

Westwood Middle School Honors and Accelerated Classes Grades 7 & 8 2010 - 2011

For the vast majority of our students, placement in the regular classes is appropriate. By using a variety of strategies, teachers are able to differentiate the instruction to provide varying amounts of challenge and support to facilitate successful student learning for a wide range of students. The needs of some of our students exceed the expectations of a regular classroom. To meet the needs of these students, WMS provides honors and accelerated classes.

In the spring of each year, students at WMS are assessed using multiple criteria to determine appropriate placement in honors classes. The screening includes achievement scores (as measured on the NWEA Measures of Academic Progress – MAPs) in reading and math, available ability tests, teachers' ratings, demonstrated student performance, and student self-nomination.

Students who are currently in an honors class will be re-assessed at the end of sixth and seventh grade in each honors class they are taking to determine if continued placement in that/those class(es) is the best match for individual student success. The number of honors classes that a student takes varies depending on each student's individual strengths and needs.

If you believe that your student should participate in honors classes which they are not currently taking please do the following:

- Read the following information regarding classes that are available, the qualities of a successful honors student and the characteristics of an honors class.
- Fill out the Honors Class Interest form, and we will gather the needed data to assess your student.
 - 6th grade students in Honors Language Arts will be screened automatically for Honors Social Studies and Honors Science
 - 6th grade students in Pre-algebra will be screened automatically Honors Science
 - 7th grade students will automatically be screened for classes in which they are currently enrolled
- Return the form to the middle school office or mail to:

Westwood Middle School
711 91st Ave. NE
Blaine, MN 55432
Attn: Marianne Paulos

Questions?
Contact Marianne Paulos
mpaulo@district16.org
763-795-6354

Honors and Accelerated Classes

7 th Grade	8 th Grade
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honors Language Arts • Honors Science • Honors Social Studies • Algebra 1 (linear + exponential) • Algebra 1 & 2 (quadratic + rational)– High School credits (must have successfully completed Pre-Algebra in 6th grade) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honors Language Arts • Honors Science • Honors Social Studies • Algebra 2 (quadratic + rational) - High School credits (must have successfully completed Algebra 1) • Geometry – High School credits (must have successfully completed Algebra 1 & 2)

* In the regular math classes, teachers utilize personalization (a district initiative) and flexible grouping to challenge and support students.

What Are the Traits of a Successful Honors Student?

Successful honors students will almost always display these traits.

Language Arts	
<i>Achievement tests</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent reading achievement scores above the 85th percentile
<i>Reading Characteristics</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reads above grade level • Thinks critically and creatively • Makes logical inferences • Grasps underlying principles
<i>Writing Characteristics</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizes ideas when writing • Writes clearly and precisely • Provides details to support ideas • Uses rich vocabulary • Revises and edits
<i>Other characteristics</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows sustained effort • Completes work on time • Is self motivated

Social Studies	
<i>Achievement tests</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent reading achievement scores above the 85th percentile in total reading and the informational comprehension strand.
<i>Social Studies Characteristics</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interest in Social Studies is evident in the quality of questions • Reads avidly; reads across many topics and/or is singularly focused on one topic • Reads above grade level • Possesses a comfort in working with unfamiliar words and content • Makes logical inferences from ideas details in content • Connects ideas, themes, and issues related to Social Studies
<i>General Characteristics</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employs a rich vocabulary • Possesses a keen memory • Is able to connect ideas across disciplines and/or time • Demonstrates the ability to think critically and abstractly • Demonstrates commitment to producing exemplary work • Works collaboratively and efficiently in groups

Science	
<i>Achievement tests</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent reading and math achievement scores above the 85th percentile
<i>Science and general ability characteristics</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displays a keen interest in Science • Thinks critically • Thinks abstractly • Does well with problem solving • Connects ideas across disciplines
<i>Other characteristics</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displays sustained effort • Completes work on time • Displays a positive attitude • Works well in groups

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All Accelerated Math Classes	
<i>Mathematics characteristics</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thinks abstractly and logically • Connects concepts from different areas of mathematics • Understands and uses symbols to replace concepts, operations, ideas, and relationships • Isolates what they understand and what they don't • Formulates strategies and approaches to unique problems • Computes flexibly, accurately and efficiently • Extends their thinking
<i>Other characteristics</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displays the willingness and persistence to practice (homework) to reinforce and solidify their thinking and skills. • Completes work on time
Algebra 1 (linear + exponential) in 7th grade; Algebra 2 (quadratic + rational) in 8th grade	
<i>Achievement tests</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent math NWEA MAP achievement scores above the 85th percentile • Meets the criteria on the Problem Solving Assessment • Meets the criteria on the Iowa Algebra Readiness assessment
<i>Course requirements</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successfully completes previous required course with an average of B or better
Pre-Algebra in 6th grade; Algebra 1 & 2 in 7th grade; Geometry in 8th grade	
<i>Achievement tests</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent math NWEA MAP achievement scores above the 95th percentile • Meets the criteria on the Problem Solving Assessment • Meets the criteria on the Iowa Algebra Readiness assessment
<i>Course requirements</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successfully completes previous required course with an average of B or better

* In the regular math classes, teachers utilize personalization (a district initiative) and flexible grouping to challenge and support students.

What is an Honors Class?

An honors class parallels the curriculum offered in the corresponding regular class, but it provides more rigor and challenge to a range of students who are intellectually gifted and/or academically talented to maximize student achievement. As with a regular class, a teacher of an honors class develops and implements effective high-quality curriculum and instruction which recognizes the variance in learner needs.

How is an honors class different? Characteristics include:

Content:

1. Learning targets have expectations that are more complex, rigorous, and require deeper levels of cognition than a regular class.
2. Students apply knowledge, understandings and skills to contexts that are unfamiliar and dissimilar from those in a regular class.
3. Advanced/Alternative resources are matched to the learning targets.
4. Teaching and learning is focused on big ideas, themes, principles and issues.
5. Increased depth and breadth of connections between and/or within disciplines are evident.

Teaching and Learning:

1. Pace of teaching and learning is accelerated.
2. Consistent use of advanced levels of communication in oral and written form reflects the practices of the discipline.
3. Focus on complex thinking is ongoing and includes: deep levels of critical and creative thinking, multifaceted problem solving and meta-cognitive processes.
4. Greater levels of self directed learning and behavior, as well as, increased use of research strategies are present.
5. Assessments are linked to the more complex levels of teaching and learning.

Westwood Middle School Interest Form Honors Classes: Grades 7 & 8

Name of student: _____ Parent: _____

Current Grade: (circle one) 6 7

Please check the classes in which you feel that the student will be successful. Please remember that screening for placement uses multiple criteria in addition to student and/or parent interest.

To encourage efficiency and reduce paper waste, the current 6th and 7th grade students listed below will automatically be screened, and an interest form is not needed.

- 6th grade students in Honors Language Arts will be screened automatically for Honors Social Studies and Honors Science
- 6th grade students in Pre-algebra will be screened automatically Honors Science
- 7th grade students will automatically be screened for classes in which they are currently enrolled

_____ Honors Language Arts

_____ Honors Social Studies

_____ Honors Science

_____ Accelerated Math: Name the class _____

In the space below, please share what makes your student a good candidate for honors and accelerated classes. Use the back if necessary.

Parent Signature

Student Signature

Return by **April 5** to:
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