trenton Street. After school, teachers stay with students until 2:45 at which time any remaining students wait in the office.

## **How do students get to school? Is free school busing available?**

Students that attend Lowry walk, bike, drive and take buses. We have lots of different ways for families to get to school. If you are within the Lowry Elementary Boundaries and greater than one mile from school, your family will qualify for transportation. Please reach out to DPS transportation for more information - <http://thecommons.dpsk12.org/transportation>

## **What type of before and after school programs are offered?**

Lowry is one of the sites of Discovery Link run through the DPS Office of Extended Learning and Community Schools. Programs are in high demand and may have a wait list. Due to licensing and other constraints, we are limited in the number of spots available. Please visit the Discovery Link website for additional information and registration information - <https://discoverylink.dpsk12.org/>

Lowry parents also help coordinate a variety of After School Enrichment Classes. Four 8-week sessions are offered each year. A variety of classes are offered including: karate, cooking, golf, dance, legos, bricks for kids and yoga. Scholarships are available. Our co-ed competitive Lowry Basketball Team is also available for 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> graders.



## **What are the food options at Lowry?**

We offer free breakfast for all students at the start of school. Breakfast is eaten in the classroom during the first 15 minutes of the day while students participate in quiet activities to kickstart their day. A free hot lunch has multiple entrée choices plus fresh fruits and vegetables on a salad bar. Students have 20 minutes for lunch. Our Victory Garden provides fresh vegetables for lunch in the growing season. Parents can load their students account via My School Bucks to pay for lunch.

## **How much time do students have recess for?**

Lunch recess is 25 minutes long for all students and is supervised by Lowry team members. Additionally, Lowry is thrilled to have a partnership with a non-profit called Connect Us, a non-profit dedicated to building the social and emotional wellbeing of children. Connect Us facilitators help to create a safe and inclusive play environment. Facilitators play alongside students in a variety of inclusive games and activities. This adult engagement and inclusive play reduces competitive intensity, aggressive behavior and bullying behaviors. When conflict does occur, Connect Us facilitators help students work through disagreements while guiding them through negotiation and conflict resolution strategies.

## **What is the philosophy on homework?**

Homework varies from teacher to teacher. ECE and Kindergarten students can expect to read each night. First to fifth grade students can expect reading, spelling and math. The exact amount typically increases with each grade level. Lowry teachers understand that family time is very important and homework should never take more than 30-40 minutes a night.

## **What is the WINGS Program?**

An Affective Needs program for 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> graders, WINGS (When I Need Guidance and Support) provides support for students with severe emotional needs. WINGS operates as an Inclusive classroom – students do the majority of learning in this classroom, but can join grade level peers as able for certain activities as their needs dictate. Our students are supported by 1 Full Time Teacher, 1 Full Time Social Worker and 2 Full Time Paraprofessionals.

## **What does parent involvement look like at Lowry?**

Parents are welcome and encouraged to volunteer at Lowry. While current COVID restrictions prevent parents from working inside the school, there are a variety of ways to be involved either outside or from home.

We have an active PTO that supports our teachers and students with special events and monetary support. We are fortunate to raise ~\$80,000 per year to support teacher special projects, curriculum support, teacher appreciation, community building and special activities for students such as Avid for Adventure outdoor day, student musical and an end-of-the-year carnival. We host two main fundraisers, a Fun Run in the fall and an Auction Dinner in the spring. Additional smaller fundraisers include monthly Dining for Dollars, gift card sales and share parties.

## **What does the school use for regular communication to families?**

We use Digital Deets as our primary form of communication. This provides updates from staff and parent volunteers via an app, email or website.

## **How do we “choice in” to Lowry?**

Families who live outside of the Lowry boundaries are required to “choice in” to Lowry. Even families who live within Lowry are encouraged to submit a Choice form as it allows us to anticipate our enrollment. Round One Choice Applications are due February 15, 2022. Choice is a lottery-based program. For more information, visit the School Choice website <http://schoolchoice.dpsk12.org/schoolchoice-round-1/> and the [FAQ](#).