

Walla Walla Public Schools

The Explorer Program

for students in grades 2-7



Walla Walla School District's Explorer Program provides students of high academic and intellectual ability with designated time to explore concepts in greater depth. Classes are currently offered for students in grade three through eight.

The goal of the Explorer Program is to encourage the development of higher level thinking skills. Students learn to become responsible for their own learning, to develop their creative thinking and critical reasoning power and to strive to reach their potential.

The Explorer Program exists at both the elementary and middle school levels. At the elementary level, the focus is on math and science. At the middle school level, the focus is in the humanities (social studies and literature). The program is challenging and students will often have additional work to do, including in-class assignments, projects, and homework.

Gifted children have a definite set of characteristics. You may see some of these in your child:

- Learns new material faster, and at an earlier age, than peers.
- Remembers what has been learned, often making review unnecessary.
- Is able to deal with concepts that are too complex and abstract for age peers.
- Has a passionate interest in one or more topics; would spend all available time learning about that topic if s/he could.
- Does not need to watch the teacher to hear what is being said; can process more than one task at a time.
- Is very intense. Gets totally absorbed in activities and thoughts; may be reluctant to move from one subject area to another; may insist on mastering one thing before starting another. May experience periods of such fierce concentration that he is literally unaware of what is going on around him.
- Prefers complex and challenging tasks to “basic” or “busy” work. May change simple tasks or directions to more complex ones to keep interested.
- Has many, and sometimes unusual, interests, hobbies, and collections. May have a passionate interest, such as dinosaurs, that has lasted for many years

The annual selection process for in-district students takes place in the spring. The deadline for grade 2-7 referrals is March 14, 2012. All referred students will take a norm-referenced standardized test at their school and those who qualify for further testing will participate in cognitive abilities testing. In all cases, parents will be notified of the results of the process, and a child not selected one year may be referred again in subsequent years.