

Choice School Information Night 2025-2026

Renaissance School of
Art and Reasoning



THE RAVEN IS ABOUT
REBIRTH, RECOVERY,
RENEWAL, RECYCLING,
REFLECTION AND HEALING.
HE SIGNIFIES MOVING
THROUGH TRANSITIONS
SMOOTHLY BY
CASTING LIGHT INTO
THE DARKNESS

Agenda

- Introductions & Values
- Curriculum & SPED
- Outdoor Education
- Considerations
- PTSA
- Application & Timeline
- Questions



RSAR Teachers



- Kate Wold (Performing Arts 6, 8)
- Garth Ball (Performing Arts 7)
- Mariana Borgiani (Guild, Math 7, LA/SS 6, 7)
- Haakon Standal (Guild, LA/SS 8, Visual Arts 6-8)
- Elizabeth Rothwell (Guild, Science 6-8, Math 6, Algebra, Lead Teacher)
- Howard and Leanne Mawhinney (Special Education)
- Michelle Hartop (Para Educator)
- Kaleb Vandell (Para Educator)

RSAR Staff



- Todd Apple (Principal)
- Cheryl Kenyon (Associate Principal)
- Shanna Berlanga (Office Manager)
- Lenore Gallucci (School Counselor)
- Rebecca Harris and Kelsey Ballin (School Nurses)
- Kathleen Story (Librarian)



RSAR Values

- Empathy
- Persistence
- Preparedness
- Respect
- Responsibility

RSAR Curriculum



- All instruction is aligned with district and state standards
- Emphasis on Visual & Performing Arts throughout all three years of middle school
- Students do not need to have experience with the arts, but must be willing to fully engage



Why Performing Arts?

- Research shows that participation in Performing Arts in middle school:
- Supports engagement with school and academic success
- Strengthens emotional and social skills
- Enhances creativity and problem solving
- Supports long term academic success



Performing Arts at RSAR

- Cornerstone of RSAR program, not a course offering at all schools
- Story and character creation
- Acting and improvisational skills
- Performances at the Eastlake High School theater
 - Mandatory: one-act plays and student showcases
 - Optional: talent show

Visual Arts at RSAR



- Cornerstone of RSAR program
- Gradual release to more challenging, less structured projects
- Art history integrated throughout
- Northwest Native Art Series
- Visual Journal
- Winter Showcase and Spring Potluck
- Seattle Art Museum Field Trip
- National Junior Arts Honor Society

Language Arts at RSAR



- **6th and 7th Grade:**

- Amplify curriculum
- Fluency and grammar practice
- Four book projects per year
- Multiple long-term projects
- Writers in the Schools (WITS) focuses on poetry and comic writing

- **8th Grade:**

- Whole books (no excerpts) chosen from district-approved reading list, covering themes like hubris, coming of age, racial injustice, and dystopia
- Parts of effective composition, with a focus on logical flow throughout writing
- Daily writing, choice of prompts for essays, peer review/revision
- Writers in the Schools (WITS) focuses on creative storytelling



Social Studies at RSAR

- **6th and 7th Grade:**

- Early human development and ancient civilizations
- How geography, culture, religion, and government shaped societies
- Civilizations across regions
- Historical thinking skills using maps and primary sources

- **8th Grade:**

- Washington State History Screenplay or Narrative Story
- Civics
- Current Events
- Debate Analysis
- History Museum Field Trip



Math & Science at RSAR

- **Math 6+ and Math 7+:** How to Learn Math series, ratios and proportional relationships, the number system, expressions and equations, geometry, statistics and probability
- **Algebra:** taken in 7th or 8th grade
- **Geometry:** taken in 8th grade at EHS
- **Science:** all three grades include life science, physical science, earth and space science, and engineering and technology

Math & Science at RSAR



- **Math:**

- Math pathways and classes at RSAR are very similar to other schools in the district
- How to Learn Math series
- Student choice
- XtraMath, ALEKS
- No Safety Net program or resource classes, but multiple intervention periods each week
- Geometry @ Eastlake

- **Science:**

- All middle schools in the district are in the process of adopting the Open Science Education (OSE) curriculum
- At RSAR, a variety of resources are used including direct instruction, inquiry-based investigations (OSE), hands-on labs and experiments, collaborative group work, and models and simulations
- Guest Presenters
- Pacific Science Center Field Trip
- Gel Electrophoresis Lab @ Eastlake



Guild at RSAR

- Advisory
- Guild Teacher is your point person
- Building a safe, small, multi-aged community
- Build student skills – academic support
- 504 Coordinators
- Discipline always includes Guild teacher

Special Education at RSAR



- Experienced special education teachers and outstanding para educators
- Push-in and pull-out services
- Multiple systems in place to support students with IEPs
- All students take the same classes within a grade level; no resource classes



Outdoor Education

- All school camp experience at the beginning of each school year
- Chaperoned by Guild teachers and 15-20 parent volunteers
- Students are housed in cabins with heating and plumbing
- Typically 50-75 miles from school
- Community building
- Hands on scientific exploration
- Personal challenges and growth
- Required component of the RSAR program

Is RSAR the Right Choice?



- Visual and Performing Arts are required classes each year – no experience is necessary, but *interest* and *willingness to try* are critical
- Rigorous course of study; implementation of curriculum meets and exceeds grade-level standards
- Regular use of Eastlake High School facilities (cafeteria, library, theater, Geometry classes)
- Small school setting (pros and limitations)
- Community involvement is *key*

Other Considerations



- No electives other than Visual and Performing Arts
- No transportation, except for the Eastlake High School buses
- Many opportunities to participate in student-led clubs and parent-organized events, but no formal music or sports programs
- Financial contributions are needed to make school programs possible (\$450 camp, \$325 PTSA, \$130 class fees, \$40 ASB)
- Bell schedule aligned with Eastlake High School (start/end times differ from other middle schools)



PTSA – We couldn't do it without them!

- LWSD choice middle schools were established with the understanding that they would need an especially engaged and supportive community of families to be successful
- Facilitates school-family-community partnership, supports programming, and hosts community-building events and arts enrichment opportunities
- 25 volunteer hours required (option to buy out for additional \$375)
- More information a rsarptsa.org

Application & Timeline



- The lottery is conducted by the district using a computer-based random number sequence generating tool
- Application window November 1, 2025 – December 1, 2025
- Lottery notifications shared on January 16, 2026
- Responses due by January 31, 2026
- More information and application available at lwsd.org/programs/choice-schools

Please view the website to confirm all dates for the current school year.



Questions?

- Shanna Berlanga, Office Manager sberlanga@lwsd.org
- Elizabeth Rothwell, Lead Teacher erothwell@lwsd.org
- Other contacts available at rsar.lwsd.org/about-us/staff-directory
- Choice school information at lwsd.org/programs/choice-schools