

Meet the GP Staff

Name	Blurb
 <p data-bbox="250 604 422 667">Shelby Arden Kindergarten</p>	<p data-bbox="493 344 1414 554">I am a proud David Douglas and Gilbert Park alumni. The saying is true, "Everything you need to know, you learn in kindergarten." The growth kindergarteners make and the enthusiasm they show is inspiring. This is my sixth year teaching kindergarten and I love it! When I'm not teaching I enjoy coaching volleyball at Alice Ott, spending time with my family and friends, exploring the outdoors, and travelling.</p>
 <p data-bbox="250 945 422 1008">Lincoln Fisher Kindergarten</p>	<p data-bbox="493 705 1414 915">Growing up in the quiet desert of New Mexico certainly taught me the value of a good book. In many ways I became a kindergarten teacher so that I could share my love of reading with a new generation. I enjoy spending time in the outdoors with my family, as well as listening to and performing music. The five year olds that I work with are usually the smartest, kindest, hardest working people I meet.</p>
 <p data-bbox="250 1297 422 1360">Denise Davis Kindergarten</p>	<p data-bbox="493 1050 1398 1218">This is my 26th year teaching at Gilbert Park. I love teaching kindergarteners!! I love their innocence, enthusiasm and eagerness to learn!! My husband and I have 2 children who are both in college. I love camping and boating with my family, spending time at the beach, reading, and I am a HUGE Blazer fan!!! :) Go Blazers!!!</p>
 <p data-bbox="250 1663 422 1726">Carly Riepe Kindergarten</p>	<p data-bbox="493 1398 1408 1642">This is my second year teaching Kindergarten at Gilbert Park, and my fourth year in David Douglas. I am honored to be part of such a dedicated community of colleagues and students. Kindergarten is a wonderful and busy year! My goal is to prepare my students academically for first grade, and make it known to them that they are a vital part of our community. When I am not teaching, I enjoy taking my puppy to Mount Tabor, hiking, and spending time with friends outdoors.</p>

 <p data-bbox="269 447 401 510">Lisa Schill 1st Grade</p>	<p data-bbox="493 212 1419 422">This is my 2nd year teaching at GP and my first year teaching 1st grade! I previously taught special education here at GP for one year. I have lived in Portland for a little more than a year now, moving here from San Jose California. I spent part of this summer hiking through the National Parks in Colorado, Utah and Arizona. I love camping, reading and hanging out with my friends and two cats!</p>
 <p data-bbox="237 789 431 852">Jennifer Flagel 1st Grade</p>	<p data-bbox="493 548 1414 716">I'm excited to be starting my 14th year teaching First Grade at Gilbert Park. We have a great staff and community. I got married in the fall of 2016 and had a wonderful honeymoon last summer in Mexico. I have a 8th grade son named Owen. He is definitely a middle-schooler (yikes!) and loves to play the trumpet. GO BLAZERS!</p>
 <p data-bbox="245 1150 428 1213">Janet Huntley 1st Grade</p>	<p data-bbox="493 894 1406 1241">This is my 29th year of teaching at GP. I grew up in the David Douglas School District and I went to GP for grade school, Alice Ott and David Douglas High School. I'm teaching in my old first grade classroom. I love to travel around the United States and abroad. This summer I spent time in Maui, and Aruba. I went to Aruba with 3 friends that I've known since first and fourth grade. I love spending time with my family and friends. This summer I got married and went to Maui for my Honeymoon and swam with lots of sea turtles. I am an avid sports fan and love the Blazers! I've had season tickets to the Blazers for 23 years. Go Blazers!</p>
 <p data-bbox="233 1524 435 1587">Cara Schlessler 1st Grade</p>	<p data-bbox="493 1283 1419 1556">I was born and raised in the Portland area! This is my 6th year at GP and my 5th year teaching 1st grade. I graduated from Oregon State University in 2010!!! Go Beavers!!! I love spending time with my friends, family and my new kitten in my free time. I love traveling. Most recently I got to go to Disneyland again which I hadn't done since I was 11. It was a great time spent with my 4 friends that I have known since elementary school. I enjoy sports and am a big Blazers fan! Go Blazers!!!</p>
	<p data-bbox="493 1629 1409 1829">This is my 12th year teaching in the David Douglas School District! I also attended grades K-12 in David Douglas. I received my Bachelor's degree from Western Oregon University and my Masters at Teaching degree at Concordia University. I enjoy spending time with my family and friends. Walt Disney World and the beach are my favorite places! I look forward to another great year at Gilbert Park.</p>

<p>Stacy Harrison 2nd Grade</p>	
 <p>Melanie Phillips 2nd Grade</p>	<p>I have been teaching for 15 years in David Douglas and this is my 14th year teaching at Gilbert Park. I have 3 grown daughters and 6 grandchildren. In my free time, I enjoy spending time with my family and friends, traveling, cooking, reading, and gardening.</p>
 <p>Becky Franzke 2nd Grade</p>	<p>This is my 18th year teaching in the David Douglas School District. I have taught grades 1st-4th throughout my career. I also attended schools within the district K-12. I enjoy spending time with my husband and 3 sons by traveling and watching them participate in a variety of sports. I am looking forward to another fabulous year at Gilbert Park!</p>
 <p>Dora Plancon 2nd Grade</p>	<p>This is my first year teaching at Gilbert Park, and I am so happy to be here! I have worked previously in the David Douglas School District with the SUN program and as an instructional assistant. I grew up in the woods of Maine, and went to Vermont for college. Then I moved to Portland, Oregon and began working in schools. I was inspired by the communities of Portland and went back to school for a Masters of Teaching at Concordia University. In my free time I enjoy hiking, skiing, yoga, baking and being crafty.</p>
 <p>Jessika Joers 3rd Grade</p>	<p>This is my 15th year in the David Douglas School District. I taught kindergarten for 9 years, 4 years in second grade, and this is my second year in third grade! I have two children who also attend school in the David Douglas School District. I love teaching at Gilbert Park and feel lucky to be a part of such a great community!</p>



Laura Riehl
3rd grade

This is my 5th year teaching and my 4th year teaching 3rd grade at Gilbert Park. I have a Bachelor's degree in Human Development and a Master's Degree in teaching from Warner Pacific College. Prior to that I spent 13 years in various positions in education. I have a wonderful husband and two fantastic children who both attended David Douglas schools through high school. I also have three beautiful granddaughters. I love to spend time with my family at our cabin on Lake Merwin where we enjoy boating, playing games, and campfires. I am an avid reader and strive to ignite the reading "bug" in all of my students. Go Ducks! Go Seahawks!



Amy Spencer
3rd Grade

This is my 5th year teaching in DDSD and at Gilbert Park. I went to Western Oregon University to study music and Portland State University to become a teacher. I have lived in the Pacific Northwest my whole life and especially love this beautiful city. In my spare time, I love to read, swim, go camping, sing, and be with my family. I also love wild animals, especially owls, which you'll see a lot of in my classroom. :)



Lauren O'Gara
3rd Grade

This is my 5th year at Gilbert Park Elementary, and I am so pleased to be a part of this wonderful community. I have taught 3rd grade and 4th grade while at Gilbert Park. In addition, I have had 9 years of cumulative experience working with students ranging from preschool to 4th grade. I have experience in public schools, private schools, international programs, and after-school programs. I have worked with students from around the world, and I have enjoyed time with students from a variety of backgrounds. I strive to facilitate a strong sense of community within the classroom, and I value the needs of each child socially, emotionally, and academically.

Outside of school, I enjoy hiking, traveling, yoga, reading, and spending time with my friends and family.



Rachel Pitts
4th Grade

This is my fifth year teaching 4th grade and my third year teaching at Gilbert Park. I moved to Portland from Georgia. I am really enjoying all that the Pacific Northwest has to offer. In my free time I enjoy cooking, reading, and spending time outdoors.



Dan O'Brien
4th Grade

I am excited to be coming back to Gilbert Park for a second year. I graduated from Westfield State University and majored in Elementary Education, with a concentration in math. I was born and raised in Billerica, Massachusetts, about 20 minutes outside of Boston. I love hiking, swimming, reading, soccer and volleyball and am a big Boston sports fan.



Jana Daley
4th Grade

I've been teaching for 28 years in the David Douglas School District. I've taught 5th, 4th, and 3rd grades as well as did a 6 year stint in the Library back when it was a certified position. My husband and I have two wonderful boys (23 and 20 yrs. old). Keegan just graduated from the University of Oregon and just started his first "adult" job as an accountant. Connor is a junior at the University of Oregon in Business. We are avid football fans (Go Ducks and Go Packers!). I love to read, take Zumba classes, golf, and spend time with family and friends!



Scott Burton
4th Grade

This is my 16th year teaching at Gilbert Park. I grew up in the David Douglas School District, and I am very happy to be home. I have three daughters and a wonderful wife who all attended Gilbert Park. Go SF Giants!



Rod Purdum
5th Grade

I have lived in Oregon since the age of twelve. I graduated as a Beaver from OSU, and later earned my Masters in Education from Portland State. I've been part of the awesome Gilbert Park family since 2004. I am a hot air balloon pilot and enjoy traveling, especially on a motorcycle.



Amber Richardson
5th Grade



Kayla Wallace
5th Grade

This is my first year teaching at Gilbert Park, but I have been teaching the last 5 years at Ventura Park as a 5th grade teacher. I grew up in Portland and Gresham and went to the University of Oregon for both my undergrad and Masters of Teaching. Go Ducks! My husband teaches 5th grade at Lincoln Park and we have two sons, Quincy (3 years old) and Winston (7 months).



Aika Topolski
5th Grade

This is my first year teaching at Gilbert Park; however, I have been in the David Douglas School District for nearly ten years. This will be my third year teaching 5th grade. I grew up in Portland, attended college at the University of Puget Sound and obtained my Masters in Teaching at Concordia University. I love to be outdoors as much as possible: hiking, camping, swimming, etc. I also love music and reading and going on adventures with my family and dog. I look forward to having a phenomenal year with my students!



Jamie Voelker
Student Behavior
Specialist

I am so excited to be joining the Gilbert Park team. This is my first year in the David Douglas School District and my 7th year of teaching. I have taught both middle school and elementary school as a Learning Specialist with a focus on Math. I love Math so much! I'm originally from New Orleans, Louisiana and I love to cook and bake. I'm married and have an 11 yr old daughter. During my free time, I like to travel, dance, and read.



Nina Sivaram
Special Education

This is my fourth year at Gilbert Park as the Title 1 teacher, as well as my fourth year living in Portland. Prior to moving to Oregon in 2000, I lived in Idaho, Wyoming, Vermont, and grew up in upstate New York. My dog Harry and I love many outdoor activities including hiking, backpacking, running and doing arts and crafts.



<p>Cheryl Hull Reading Intervention</p>	
 <p>Val Ellett Music Teacher</p>	<p>I enjoy painting in my free time. I also play flute with Portland Wind Symphony. The best thing about teaching at Gilbert Park is that I get to know EVERY. SINGLE. STUDENT! Often, for years! This is my 23rd year of teaching. My classroom motto is, "Together, We Rock!"</p>
 <p>Amber Tatge English Language Development</p>	<p>I am originally from Minneapolis, Minnesota, but I started my teaching career in San Jose, California. Now enjoying the green Oregon climate, I am specializing in English Language Development and helping English Learners succeed in school. I love languages and traveling. I speak German and Spanish.</p>
 <p>Patty Utz Student Achievement Specialist</p>	<p>This is my 15th year at Gilbert Park. I was born and raised in Portland and attended Portland Public Schools. I graduated from University of Oregon with a bachelor's degree in Psychology. Go Ducks! I earned my Masters in Education and Reading Endorsement at Portland State University. I have a daughter, Tori, and two sons, Mason and Miles. In my free time I like to read, sew, and spend time with my kids.</p>
 <p>Paul Crain P.E.</p>	<p>I have been teaching physical education in David Douglas for 26 years. My wife and I have been married for 32 years with three wonderful daughters. I enjoy spending time with my family, fly fishing working out and watching college football. Go Sun Devils!!</p>



Peter Martin
Speech and
Language
Pathologist

I am originally from upstate New York, but love living here in Portland (and within David Douglas). This is my fourth year as the speech-language pathologist at Gilbert Park, where I am rewarded daily by supporting all of my exceptional and typically-developing students. Outside of work I play drums, write, garden, and dote upon my loving wife and our three dogs. I am also an avid collector of books, records, and films from around the world.
Ask me about my veganism :-)



Dina Soriano
Counselor

I am thrilled to be a part of the Gilbert Park School Community. This is my first year at Gilbert Park and the David Douglas School District, and my 15th year as an educator. I was born and raised right here in Portland. In my free time, I enjoy spending time with my family, hiking, yoga, and going to the beach. I also love watching and playing sports. I am huge Blazers and Duck Fan. I look forward to getting to know GP students and supporting them in their social-emotional learning and growth.