



Silverton Paideia Academy

<http://silverton.cps-k12.org>

Our Educational Philosophy

Silverton Paideia Academy is an elementary school adhering to the Paideia philosophy of education, guided by the principles that all children can learn, that all students need and deserve the same high quality education, that all students must be challenged to perform to the best of their ability, and that all genuine knowledge is active rather than passive. In support of these goals, we have also adopted the museum school concept to enhance the instruction and learning already taking place.

In order to accomplish this, Silverton Paideia Academy features the following:

- The same strong liberal arts course of study for all students;
- Hands-on math and science instruction;
- Integration of the museum school concept to encourage students to actively process and apply new knowledge and skills;
- The use of teachers as “coaches” to help students learn;
- The utilization of small group activities in which students practice specific skills; and
- Seminar periods in which students learn to express and defend their opinions about important issues and ideas.

What is Paideia?

Paideia (py-DEE-a) comes from the Greek *pais* or *paidos*, meaning “the upbringing of a child”. The Paideia philosophy celebrates the fundamental notion that to be fully educated is a lifelong adventure that starts with an individual's formal schooling. It is based on the assumption that all human beings are active learners, capable of a fully humanistic life defined by intellectual growth. Through the use of three distinct instructional techniques—*didactic instruction* to increase students’ factual recall, *intellectual coaching* for developing students’ literacy skills, and *seminar dialogue* to strengthen students’ conceptual understanding—teachers and students are engaged in a rigorous and multi-faceted educational process. Thus, Paideia schools should ultimately be judged by how well they prepare students for a full and active life of both the heart and mind.

What is a museum school?

A museum school can mean different things to different people, but at Silverton Paideia Academy it means that our students are engaged in the active creation of projects, artifacts and exhibits that utilize the skills and knowledge they gain through the existing Paideia program. In order to fully appreciate this creative process and to put knowledge into a meaningful context, students will make frequent visits to local museums and related institutions. More than just a fieldtrip, these visits will focus on selected objects or exhibits in order to stimulate or enhance the students’ traditional classroom learning. Through these visits, as well as pre-visit and post-visit activities directly related to the museum experience, students and teachers will utilize the museums as an extension of their classroom, not someplace to visit only on special occasions.

Why a museum school at Silverton Paideia Academy?

It is well documented that students learn in countless ways and that instructional strategies should reflect these various modes of learning. This differentiated instruction is the foundation of the Paideia philosophy and numerous other pedagogical models that attempt to reach students in the manner that best suits their learning style. The museum school concept takes root as “a new synthesis between the formal learning of the traditional school sector and the informal learning so well-suited to the museum.”(Barry Lord, *The Manual of Museum Learning*, p. 81)

A museum school can be as broadly defined as the goals of parents, staff and administrators or the diversity of the partners involved. Some museum schools may be literally located within a museum, with dedicated classroom space in close proximity to the gallery floor. When located in a traditional school building, the casual visitor should feel as if they are walking into a museum and notice the prominent display of student projects, the use of descriptive language in student work, and students who are engaged in hands-on, minds-on learning and investigation.

Regardless of the physical location of the museum school, there are three elements that are necessary for successful implementation:

- In-depth partnerships with museums and related institutions including zoos, aquaria, galleries, performing arts venues and historic homes to support the museum learning model through professional development and student programming;
- Commitment on the part of the school faculty and administration to support frequent visits to and by museums and related institutions to support in-class curriculum; and
- Student projects, particularly created artifacts and exhibits, are integrated into the curriculum and prominently displayed throughout the school building.

At Silverton Paideia Academy, the museum school concept is being applied in support of the Paideia program already in place. Through formal and informal partnerships with area museums, zoos, aquaria, galleries, performing arts venues, historic homes and related scientific and cultural organizations, Silverton Paideia Academy has adopted the museum school concept to actively extend learning beyond the limitations of a physical classroom or the traditional school day.

In accordance with its role as a Community Learning Center and in furtherance of the Paideia focus on lifelong learning, Silverton Paideia Academy and its partners will also extend the museum-related opportunities to our larger community including the City of Silverton and surrounding communities.