



West Ada

SCHOOL DISTRICT

Parent FAQ

GT self-contained programming at Discovery Elementary School

Q: My child is currently in the 3rd grade GT self-contained class. Does s/he have to reapply to continue in the program in 4th and 5th grades?

A: No. Once a student is placed in a GT classroom, s/he remains in that program and does not need to reapply. Students are only removed from a GT self-contained class (or any other class) if a different placement is deemed more appropriate for their needs.

Q: Does my child have to re-test to ensure that s/he still qualifies for GT?

A: No. Once a student qualifies for GT, s/he is eligible for services through 8th grade without retesting.

Q: What about Middle School?

A: Discovery Elementary and Heritage Middle School both opened self-contained GT programs in 2014-15 (for 3rd grade and 6th grade respectively). Both programs anticipate adding one grade per year through 2016-17 to include grades 3 – 5 and 6 – 8. Discovery Elementary self-contained students will be granted placement in the Heritage self-contained program (regardless of the students' home school boundary). The Middle School program consists of a four-period cohort of classes that include Reading, English Language Arts, Social Studies, and Science. To complete their schedules, students take electives as traditional Heritage students do, and they are placed in the appropriate math class for their skill level.

Q: Are self-contained GT students isolated from the rest of the school? What about PE, music, and social opportunities?

A: Self-contained students are fully integrated members of their school communities. In most ways they are traditional students within their schools, and they participate fully in school-wide activities, recesses and lunch, and 'specials' like PE, health, and music.

Q: What is the difference between this class and a traditional 3rd grade class?



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A: Self-contained GT classes and traditional classes both address the grade-level district curricula. However, self-contained classes compact the material (move more quickly) and are therefore able to enrich it significantly with both depth and breadth. Self-contained classes tend to focus on real-world, project, and problem-based learning in which students engage in critical thinking and inquiry. Self-contained classes are also able to address issues and topics that are common among gifted learners, such as perfectionism and asynchronous learning (i.e., being very advanced in one or more areas and not as advanced in others).

Q: What can I do as a parent to support my child in this class?

A: We love creating partnerships with parents. We encourage you to read the communication that is sent home by the classroom teacher so that you can be fully informed about what is happening in class. We also encourage you to keep 'feeding' your child's outside interests, talents, and curiosity.

Q: Who can I contact for further information?

A: For questions specific to the class that your child is in, please contact his/her teacher directly. For school-based questions (including teacher/class assignments), please contact his/her principal. For questions specific to GT and programming choices, please contact Kate Hunter at the district office.