



K-8 STEAM ACADEMIES FAQ

WHAT IS A K-8 STEAM ACADEMY?

STEAM uses science, technology, engineering, the arts, and math as points of entry to guide student inquiry, dialogue, and critical thinking. This process relies on arts integration, an approach to teaching in which students construct and demonstrate understanding through an art form. Students engage in a creative process which connects an art form and another subject area, addressing standards in both areas.

WILL K-8 STEAM ACADEMIES BE LOTTERY-BASED, MAGNET, OR A TRADITIONAL ZONED SCHOOL?

The K-8 STEAM Academy will be a traditional zoned school.

WHAT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES WILL BE INCLUDED?

As with all our elementary and middle schools, programs such as Talented and Gifted (TAG), Special Education, English Language Learners (ELL), Early Intervention Programs (EIP), Remedial, and Continuous Achievement, K-5 Visual Art & General Music, and 6-8 Band, Visual Art & Design, Orchestra, & Chorus will be offered. We will continue to provide student support services (counseling, social work, psychological services) as we do with our traditional schools.

HOW WILL THE ARTS BE INTEGRATED?

STEAM uses science, technology, engineering, the arts, and math as points of entry to guide student inquiry, dialogue, and critical thinking. In any give core content class, you will observe creative teaching strategies that the arts employ to engage students in the learning of that core content. The arts classes will stand alone within the arts content and integrate other content when the standards are aligned. Arts integration works best in schools with strong arts programs and dedicated arts classes (e.g., visual art, music, band, chorus, orchestra). Students will apply the skills and concepts learned in their art and music classes to connect content in and through the arts.

WILL THE CURRICULUM BE THE SAME AS OTHER FCS SCHOOLS?

The K-8 STEAM Academies will follow the same instructional framework and standards as other FCS schools. We will use our current Georgia standards in the areas of Science, Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education (Technology and Engineering), Math, and the Arts. We will also continue to use our district-wide instructional framework (Standards Mastery Framework).

The difference will be in the Arts integration in teaching creative problem solving, innovation, and empathy. The arts provide hands-on avenues for students to engage with curriculum and prepare students for future careers in the growing creative economy. Also, the K-8 schools will involve problem-based learning, investigation research, and integration of Math, Science, CTAE, and Fine Arts instruction. Teachers will be given ample time to plan meaningful, purposeful, and intentional interdisciplinary lessons. The K-8 schools will also rely on strong business and community partnership to assist in making real-world connections.

WHAT IS THE VALUE OF THE K-8 MODEL COMPARED TO THE CURRENT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL MODEL?

Students in the K-8 model outperform their counterparts, especially in Math. The K-8 model decreases transitions for our students and families. This leads to a more "family oriented" feeling throughout the school. Throughout the nine years, parents and students are able to build stronger relationships with school faculty and staff. This secure social foundation improves student stability and increases attendance.

The structure of the K-8 also lends itself to increased leadership opportunities for students and increased participation in extracurricular activities. These experiences lead to fewer behavioral problems including decreased instances of bullying, because kids feel a part of the school and school family. The younger students will see positive behavior from the older students that they want to emulate. The older students will be peers and mentors to the younger students. All of these factors lead to an increase in the cohort graduation rates - more students successfully becoming responsible, productive citizens.

WHAT IS THE GEORGIA STEAM CERTIFICATION?

The Georgia Department of Education is dedicated to preparing students for 21st Century careers by providing high quality educational opportunities in science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics fields. In Georgia, STEM and STEAM education is defined as an integrated curriculum that is driven by exploratory project-based learning and student-centered development of ideas and solutions. We are using the tools, resources, and frameworks from the Georgia STEAM certification to inform curriculum and instruction at the K-8 STEAM academies. For more information, please visit www.stemgeorgia.org.

HOW WILL TEACHERS BE SELECTED?

There are not additional certification requirements to teach at a K-8 school. Our district will go through our normal Talent and Human Resources processes to determine staffing for the K-8 STEAM Academies.

WILL EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES BE OFFERED?

Yes. Extracurricular offerings will be based on student interest. Because of the theme of K-8 STEAM academies, extracurricular activities could include National Junior Art Society, STEAM Showcases, Science Olympiad, Technology Students of America (TSA), VEX Robotics, and many more.

HOW WILL TRANSPORTATION BE PROVIDED?

Transportation will be provided from bus stop locations to the school and back home. Parents will have access to the "Here Comes the Bus" application for bus stop routes.

HOW WILL THE BUILDING DESIGN ENSURE YOUNGER AND OLDER STUDENTS HAVE SEPARATE SPACES?

The grade bands will be in separate spaces during instructional times and lunch. Student groups, however, will be brought together for intentional purposes; for example, peer mentoring and student project showcases.

WHAT IS THE PROJECTED ENROLLMENT FOR A K-8 SCHOOL?

The projected enrollment is estimated at 1,200 students, but this is subject to change.