



EAST WHITTIER CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

PRESS RELEASE

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East Whittier GATE STEM Academy Challenges Students to Expand Educational Horizons

EAST WHITTIER – Qualifying East Whittier City School District students are being considered for the District’s Gifted and Talented Education program, which will immerse them in a series of advanced educational offerings, including workshops in explosive science, creative game development and innovative engineering.

East Whittier’s Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) program is designed for third-through eighth-grade students with accelerated abilities who are looking to challenge themselves academically through a series of hands-on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) workshops. Many GATE courses are incorporated into the regular school day academics for the District’s 902 GATE students with some schools offering additional after-school enrichment opportunities.

“East Whittier recognizes the need to serve gifted and talented students whose academic performance and intellectual ability is highly developed,” EWCSD Superintendent Mary Branca said. “The goal is to ensure that identified students are challenged with tasks that encourage them to explore subject matter in depth, utilize critical thinking skills and engage in academically complex experiences.”

Students may be referred by teachers or parents, or have achieved a score of “Exceeded” on their English language arts (ELA) or math common assessment test (third-graders) or the state’s Smarter Balanced Assessment in ELA or math (fourth- through eighth-graders). Students must then score in the upper percentile of the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) to be identified as GATE.

Once accepted into the GATE program, students will have the opportunity to expand their educational horizons in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) through participation in the East Whittier GATE STEM Academy.

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The GATE STEM Academy is a year-long three-trimester extracurricular study program in which students explore the building blocks of science in engaging workshops that will spur their imaginations. Meeting once a trimester, each workshop concentrates on a specific aspect of STEM education with rigorous lessons that encourage collaboration and critical thinking. The workshops are:

- **“Exploding Science” (Trimester 1)** – Students learn to balance chemical equations, unravel the mysteries behind physical reactions and decipher the periodic table.
- **“Tech City: Game Developer’s Studio” (Trimester 2)** – Students design their own game, enlist feedback from their peers and put their gaming knowledge to the test in a quest to develop the next “Minecraft” or “Mario Brothers” game.
- **“Inventor’s Workshop: Extraordinary Engineering” (Trimester 3)** – Using the “Engineering Design Process,” students work in teams to bring life to their own gadgets and gizmos, turning ideas into reality.

GATE services vary from school to school, with additional enrichment opportunities available at every campus.

Photo Captions:

EWCSG_GATE1: East Whittier City School District’s GATE program engages students by expanding their educational horizons in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

EWCSG_GATE2: The “Exploding Science” workshop provides East Whittier City School District GATE students opportunities to creatively experience science.

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