Choice School Information 2026-2027

Renaissance School of Art and Reasoning



RSAR Teachers

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

RSAR Staff

- Todd Apple (Principal)
- Cheryl Kenyon (Associate Principal)
- Dina Jay (Dean of Students)
- Shanna Berlanga (Office Manager)
- Lenore Gallucci (School Counselor)
- Rebecca Harris (School Nurse)
- 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, $90 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, 2026 – December 1, 2026
- Lottery is held at district office January 4-8, 2027
- Families that applied are notified of placement or waitlist on January 15, 2027
- Acceptances due by January 29, 2027 by 3:00 PM
- 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, Co-Lead Teacher erothwell@lwsd.org
- Haakon Standal, Co-Lead Teacher hstandal@lwsd.org
- Other contacts available at rsar.lwsd.org/about-us/staff-directory
- Choice school information at lwsd.org/programs/choice-schools