

STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH POLICY  
'Opt-In and Opt-Out' Procedures

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to set forth a consistent standard for use of 'opt-in and opt-out' procedures for all STEM activities. Parents can expect the use of consistent standards at STEM School for opting-in and opting-out of programs, events, and activities. Under no circumstances will students opting-in/out be ostracized, nor will parents choosing to exercise their right to opt-in/out be criticized for their decision.

II. POLICY

Opt-out (parent request required for nonparticipation) applies to the Board-approved curriculum and related activities that occur regularly or as a matter of course. Opting-out always requires a showing of a bonafide reason, to avoid violating compulsory attendance rules. Replacement classes or activities may or may not be provided at the school's sole discretion. Opting-out procedures do not apply to matters of health and safety, or state/federal mandates.

Parents shall be notified by the school about upcoming programs, events, or activities in sufficient time and detail to allow time to opt-out if deemed reasonably necessary. Subject to district and state graduation requirements and the compulsory attendance laws, parents may exercise the right on behalf of their child (with bonafide reason) to opt out of:

- Physical Education (requires written request from child's physician)
- Parties or Holiday activities
- Board adopted or approved curriculum
- Student use of Internet for curriculum-related research

Curriculum adopted by the Board or otherwise pursuant to STEM policy is the official curriculum of STEM and comes under the opt-out category. STEM and its teachers will make their best efforts to identify and timely notify parents of the teaching of materials or methods of instruction in the curriculum that may reasonably offend the moral, ethical, religious, or political conscience of individuals, to allow adequate time for parents to review materials and request (in writing) an opt-out.

Student use of the Internet for purposes of research and retrieval of current information related to curricular content areas is a generally accepted practice and is considered an essential instructional tool, and thus comes under the opt-out category.

## *Opt-in Opt-out Policy*

In any case where there is doubt as to whether a program, event, or activity should be treated as opt-in or opt-out, opt-in procedures should be used.

Opt-in (parents permission required for participation) pertains to school offerings and curricula that:

- (i) are not part of the Board-adopted or approved curriculum or involve presentation of Controversial Learning Resources (see STEM Policy on Controversial Learning Resources),  
OR
- ii) are not required by law to meet compulsory attendance or credit standards  
OR
- (iii) are not generally accepted regular matters of course within the school year.

For all opt-in offerings scheduled to take place during regular school hours, replacement classes or other alternatives will be provided for students who do not opt-in. STEM employees will provide timely notice to parents about opt-in programs, events, or activities so parents can make an informed decision about whether their children will participate.

Children will not be allowed to participate in the following programs, events, or activities without parent permission:

- Activities having a potential for increasing liability to the district (e.g., field trips, ropes course, jump rope for life, athletics, dispensing medication)
- Programs, activities, or materials that can be reasonably interpreted as containing religious messages, instruction in values, or controversial moral or ethical principles, involve Controversial Learning Resources, or that may result in invasion of the student's or family's privacy. Including, but not limited to the following:
  - Name in school directory
  - DARE
  - Programs on death, dying, and divorce
  - Educational movies with a PG-13 or more restrictive rating
  - Unrated visual materials, and/or other media that may be reasonably foreseen to cause offense to some individuals and are not part of the Board-approved curriculum
  - Programs where opting-in is a requirement of the law (e.g., special education, federal programs)
  - One-to-one or group counseling situations when counselors, social workers, or psychologists are involved with students (except as required for compliance with state and federal laws concerning the education of students with disabilities, compliance with child abuse and neglect reporting obligations, in emergency situations wherein there is a bona fide concern that the student's safety or health is in jeopardy, and when discussing academics or discipline problems).

*Opt-in Opt-out Policy*

Approved by the STEM School Board on 10/01/2023.  
(dd/mm/yyyy)

STEM School Highlands Ranch

By: *Michelle Horne* (signature on file)  
(Signature, Board secretary)

Michelle Horne  
(Printed name, Board secretary)

Adopted: March 2013  
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