



Parents naturally have many questions about how Two Rivers Classical Academy will operate. At the present stage of its development, it is impossible to determine and describe the answers to all these questions. We have attempted to generally address some of these issues below, and we will update constituents with more answers as TRCA develops.

Our Name

Yes, Two Rivers is a popular description of the Des Moines area because of confluence of the Raccoon River and Des Moines River. But it also captures the philosophy of what makes the school unique. We really want it to be the best of two worlds – family and school – working together for the glory of God and the good of our children.

Admission Process

We anticipate the admission process to have four steps:

- 1) Attend a public information meeting;
- 2) Read and understand the information packet and other resources;
- 3) Meet with academy leadership privately or in small group;
- 4) Submit application and fee.

We anticipate the application for 2019-2020 will become available in January 2019. It should be noted that applying is not a guarantee of admission. Rather, TRCA leadership will look at a number of factors to insure the academy is a good fit for each family.

Parent Training

Prior to the start of the 2019-2020 academic year, TRCA will conduct a parent training. The training will likely occur over a period of several days, allowing parents and faculty to become acquainted, and it will cover topics such as: curriculum and lesson plans; how to implement the curriculum at home; student expectations and discipline; and details about the day-to-day operations of the academy. Attendance at the parent training will be required.

Discipline

TRCA will seek to balance and incorporate both a "joy through discipline" and a "joy through exploration" approach into its academic culture. Faculty will model and create practices, routines, and standards that form TRCA students, while parents are reinforcing their own similar expectations for their children at home. Many specific details are yet to be determined and will eventually be communicated through an Academy Handbook.

Faculty

TRCA is committed to hiring quality faculty members – professional teachers that value the individual student and family, that whole-heartedly adopt the philosophy, values, and model of TRCA. TRCA will invest in its teachers and build quality curriculum around them. While state licensing is not indicative of quality, TRCA intends to have at least some teachers licensed to supervise home schooling families pursuant to state law regarding home schooling.¹ Particularly in the Logic and Rhetoric schools, adjunct faculty may be utilized for some courses.

¹ See the Iowa Department of Education's *2018-2019 Private Instruction Handbook* at See the Iowa Department of Education's 2018-2019 Private Instruction Handbook at <https://educateiowa.gov/pk-12/options-educational-choice/competent-private-instruction-home-schooling>

Curriculum

TRCA has not yet identified the specific curriculum that will be used, though the information packet contains an example from a similar school as a model. The curriculum plan will be established by professionally-trained teachers, in consultation with the board of directors and other advisers. Parents may wish to supplement with topics at home (e.g., Spanish), but they should understand that substituting a curriculum (e.g., math) will not be acceptable. In some rare situations, on a case-by-case basis, accommodations may be made for special needs (e.g., dyslexia).

Schedule

TRCA will meet two days per week, likely beginning at 8:30 a.m. and ending by 3:30 p.m. Initially we anticipate the academy meeting on Mondays and Wednesdays. There may also be special events and educational trips, and those dates would be communicated in advance. If growth demands, TRCA would consider operating a second cohort that meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Grades and Class Sizes

Classical education is built upon the three stages of the Trivium, which naturally follow the development of a child’s physical and intellectual capabilities. The American system of graded classes is less significant in classical education, as the focus is on mastery of the tools of learning, and a child’s progression through the stages should occur at the individual’s own unique pace. With that understanding, here is an approximate correlation between the Trivium stages and American grades:

American Grades	Trivium Stage	Classical Emphasis
Preschool – 2nd Grade	“Pre-Grammar”	Basic reading, writing, and math tools
3rd – 5th Grades	Grammar School	Memorization and recitation
6th – 8th Grades	Logic School	Logic and reason
9th – 12th Grades	Rhetoric School	Expression and application

At present, we are gauging the level of interest in each stage and will announce which stages will be initially available. Each classroom instructor will have 10 to 14 students, and it is possible that there will be multiple classrooms for each stage.

Location

TRCA has not yet identified a location for the academy to meet. We anticipate renting educational space from a church, preferably central to the metro area, easily accessible, and conducive to a learning environment. The location will be announced prior to accepting applications. If future demand justifies it, TRCA would consider operating multiple sites. Because TRCA will be renting church space, it will not be practical to operate a kitchen; thus, students will need to bring sack lunches.

Technology

TRCA recognizes the value of limiting technology in the classroom, particularly for younger students. In limited situations, technology can supplement and enhance human interactions, but to be effective, it must be used judiciously. More opportunities for effective use of classroom technology become apparent in the upper stages. Technology will be useful for communication and collaboration between parents and professional faculty.

Finance

TRCA’s model is based upon home schooling; thus, the leadership recognizes that the cost of attending must be attainable to single-income families. Similar schools across the country charge a range of \$2,500 to \$3,500 per year, per student, plus the cost of curriculum and uniforms. We anticipate a similar cost structure. TRCA’s operations will be funded entirely by tuition rather than fundraising. Donations will be solicited to finance the start-up of the academy, and thereafter donations will be used for scholarships.

Governance

TRCA is governed by an independent, self-perpetuating board of directors. The board will set policies, hire the head-of-school, approve faculty, and oversee the operational integrity of the academy. The board will solicit input from the academy's constituents, including parents and faculty. The day-to-day operation of the academy will reside with the head-of-school and the faculty.

Regulations and Accreditation

TRCA will not pursue state accreditation, though it may eventually pursue private accreditation with private organizations, such as the Association of Classical Christian Schools. It should be understood by every parent that they are homeschooling, pursuant to the laws of the State of Iowa. TRCA anticipates hiring faculty that can provide licensed supervision that qualifies as Competent Private Instruction;² however, the responsibility of meeting state and local requirements remains with parents.

Two Rivers Classical Academy admits students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at our school and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, and national or ethnic origin in administration of our educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic or other school-administered programs.

² See the Iowa Department of Education's *Private Instruction Comparison Chart 2018-2019* at See the Iowa Department of Education's 2018-2019 Private Instruction Handbook at <https://educateiowa.gov/documents/accreditation-program-approvals/2018/07/private-instruction-comparison-chart-2018-2019>