

## Meet the GP Certified Staff



Shelby Arden  
Kindergarten

This is my tenth year teaching kindergarten at Gilbert Park! Being a kindergarten teacher is very rewarding. I love having the opportunity to assist kindergarteners in beginning a positive educational experience and start building their love for learning. When I am not working, I enjoy spending time with my family and friends, exploring the outdoors, running, and traveling.



Lincoln Fisher  
Kindergarten

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 the great outdoors, music, and pizza. The five year olds that I work with are usually the smartest, kindest, and hardest working people I meet.



Denise Davis  
Kindergarten

This is my 31st year teaching at Gilbert Park. I love teaching kindergarteners!! I love their innocence, enthusiasm and eagerness to learn!! Our theme this year is, "It's Cool to be Kind"!! 🧐

My husband and I have 2 children. They are both married and live locally!! I am thankful for that!! I love camping and boating with my family, spending time at the beach (my new hobby is collecting agates), reading, and I am a HUGE Blazer fan!!! :) Go Blazers!!!



Shelby Ellis (she/her)  
1st Grade

I am proud to be a Gilbert Park Otter! This is my 3rd year teaching in DDSD and my second year teaching 1st grade here at GP. I am a lifelong Portland metro resident, and I have a lot of love for this city! When I'm not hanging out with the coolest 6 & 7 year olds, you can find me hanging out at the coast, camping, watching a soccer game (Go Thorns!!!), or hanging out with my beloved Corgi, Dolly. I'm excited for a year full of learning and growing in Room 3!!



Janet Huntley  
1st Grade

This is my 33rd year of teaching at Gilbert Park. I grew up in the David Douglas School District and I went to Gilbert Park for grade school, Alice Ott (Gilbert Middle back then) and graduated from David Douglas High School. I graduated from Portland State University. I'm teaching in my old first grade classroom. I love to travel around the United States and abroad and make wonderful memories from all of my adventures. This summer my husband and I went to Bend, the beach and to Aruba.. I also did lots of hiking this summer too. I love spending time with my family and friends. I am an avid sports fan and love the Blazers! I've had season tickets to the Blazers for 27 years. Go Blazers!!! I'm looking forward to a great year with my first graders!!!



Cara Schlessler  
1st Grade

This is my 10th year at Gilbert Park and my 9th year teaching 1st grade. I received my teaching degree from Oregon State University!!! Go Beavs!!! I continued on to Concordia University for my Masters in Education. I love spending time with my friends, family, and my 2 cats (Myrtle & Tate). I am a big Blazers fan! Go Blazers!!! I love traveling though I did not take any big trips this year. I am a big Backstreet Boys fan and I got to see them perform a few times this summer! Baking is something else I enjoy. Practicing my cake decorating skills is my favorite. I am looking forward to a wonderful school year.



Stacy Harrison  
2nd Grade

This is my 16th 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 in 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.



Melanie Phillips  
2nd Grade

This is my sixteenth year teaching at Gilbert Park and my seventeenth year with the district. I have two grown daughters and six grandchildren. In my free time, I enjoy spending time with my family and friends, traveling, spoiling my dog Austin, spending time on the beautiful Oregon coast, cooking, reading, and gardening. I look forward to another fantastic school year at Gilbert Park.



Veronica Stewart  
2nd Grade

This will be my 2nd year at Gilbert Park teaching 2nd grade. Previously I taught special education at Menlo Park and at West Powellhurst. When I am not teaching I spend time with my husband, two sons, and our two cats. Malcolm is in high school and Quinten is in 6th grade. Our cats do not go to school and their names are Cream and Rocket. I also enjoy reading novels and canning foods. I am excited for this year at Gilbert Park.



Laura Riehl  
3rd grade

This is my 9th year teaching and my 8th 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 University. 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 four 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 9th 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, scrapbook, sing, and play in the river. I also love wild animals, especially owls, which you'll see a lot of in my classroom.



Amber Black  
3rd Grade

Hello! I am so thrilled to be a Gilbert Park Otter! This is my 9th year teaching and my second year at GP. I earned my bachelor's from PSU and my master's at Lewis and Clark. I am originally from Missouri but moved to Southern Oregon when I was young and that is where I grew up. I have also lived in Seattle for a brief period of time when I served with Americorps, and later worked as a preschool teacher. I have lived in Portland for the past 17 years. I live in the Parkrose neighborhood with my husband, Brady and our dog, Arlo. When I'm not teaching I enjoy making jewelry, cooking, baking, long strolls through Target or Costco, reading, and spending time with my friends and family.



Scott Burton  
4th Grade

This is my 20th 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 is also an educator. I graduated from Western Oregon University and have been teaching ever since. In my free time, I spend a lot of time with my family and our very energetic miniature poodle. I love reading about history and sports. Go SF Giants!



Lisa Schill  
4th Grade

This is my 6th year teaching at GP, and my second year teaching 4th grade! I previously taught special education here at GP for one year, then 1st grade, then a 1st/2nd grade split, and am now settled in 4th grade! I have lived in Portland for a little more than 5 years now, moving here from San Jose, California. I spent this summer catching up on reading, going outdoors and to the river as much as possible, and hanging with my family! I love camping, boxing and hanging out with my friends, my two dogs and two cats!



Kaity Wu  
4th Grade

I grew up in NYC and Southern California but have called Portland home for the past 18 years. I have a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Tufts University and a Master of Arts in Teaching from Warner Pacific University. When I am not at school, I love spending time with my family, reading and doing crafts. This will be my first year at Gilbert Park and I am honored and excited to be a part of such a vibrant school community!



Becky Franzke  
Student  
Achievement  
Specialist

I have been very fortunate to teach in the David Douglas School District the past 21 years. I have taught grades 1st-4th throughout my career and I am thrilled to be the Student Achievement Specialist this year. I grew up in the David Douglas School District attending grades K-12. After high school, I received my bachelors degree at Western Oregon University and then went on to get my masters from Grand Canyon University. I enjoy being outdoors, reading, and spending quality time with family and friends. I am looking forward to another amazing year at Gilbert Park!! Go Otters!





Kaylee O'Neill  
5th Grade

This is my first year at Gilbert Park and my 6th year teaching! Before teaching I spent my days working at summer camps for about 10 years. It was there that I discovered how much fun teaching and learning can be! For my first teaching job, I taught the 4th grade at an international school in Indonesia and helped to direct English summer camps there. When I got back to the USA, I taught 6th grade in the Reynolds School District. I now live in Portland, and I fill my time teaching, rock climbing, and drinking oat milk lavender matcha.



Paul Foreman  
5th Grade

I grew up in Washington, DC, and I have been working with kids for thirteen years. I first became interested in education when I started teaching music lessons to pay the bills as a working musician. I love the moment when students realize that failing and learning are the same thing. I spent seven years traveling the world and teaching in many different countries. When I'm not at school, I love to cook in my kitchen, sleep in my camper van, and surf in the Pacific Ocean. This is my first year at Gilbert Park. I love swimming so I'm excited to finally become an otter.



Stephanie Slocum  
5th Grade

My name is Stephanie Slocum. This will be my 6th year teaching! I was born and raised in Meridian, Idaho and recently moved to Portland. This city is BEAUTIFUL! I graduated from the University of Idaho with my Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education and am currently working on my Masters in Educational Leadership & Administration. During my free time I like to hike with friends, hang out with my cat TouLouse, and enjoy everything Portland has to offer! (I'm currently trying to find my favorite coffee shop, so if you have any recommendations please reach out!) I am excited to work at Gilbert Park and build a relationship with each student.



Anastasia Furlong  
SLC-AFS

Hello! I am excited to join the Gilbert Park Team this year as the Academic Functional Skills teacher in Room 8! This is my 6th year teaching in Education. I am brand new to David Douglas and I have loved my time here so far. I am an Oregon native and currently live in SE Portland with my fiancé. I spend my free time bodybuilding, gardening, hiking, going to Blazer Games, and completing my home renovations I started on this summer. I look forward to growing and learning with your child this year.



April Nordmeier  
SLC-AFS

Hello! I am excited to be returning to Gilbert Park this year as the Academic Functional Skills teacher in Room 1! This is my fifth year teaching and my seventh year in Special Education. I have worked in many areas of disability including in home care and group home management. My favorite by far is the classroom, and I am thrilled to be working with GP families to help their students reach their highest level of independent success! In my free time I love to paint, garden, sing, craft, sew, and spend time with my two children and two cats!!



Sarah Dalisky  
Student Behavior  
Specialist

I'm very excited to be joining Gilbert Park this year. This is my 20th year in education and my 5th year as a Student Behavior Specialist (SBS). Before becoming a SBS, I was a classroom teacher- teaching 3-5 grades. I look forward to supporting our students and partnering with families this year. In my free time I love to travel, crochet, read, and spend time with my family- including my 2 children.



Jen Flagel  
Title I Reading  
Specialist

I'm excited to start my 18th year teaching at Gilbert Park! This is my second year as our school's Reading Specialist. I can't wait to work with many of your children to develop a growth mindset and love of reading! I travel whenever I can and have made many wonderful memories from around the world. I just celebrated my six year anniversary in Costa Rica. Pura Vida!



Val Locke  
Music Teacher

I enjoy gardening and painting in my free time. I live out in the country with my family and I have 15 chickens, 2 dogs, and 2 cats. The best thing about teaching at Gilbert Park is that I get to know EVERY. SINGLE. STUDENT! Often, for years! This is my 26th year of teaching. My classroom motto is, "Together, We Rock!"



Amber Tatge  
English Language  
Development

I am originally from Minneapolis, Minnesota, but I started my teaching career in San Jose, California in 2007. In 2015 my family moved to this beautiful, green Oregon climate and I became a member of the Gilbert Park staff! I specialize in English Language Development and helping Multilingual Learners succeed in school. I love languages and traveling. I speak Spanish and German.



Allison Schefers  
English Language  
Development

This is my 4th year of being part of this amazing Gilbert Park Staff! I have been teaching for 25 years and specialize in working with English Language Learners. I am originally from a small town in Illinois but I have been living in the Portland Metro area for 22 years. In my free time, I enjoy hiking, reading, traveling, yoga and biking.



Patty Utz  
Assistant Principal

This is my 19th year at Gilbert Park and I am so excited to serve our community as the Assistant Principal this year! I spent the first twelve years teaching 5th grade before becoming the Student Achievement Specialist for 6 years. 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. Last year I completed my Principal License at George Fox University. I have a daughter, Tori, and two sons, Mason and Miles. In my free time I like to read, do craft projects, go kayaking or paddle boarding, and spend time with friends and family.



Trevor DeVault  
P.E.

This is my 19th year teaching Physical Education in David Douglas and 2nd year here at Gilbert Park. My philosophy is to help get students some exercise without them knowing they are exercising. We play lots of games with different kinds of movement to get a whole body approach to fitness. My wife is a Veterinarian and we both graduated from Washington State University. I have a son who is in 9th grade and a daughter who is in 6th grade. We have a strange family hobby in that we show our dogs across the country with both my kids being nationally ranked in Junior showmanship.



Peter Martin  
Speech & Language  
Pathologist

Hi folks! This is my eighth(!) year as the speech-language pathologist at Gilbert Park, where I am rewarded daily by supporting all of my exceptional and typically-developing students. I grew up in upstate NY, and now I live in the district (Mill Park) with my partner Jihae and our two senior mini-dachshunds. Outside of work I like to garden, bake, play board/card/video-games, read, write, make music and art. When I leave the house I like to visit local wetlands, refuges, and other quiet nature spots. I am also an avid collector of books, records, and films from around the world.



Kaeli Tate  
Special Ed

I am excited to be at Gilbert Park for my fourth year! I grew up in Oregon and I am a big Duck fan! In my free time, I love going to the beach with my family, watching sports, baking, spending time with my friends, and hanging out with my puppy, Ranger.



Dina Soriano  
Counselor

I am thrilled to be a part of the Gilbert Park School Community. This is my 5th year at Gilbert Park and the David Douglas School District, and my 19th 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 a huge Blazers, Seahawks and Ducks Fan. I look forward to supporting our students and families.