

Frequently Asked Questions about STEM and the School of Choice Program

1. What is STEM?

STEM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering and Math, but it is much more than a sum of its parts. It is an approach to learning that integrates ALL content areas and promotes high levels of critical and creative thinking. Teaching strategies emphasize student inquiry, projects and community partnerships. Students are challenged to think creatively about real-world topics, to solve problems independently and collaboratively, and to innovate.

2. What's so special about STEM? Why the increased focus on STEM?

The United States wants to increase American students' abilities and interests in these key areas where we have been lagging some world competitors. STEM calls for an intense focus on core content and essential skills necessary for communication, problem solving and innovation to better prepare our students to thrive in college and careers.

3. How do I know if this school is "right" for my child?

Children who have been successful in this type of setting exhibit the following characteristics:

- an interest or talent in math, technology and/or science
- are open to taking academic risks
- are self-directed when given a variety of choices
- are very curious or inquisitive, like to "tinker" and try to figure things out
- easily engage in group work

However, there are no predetermined criteria for enrollment, just an open mind and a willingness to learn.

4. I have heard this is a career focused school. Aren't K-4 students too young to decide what they want to be when they grow up?

We think so. This is an educational choice made by parents in the best interest of their children. Enrolling in a STEM elementary school is not a decision to become an engineer or a scientist. But a child who likes science might be more interested in other core lessons if they are presented with ties to science topics. And a child who might think, "I'm not good at science and math," might discover new joy in these subjects through the hands-on approach of STEM. This program is not about having students make a career decision. The program is about making learning relevant. As students learn about core content, they will be exposed to how this applies to the "real world." Who does this type of work? Where is it found? Why is it important?

5. Is STEM education meant only for high-ability students?

No. Students of all learning abilities may benefit from the STEM program. Studies are showing that hands-on learning may be just as beneficial to children who have been disengaged (bored) with school and to some children with specific learning disabilities. STEM students come from all backgrounds and abilities.

6. Once a child is accepted into the program, is it necessary to "reapply" each year?

No, once a child is in the program, the only need is to complete the updated paper work each school year. However, if your child does not wish to remain in the program the following year, the school should be notified by May 1st of that school year, so the vacancy can be filled.

7. What if I enroll my child at Summit Road Elementary but he doesn't like it?

It is preferred that each student and parent honor their choice for at least one academic year. Requests for an earlier return will be handled on an individual basis.

8. Is transportation provided for students attending the school of choice?

Transportation will be provided by the Reynoldsburg City Schools Transportation Department.

9. Are siblings of the STEM School students given priority placement in the school of choice program?

Priority placement is limited only to kindergarten students with a sibling currently enrolled in the STEM school program at grades K- 4.

10. What procedures will be followed if a child is on the waiting list for the School of Choice Program?

As open seats occur, seats will be filled utilizing waiting lists. If students on the waiting list opt not to transfer during the year, the space will be offered to the next student on the list.