

ACTON
ACADEMY
MARIETTA



TRAIL GUIDE

ARE YOU READY FOR A NEW ADVENTURE IN EDUCATION?



“Acton Academy is one of the most important education developments in the world.”

—Tom Vander Ark, CEO of Getting Smart, former executive director of education for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

What if the purpose of education was to guide children to find a calling and change the world?

Everything would look different.

Acton Academy Marietta is more than a place to learn. It's a quest to begin a Hero's Journey - to discover one's greatest gifts and the grand wonders of the world.

What Is Acton Academy Marietta?

Acton Academy Marietta is 'school' reinvented. It's a 21st century place of learning where young heroes cultivate the skills needed for the real world among peers of mixed ages, learning from and teaching each other.

Through our blended learning model, instruction is tailored to each individual student, but delivered with the camaraderie and collaboration of learning within a community of peers.

We believe every child is a genius with unique strengths and potential.

At Acton, we encourage the pursuit of goals, dreams, and a calling in life. We create an environment that inspires joyful learning, cultivating the habits of lifelong learners.

CALLING: where gifts, joy, and a burning need connect

Why Acton Marietta?

1. Acton Academy uses the latest technology in a self-paced environment that is designed to foster responsibility, goal-setting, and teamwork.
2. We believe children learn best by doing, whether it's launching a startup business, creating a tidepool habitat, playing a musical instrument, creating a mosaic, or programming a robot.
3. Adults in our program are 'Guides' not teachers, who offer insightful questions and facilitate hands-on learning. Guides use the Socratic Method, always responding to learner questions with questions or choices.
4. Acton Academy is "learned-driven." This means young people take ownership of their learning and peer relationships. Acton learners think independently, take responsibility, and embrace challenge.
5. We believe in the power of real-world experiences and the importance of exploring your passions to find your calling. Beginning in Middle School, our Eagles obtain apprenticeships in a field of their interest.
6. We encourage our learners to develop personal virtues such as honesty, hard work, responsibility, kindness, and empathy.

Teamwork!



On the edge of our seats to see the results of the physics projects



Learning through games!



Getting comfy for collaboration!



What is The Hero's Journey?

Acton uses the classic story structure of The Hero's Journey to illustrate and explore the adventure of learning. There are multiple stages of The Hero's Journey. Some stages involve big challenges and trials the Hero must overcome. Other stages are new and exciting, but it's all one big adventure!

The biggest takeaway from Acton's Hero's Journey is embracing the idea that out of failure comes our greatest learning.

Collaboration!



Family Campout!



Packing List

A Growth Mindset

A Sense of Adventure

A Creative Spark

A Desire for Something Different

Courage to Begin a Hero's Journey



Enjoying 1 hour or more of outside time EVERY day!

What sets Acton Academy apart?

While we believe the core skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic are vital and we're fascinated by the mysteries of science and the beauty of the humanities, we place **equal** importance on developing character and the soft skills need for life in the 21st century through collaboration in a community.

COMPETENCY

Acton Eagles develop varied academic competencies through:

- Socratic Discussion
- Projects with purpose
- Apprenticeships
- Entrepreneurship
- Learning for Mastery
- Critical Thinking
- Adaptive self-paced tech

COMMUNITY

Acton Eagles learn to embrace build an active member of a community through:

- Mixed-Age Studios
- Frequent Collaboration
- Self-governance

CHARACTER

Acton Eagles build strong character through:

- SEL Projects
- Growth Mindset
- Leadership Roles



Studio Focus

PLAY

Explorers - Ages 5-7

FOCUS-
Be part of a
COMMUNITY
that works
together

Goal: Be a good friend
and learn to clean up!

PARTICIPATE

Adventurers - Ages 8-11

FOCUS-
Build strong
CHARACTER
and learn to not
fear failure

Goal: Develop a love of
learning; try new things;
try **HARD** things!

PREPARE

Navigators - Ages 12-14

FOCUS-
Academic
COMPETENCY
and becoming
a scholar

Goal: Work hard, turn in
excellent work on time!

PROPEL

Pathfinders - Ages 14-18

FOCUS-
COMPETENCY
COMMUNITY
&
CHARACTER

Goal: Commit to
exploring your
NEXT GREAT ADVENTURE!

In a studio, learners (and artists!) work independently or collaborate together to inspire each other on their journeys. Unlike a traditional classroom, we don't have rows of desks and whiteboards at the front. Studios look more like a coworking space or sometimes a cozy living room. This is an intentional word choice for an intentional mindset!

Each mixed-age studio has a different focus for that age group, and each focus builds off the earlier studios as learners grow in responsibility and stamina.

This trajectory of Play > Participate > Prepare > Propel all builds toward and culminates in a capstone experience called the Next Great Adventure.

When our learners graduate, they know who they are, where they are going next, and, most importantly, **WHY** they are taking their next step.

Learning Studios

The Explorers (typically ages 5-7)

The Explorer Studio is a nurturing environment that fosters learning through play. The focus is on learning to be a good friend and cleaning up!

The signature experiences of this studio are the Montessori-inspired work cycles and two hours of playtime each day.

The program and approach are designed to inspire curiosity, develop collaborative habits, and build independence.

Abundant time for learning through play and choice in high-interest activities grow curiosity and wonder.

Focus on empowerment and problem-solving builds independence and a growth-mindset.

Collaboration and character development help learners learn how to work and play with others.



Developing curiosity!



Open-ended, loose parts play is the best!



Reading with friends!

Learning Studios

The Adventurers (typically ages 8-11)

"At Acton, you get to be very independent. At Acton, we do not judge each other when we make mistakes. Acton is the best school ever."

- Henry, age 10



The Adventurer Studio is the first environment where learners work both independently on self-paced Core Skills acquisition and collaboratively on developing community covenants and participating in real world projects.

Socratic discussions, self-pacing, and growth mindset development equip students to be lifelong learners.

Hands-on learning through projects and challenges primes students for real world demands.

The Hero's Journey and community covenants transform difficult decisions into virtuous habits.

The focus of this studio is to try new and hard things! Signature experiences of this studio include a wide variety of subjects covered in the afternoons, passion projects, and the Children's Business Fair.



Learner-designed, self-governing documents



Constructing a moon base model!

Tech Talk

Acton Marietta believes in balancing the use of technology with other vital activities. Our Explorer studio is low tech, where our youngest learners interact with technology for few yet meaningful activities.

Our older Eagles typically use technology for only a portion of their learning day. This looks different daily but may include using adaptive software for delivery of personalized core skills instruction, researching for a group project, composing a summary of a current events article, or practicing keyboarding skills.

Learning Studios

The Navigators (typically ages 11-14)

Learners in the Navigator Studio participate in the design of their learning plan, take control of their work and project schedules. The focus of this studio is hard work and meeting deadlines with excellence.

The signature experiences of the Navigator Studio includes hands-on projects in science, self-directed projects in history, apprenticeships, bigger (overnight) field trips, and socials with other Actons.

Learners participate in difficult real world Quests and learn to analyze, calculate, read, write, and think more critically. They earn leadership badges through community mentoring and explore their gifts and talents through apprenticeships.



Working on real-world presentation skills

Field Trips!



Artists hard at work!



Learning chemistry through cooking - Yum!



"I have learned at Acton to embrace change. Also, I have learned to defend my point... Acton is the biggest change in my life and I love it. The people are great and the community is loving."

- Cooper, age 13

Learning Studios

Launchpad (typically ages 14-18)

The goal of Launchpad (LP) is for each graduate to discover a Next Great Adventure (NGA) — which includes a superpower skill, an industry, and place to live and work — where he or she will find a calling that will change the world.

By this time, learners have developed the skills, drive, and character needed to change the world. Most Launchpadders will complete most of the work in a traditional high school, or for college preparation, in two years to two and half years. This allows time in the last year to year and a half of high school to explore an NGA by:

- Completing deep work in Apprenticeships
- Delivering Next Great Adventure Badges to excel in the real world
- Serving in leadership roles in the younger Studios

The end result for a Launchpadder will be the proof of:

- Real work done on a resume
- Life Essay and/or college application
- NGA Talks (Ted Talk - style presentations shared with their community)

Next Great Adventure (NGA)

Heroic journeys, lifelong callings, and a meaningful life have a certain romantic appeal. Eventually, however, a hero must put food on the table and pay the rent — especially if you have a family or aspire to grow one.

This is the purpose of the Next Great Adventure and Acton Academies – to help extraordinary young people discover a calling to change their world.

Serving and mentoring in younger studios



Getting out into the real world!



What are parents saying about Acton Marietta?

Acton Academy has been a transformative experience for our daughter and for our family. The administration and guides of AAM have provided an emotionally and intellectually safe and stable environment for these kids to challenge themselves, grow academically and socially, learn new skills and discover their gifts and passions. Highly recommended to come and visit the new campus in Kennesaw. If you're looking for a (yes!) fun, challenging and engaging school for your child, it's worth a visit to decide for yourself.

- Acton Marietta Parent

As a 20 year veteran classroom teacher, I was looking at the pandemic as public school's chance to pivot and follow all of the current good research about effective teaching. Not only did I find myself frustrated when schools did not pivot, my children also became frustrated. When one of my own children asked me to homeschool them (rather than return to the traditional public school classroom) I did a lot of research and found the Acton Academy Marietta (AAM). The Acton Academy of Marietta has provided my children with a myriad of research-based educational experience such as: personal goal setting, learning for mastery, peer feedback, presentation practice, hands-on quests, Socratic debates, self-governance and much more. Some of the key ideas of AAM are MASTERY and MINDSET. I highly recommend the TED Talk by Sal Khan titled, "Let's teach for mastery - not test scores." This 10 minute video will help you understand some of the fundamental differences in an Acton Academy classroom and a traditional classroom. For all of these reasons and more, I highly recommend the Acton Academy of Marietta.

- Acton Marietta Parent

Acton Academy Marietta has provided our child and family with a novel, supportive, inclusive learning environment that stands uncontested amongst any other school option for us. Welcoming neurodiverse learners and providing a safe, fun, advanced educational experience for them has given our child the best schooling experience so far, compared to public and other private schools. Our learner feels safe, respected, honored, included, encouraged, supported, and genuinely loved at Acton Academy Marietta. This, along with the community Acton Marietta fosters, has significantly positively impacted our child's growth, development, and our overall parenting for. The guides at Acton Marietta have helped us navigate different challenges from a learner, parent, and family perspective on several occasions. They consistently show up for our learner and our family in ways that we could have never imagined when beginning this journey. I would highly recommend Acton Academy Marietta to someone else like me or a family like ours. Acton Academy Marietta has truly given my family hope again in education and has opened us up to opportunities where we connected with people and resources that we might not have otherwise known. The community among the parents, guides, and learners is really amazing to witness and experience; there is no place like Acton Academy in the public or private school arena.

- Acton Marietta Parent

Do you have questions?

Are you ready to schedule a tour?

Click here to schedule a call with our staff to answer questions or to schedule a tour for your family!

FAQs

What grades does Acton Academy Marietta serve?

Though we don't organize learners in traditional grade groupings, we currently serve what is commonly known as Kindergarten through 12th grade.

Will children be grouped into grades?

We believe that children learn best when working with both younger and older peers rather than being split into grades based on age. Multi-age learning and activities are purposeful and frequent.

What is a typical day like?

All studio schedules are similar in that the day is broken into independent work cycles, collaborative work or play cycles, free time, and community building activities.

Friday Schedules are flexible and created weekly based on studio needs and add in the following activities: Art, Music, Town Hall, Fun Friday, Monthly Celebrations, and more.

What kind of learner thrives at Acton Academy Marietta?

An Acton Academy Marietta Eagle loves to learn and is curious, self-motivated, and respectful. Our environment is an accelerator for the independent learner who embraces challenging questions, can follow directions, and shows grit in solving problems.

Does Acton Academy Marietta serve children with special needs?

We believe that all children are gifted and bring unique strengths and challenges to their learning journey. While we are not trained to serve learners with profound learning disabilities, we welcome the opportunity to discuss individual learning differences to see if we may be a mutually fitting educational setting.

How does Acton Academy Marietta measure and monitor student progress and performance?

We do this in a number of ways:

1. We set, review, and reflect on daily, weekly, and session goals. These goals are reviewed and discussed among learners, guides, and parents.
2. We utilize robust real-time data for each of our online learning tools. At any given time, any learner, parent, or Guide can see exactly what a student is learning. Since these tools are adaptive to the learner, they do not move on with content until mastery is demonstrated, and provide review and remediation where needed.
3. We use badges to track major work milestones (example: 4th grade language arts or Algebra II). Badge plans for each studio layout the required work to be done in that studio and represent the typical content offered or required nationally for elementary, middle, and high school.

How much homework do Acton learners have?

None! We believe that children of all ages need time to relax, play, and spend time with family and friends. Therefore, all work is completed during the school day in the studio, and no homework is assigned. All learners are strongly encouraged to read for fun in their free time at home.

Do you have any other resources that will help me better understand the philosophies and methods of Acton Academy?

We recommend this [list of resources](#) to anyone interested in learning more about Acton and its methodologies.

Learning turned **UPSIDE DOWN!**

*Practicing entrepreneurial skills
at the Marietta
Childrens Business Fair!*



Curl up with a good book everyday!



Tending to the garden



Follow Our Journey!

3481 Campus Loop Road, Kennesaw, GA 30144
(conveniently located right next to KSU)

770-421-5839

www.actonmarietta.org



Click to schedule a
Discovery Call!