

# STEM SCHOOL

## HIGHLANDS RANCH

### STEM School Highlands Ranch

#### Board of Directors Meeting

##### Monthly Meeting

Published on December 31, 2025 at 4:36 PM MST

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#### Date and Time

Tuesday January 6, 2026 at 5:30 PM MST

#### Location

8920 Barrons Blvd  
P-TECH Mechatronics Room  
Highlands Ranch, CO 80129

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Join from PC, Mac, iPad, or Android: <https://zoom.us/j/95825391000?pwd=msncIVBra97QrHttP6dmqMTMcpbaV9.1>

Passcode:771384

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#### Agenda

	Purpose	Presenter	Time
<b>I. Opening Items</b>			<b>5:30 PM</b>
<b>A.</b>	Record Attendance		2 m
<b>B.</b>	Call the Meeting to Order		1 m
<b>C.</b>	Pledge of Allegiance	Adelita Campbell	1 m
<b>D.</b>	Reciting of the Mission Statement	Ishmeet Kalra	1 m

	Purpose	Presenter	Time
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Never Stop Innovating! We envision a world of exponential possibilities where every child develops the innate knowledge, skills, creativity and character to thrive, lead and succeed in an ever-changing future.

## II. Approve Meeting Minutes 5:35 PM

A.	Board Meeting December 2nd	Approve Minutes	Carla Gustafson	2 m
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## III. STEM School Highlands Ranch Updates 5:37 PM

A.	Executive Director Update	FYI	LynAnn Kovalesky	40 m
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Executive Director LynAnn Kovalesky provides a general update and reviews the results of the Staff Fall Survey and SAC Parent Fall Survey. Presentation and Q&A

B.	Student Advisory Committee	Discuss	LynAnn Kovalesky	20 m
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Student Advisory Committee provides presentation on results of Fall Student Survey. Presentation and Q&A

## IV. KOSON Schools 6:37 PM

A.	2024/25 Financial Audit Report	Discuss	Darrell Lomelino	20 m
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External Auditor - Jim Hinkle will present results of audit.

B.	CIO Update	Discuss	Matt Cartier	20 m
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- Strategic Planning Update

C.	Policy Updates	Discuss	Carla Gustafson	15 m
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- STEM Enrollment Policy - Draft Updates
- New - Home School Enrichment Enrollment - Draft

D.	CIO Mid Year Review Report	Discuss	Erin Quigley	15 m
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Erin Quigley presents CIO Mid Year Review report and Q&A

	Purpose	Presenter	Time
<b>E.</b> Draft Renewal CIO Employment Agreement	Discuss	Carla Gustafson	15 m
Carla Gustafson presents draft CIO Employment Agreement renewal and Q&A.			

## **V. Public Comment 8:02 PM**

This is the time to voice opinions and provide feedback about specific agenda item(s) prior to any Board action. Speakers must complete the Public Comment Form and submit it electronically no later than 12 p.m. the day of each Board meeting. If written testimony or a handout is submitted, presenters are asked to supply one (1) copy via email to [communications@stemk12.org](mailto:communications@stemk12.org)

<b>A.</b> Public Comment Sign up link			10 m
<a href="https://forms.gle/AM9H5q4sfTKYmYSp6">https://forms.gle/AM9H5q4sfTKYmYSp6</a>			

## **VI. Consent Agenda 8:12 PM**

<b>A.</b> Vote for Consent Agenda Items	Vote	Carla Gustafson	5 m
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic Excellence Committee One Pager</li> <li>• Growth Task Force One Pager</li> <li>• Confirm IT Policies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Information Technology and Student Data Privacy Policy</li> <li>◦ Electronic Device Monitoring Policy</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Staff Handbook</li> </ul>			

## **VII. Board Committee Updates 8:17 PM**

<b>A.</b> Academic Excellence Committee Updates	Discuss	Ishmeet Kalra	5 m
<b>B.</b> CIO Support & Evaluation Committee Updates	Discuss	Erin Quigley	5 m
<b>C.</b> Finance Committee Update	Discuss	Darrell Lomelino	5 m
<b>D.</b> Governance Committee Update	Discuss	Carla Gustafson	5 m
<b>E.</b> Growth Task Force Update	Discuss	Kevin Leung	5 m

## **VIII. Executive Session 8:42 PM**

	Purpose	Presenter	Time
<b>A.</b> Convene Executive Session - CIO Contract Renewal Negotiations	Vote	Carla Gustafson	45 m

The Board may vote to recess into executive session pursuant to:

CRS 24-6-402(4)(e)(I) for determining positions relative to matters that may be subject to negotiations; developing strategy for negotiations; and instructing negotiations regarding CIO employment agreement renewal terms.

**IX.**

**Board of Director's Updates**

**9:27 PM**

<b>A.</b> Preview of Next Meeting	FYI	Carla Gustafson	5 m
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mid-Year Working Session - January 13th at PTech</li><li>• Finance - Q2 Financial Report</li><li>• Governance - Present draft Bylaws updates</li><li>• CIO Support &amp; Evaluation - Approve Mid Year Review Report and CIO Employment Agreement Renewal</li></ul>			

**X.**

**Closing Items**

**9:32 PM**

<b>A.</b> Adjourn Meeting	Vote	Carla Gustafson
Adjournment		

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Never Stop Innovating! We envision a world of exponential possibilities where every child develops the innate knowledge, skills, creativity and character to thrive, lead and succeed in an ever-changing future.



# Coversheet

## Board Meeting December 2nd

<b>Section:</b>	II. Approve Meeting Minutes
<b>Item:</b>	A. Board Meeting December 2nd
<b>Purpose:</b>	Approve Minutes
<b>Submitted by:</b>	
<b>Related Material:</b>	Minutes for Board of Directors Meeting on December 2, 2025

APPROVED

# STEM SCHOOL

## HIGHLANDS RANCH

STEM School Highlands Ranch

### Minutes

Board of Directors Meeting

Monthly Meeting

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#### Date and Time

Tuesday December 2, 2025 at 5:30 PM

#### Location

8920 Barrons Blvd  
P-TECH Mechatronics Room  
Highlands Ranch, CO 80129

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Join from PC, Mac, iPad, or Android: <https://zoom.us/j/95825391000?pwd=msnclVBra97QrHttP6dmqMTMcpbaV9.1>

Passcode:771384

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#### Directors Present

A. Campbell, C. Gustafson, C. Wroblewski, D. Lomelino, G. Wing (remote), I. Kalra, K. Leung, R. Lukez

#### Directors Absent

E. Quigley

#### Directors who arrived after the meeting opened

D. Lomelino, G. Wing, K. Leung

#### Guests Present

A. Cardinal, Amie McElroy, Gordon Mosher, L. Kovalesky, Laurie Veldhuizen, M. Cartier (remote), Ryan Alsup, S. Milner

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## I. Opening Items

### A. Record Attendance

### B. Call the Meeting to Order

C. Gustafson called a meeting of the board of directors of STEM School Highlands Ranch to order on Tuesday Dec 2, 2025 at 5:31 PM.

### C. Pledge of Allegiance

### D. Reciting of the Mission Statement

### E. Gordon Mosher, DCSD Executive Director of Schools, Choice Programming

New DCSD Board members being sworn in today.

DCSD meetings will now be in Legacy Campus Theater forward for increased accessibility

Thriving School Initiative for all elementary schools will be PreK-5 and have center based programming; middle schools 6-8; high school 9-12

Discussion around homeschool families much more accessible for DCSD; increase demand for homeschool since COVID

K. Leung arrived at 5:43 PM.

## II. Approve Meeting Minutes

### A. Board Meeting November 4th

R. Lukez made a motion to approve the minutes from Board of Directors Meeting on 11-04-25.

A. Campbell seconded the motion.

Add details : Propose 5 board members with CIO and CFO filling two seats. For initial board, current Koson Board members proposed as Foundation Board members. D. Lomelino, R., Lukez, C. Wroblewski, and C. Gustafson expressed interest in serving on Koson Foundation Board.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

## III. STEM School Highlands Ranch Updates

### A. STEM School HR Update

- Boosterthon Fun Run Updates
  - Net \$72,000

- Corporate match potential ~8k
- HS Speech and Debate to be added to list of high school potential classes
- Grade Pass through Canvas to IC
- School Recognitions Niche ratings and US News and World Report and Colorado Parent Magazine
- Fall SAC survey overall results - will discuss in SAC
- Enrollment update 1451
- Open Enrollment Numbers - used our own platform this year; December 17th deadline to accept for Round 1

#### IV. KOSON Schools

##### A. CIO Update

- Update on Health Benefits for long term planning and strategic capability
- Update on Moody Investment Rating, comparable across national trends around enrollment decline
- Community engagement and student engagement - students first approach throughout grassroots efforts
- Homeschool enrichment program update - no amendments necessary to existing charter with DCSD; K-8 planning by Michelle Gasser and Mackenzie Harper. Lots of excitement about the program

D. Lomelino arrived at 6:50 PM.

G. Wing arrived at 6:54 PM.

##### B. 2025/26 Budget Update

Revised Budget Updates

1st internal quarterly (July - September) audit update; involved and thorough process to make sure everything is tracked appropriately; also checked on bond updates

R. Lukez made a motion to Approve the Resolution of Appropriation as presented.

I. Kalra seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

##### C. Policy Update - Board Reserve

I. Kalra made a motion to Approve the Board Reserve Policy.

R. Lukez seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

**D. Policy Update - Fundraising**

D. Lomelino made a motion to Approve the Fundraising policy.

C. Wroblewski seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

**E. Policy Template Update**

C. Wroblewski made a motion to To change the date format on policy template.

I. Kalra seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

**F. Koson Foundation Board**

K. Leung made a motion to Friendly amendment by Kevin Leung: The aforementioned Koson Foundation Board shall be appointed till December 31, 2026.

I. Kalra seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

A. Campbell made a motion to Reestablish the Koson Foundation Board.

I. Kalra seconded the motion.

Re-Establish Koson Foundation Board with the following proposed Board members, for Board Approval: Koson CIO - Matt Cartier, Koson CFO - Sean Milner, Darrell Lomelino, Rudy Lukez, Cory Wroblewski

Discussion around bylaws, term limits, appointments, etc.

Newly appointed boards will update bylaws and will be approved by Koson Board

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

**G. Proposed Change to Board Meeting Schedule - 26/27**

Change from Finance committee to request from first week to 3rd or 4th meeting to better align with finance deadlines

How will this impact other meetings for SAC, staff, holiday schedules, DCSD Board meetings, etc.?

Proposed flip flop SAC and Board meetings for next school year. LynAnn will discuss with SAC.

**V. Public Comment**

**A.**

### Public Comment Sign up link

No public comment

## VI. Consent Agenda

### A. Vote for Consent Agenda Items

I. Kalra made a motion to Approve the consent agenda.

C. Wroblewski seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

## VII. Board Committee Updates

### A. Academic Excellence Committee Updates

One pager mostly done; discussing internal processes and curriculum policy at next meeting

### B. CIO Support & Evaluation Committee Updates

Will discuss in executive session to stay on top of timeline

### C. Finance Committee Update

Auditor will present next month

### D. Governance Committee Update

Making progress on bylaws; might have them ready for board in February or March

### E. Growth Task Force Update

Task force one pager to align with strategic plan and forming the committee and processes.

Focused on Mineral project and making sure we're focused on low-hanging fruits first.

## VIII. Executive Session

### A. Convene Executive Session - CIO Mid Year Board Evaluation

C. Wroblewski made a motion to Convene Executive Session.

R. Lukez seconded the motion.

The Board may vote to recess into executive session for the CIO Mid Year Board Evaluation pursuant to: CRS 24-6-402(4)(f)(I) for personnel matters except if the employee who is the subject of the session has requested an open meeting, or if the personnel matter involves more than one employee, all of the employees have requested an open meeting. With respect to hearings held pursuant to the "Teacher Employment, Compensation, and Dismissal Act of 1990", article 63 of title 22, C.R.S., the provisions of

section 22-63- 302 (7)(a), C.R.S., shall govern in lieu of the provisions of this subsection (4) and CRS 24-6-402(4)(e)(I) for determining positions relative to matters that may be subject to negotiations; developing strategy for negotiations; and instructing negotiations regarding CIO employment agreement renewal terms

The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

#### Roll Call

E. Quigley Absent

C. Gustafson Aye

C. Wroblewski Aye

K. Leung Aye

R. Lukez Aye

G. Wing Aye

A. Campbell Aye

I. Kalra Aye

D. Lomelino Aye

Executive session begin: 8:03pm

Executive session end: 10:03 pm

Kevin Leung left at 9:14 pm

Cory Wroblewski left at 9:56

Gina left at 10:03pm

## IX. Board of Director's Updates

### A. Preview of Next Meeting

Reconvened public session: 10:06pm

## X. Closing Items

### A. Adjourn Meeting

A. Campbell made a motion to Adjourn.

R. Lukez seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 10:06 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

I. Kalra

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## Documents used during the meeting

- December Board Presentation 25\_26.pdf
- CIO Board Presentation 20251202.pptx.pdf
- Revised Budget FY 25-26 Final.pdf
- 25-26 BOD Resolution - Revised Budget\_12-2025.pdf
- Policy\_Board Reserve\_2025.pdf
- Policy\_Fundraising\_2025.pdf
- Policy\_template\_2025.pdf

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# Coversheet

## Executive Director Update

<b>Section:</b>	III. STEM School Highlands Ranch Updates
<b>Item:</b>	A. Executive Director Update
<b>Purpose:</b>	FYI
<b>Submitted by:</b>	
<b>Related Material:</b>	January Board Presentation 25_26.pdf

# STEM SCHOOL

## HIGHLANDS RANCH

# ED PRESENTATION

January 6, 2026

*LynAnn Kovalesky, Executive Director*

# STEM SCHOOL

## HIGHLANDS RANCH

# STEM SCHOOL UPDATE

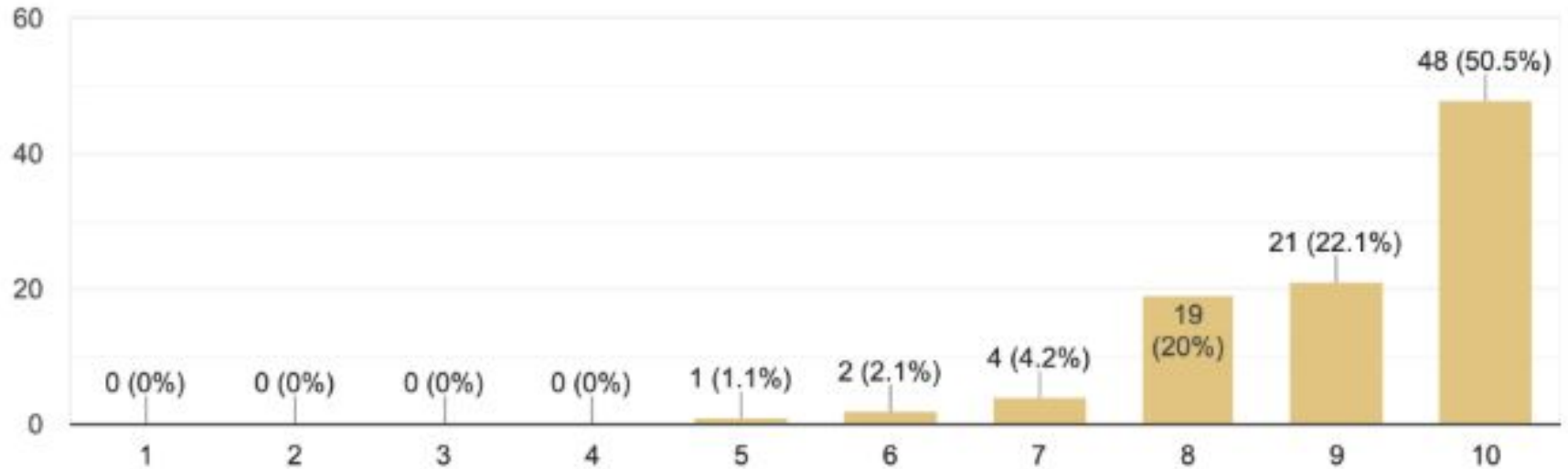
# SCHOOL UPDATES

- New 1st Grade Teacher- Ashley Scott
- New SRO- Deputy Monti
- Staff Alumni Event was a success!
- January 16th - Early Release
- January 19th- MLK Day (no school)
- January 30th - Teacher workday - No school for students

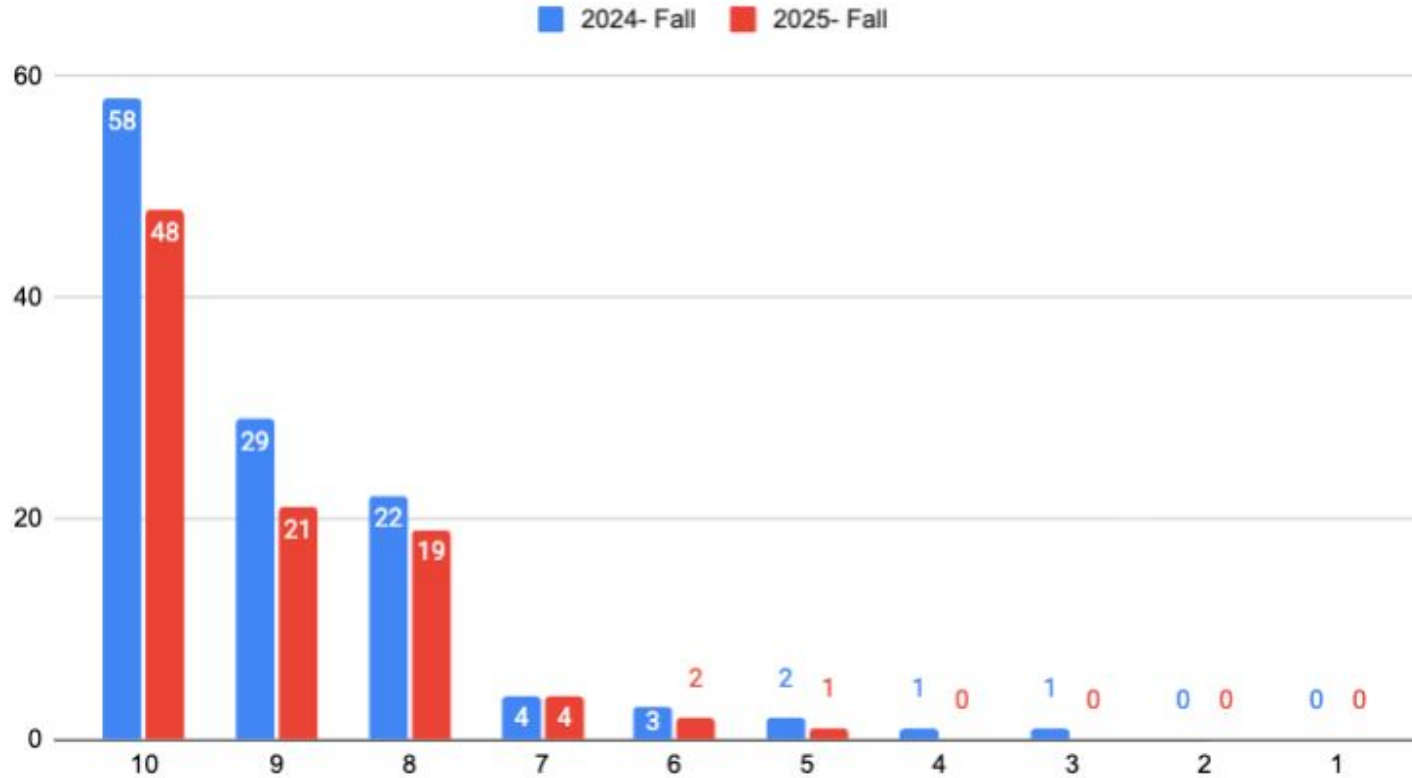
# 25/26 Staff Survey Results

## I believe and am committed to STEM's vision statement.

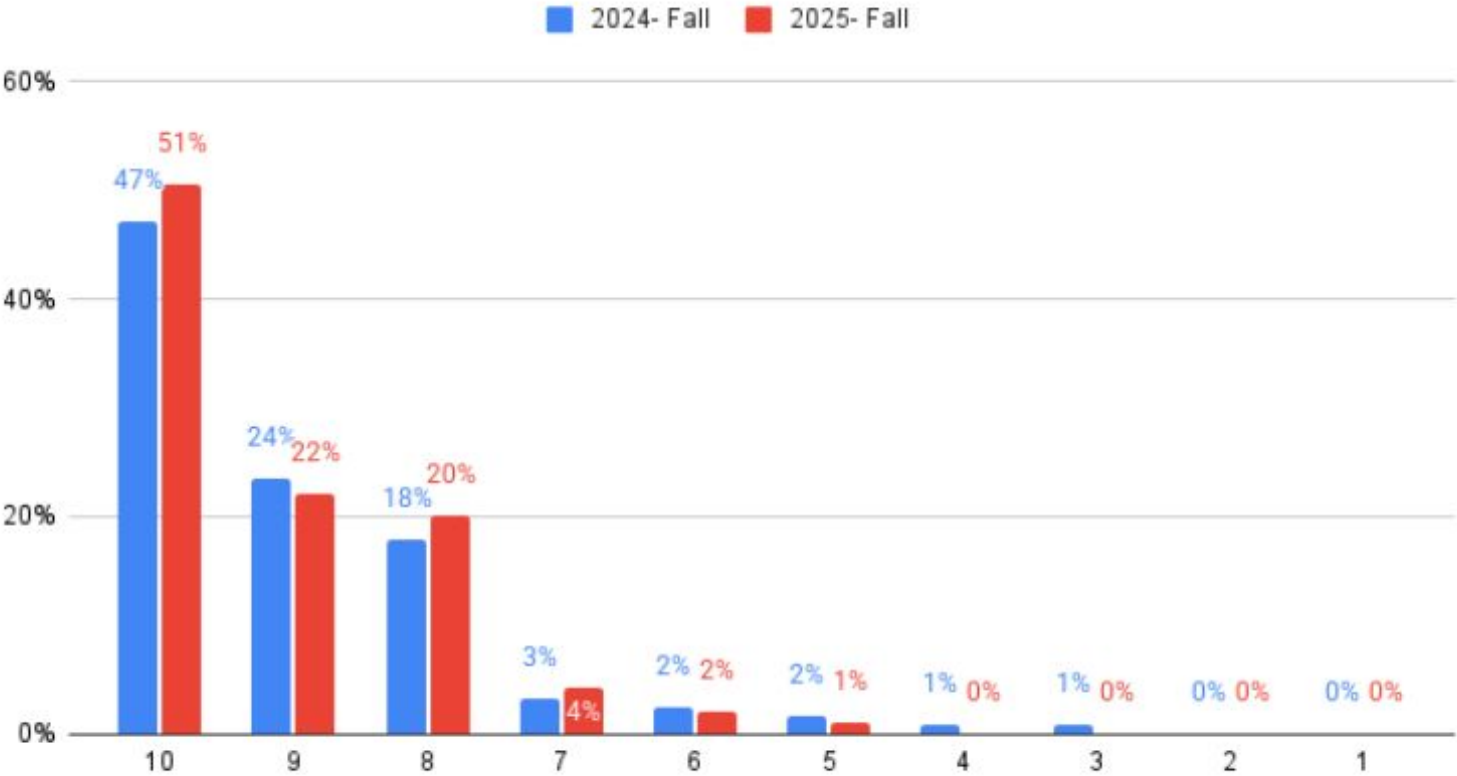
95 responses



## I believe and am committed to STEM's vision statement.



I believe and am committed to STEM's vision statement.

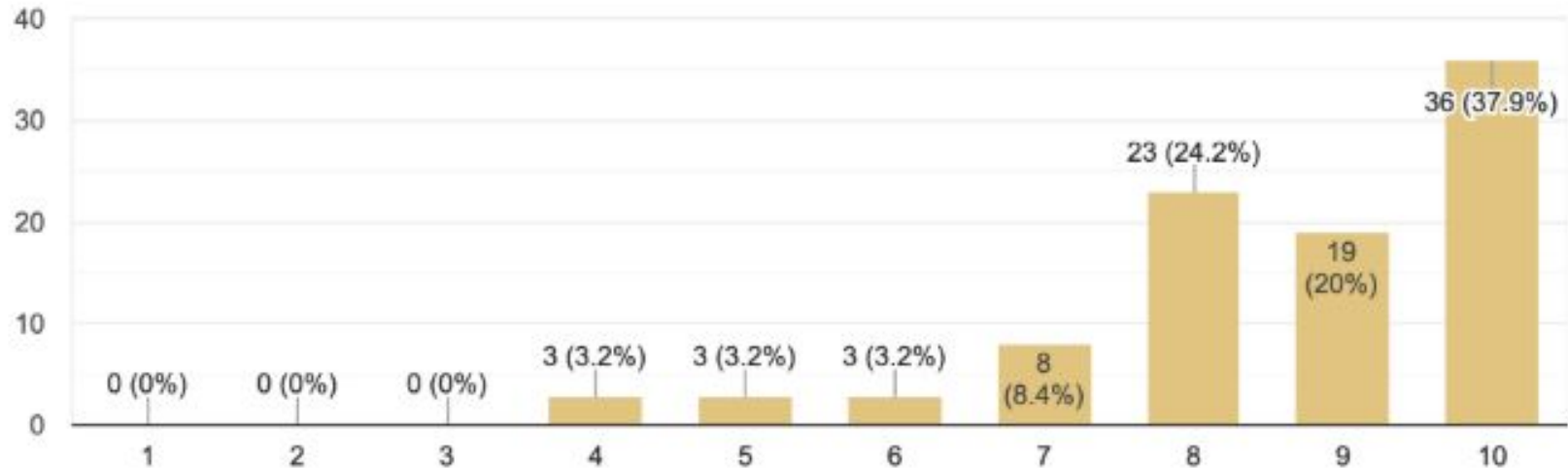


Number of Respondents	
Fall 2024	120
Fall 2025	95

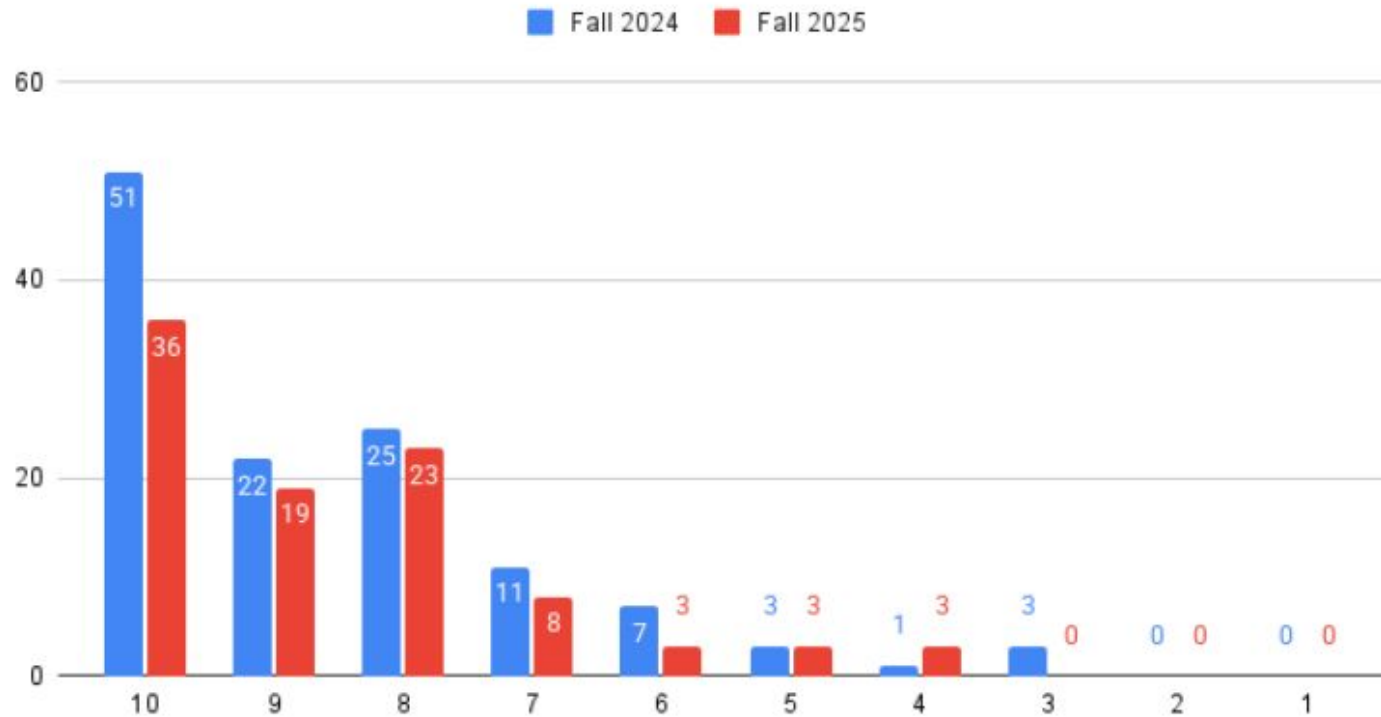


I am excited and inspired by STEM's program model that is centered on problem based learning, real world application, whole student development and personalized pathways.

95 responses

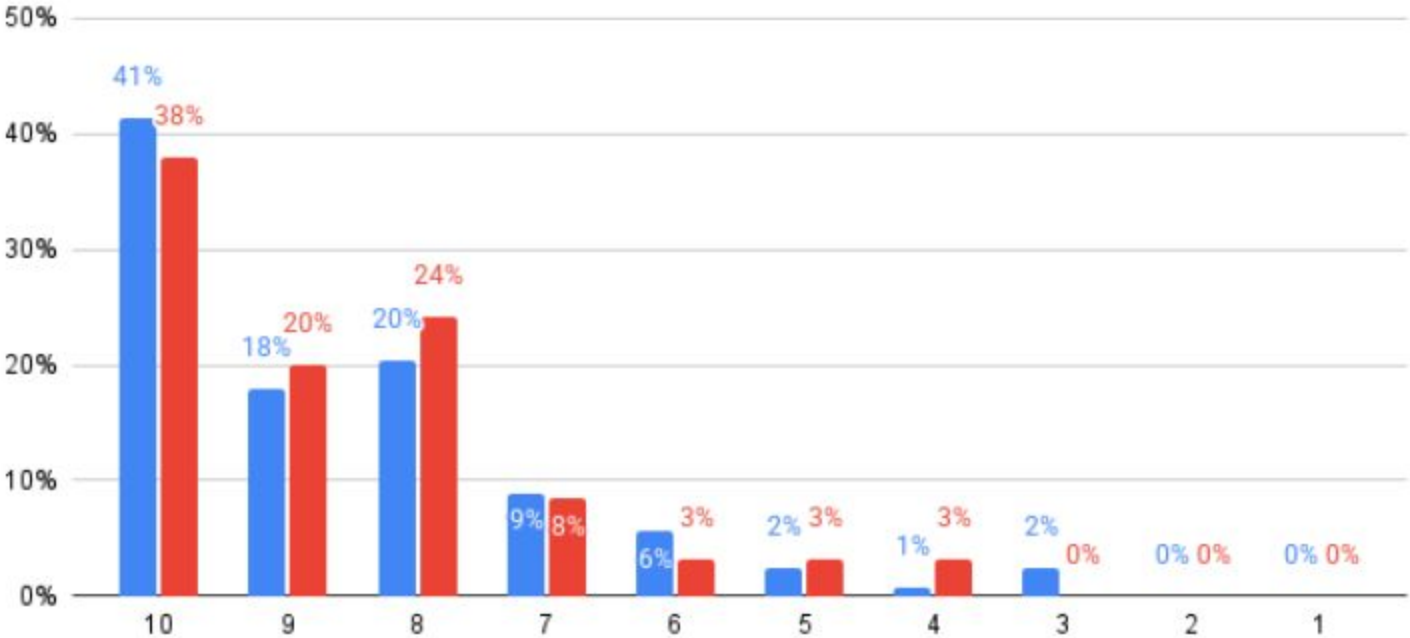


I am excited and inspired by STEM's program model that is centered on problem based learning, real world application, whole student development and personalized pathways.



I am excited and inspired by STEM's program model that is centered on problem based learning, real world application, whole student

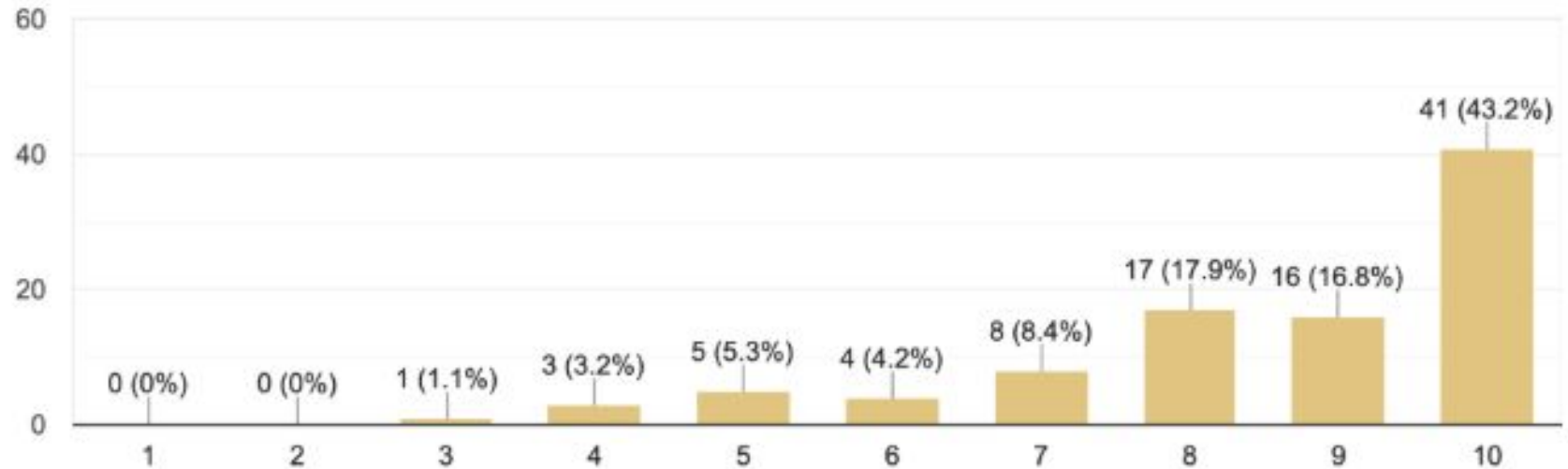
Fall 2024    Fall 2025



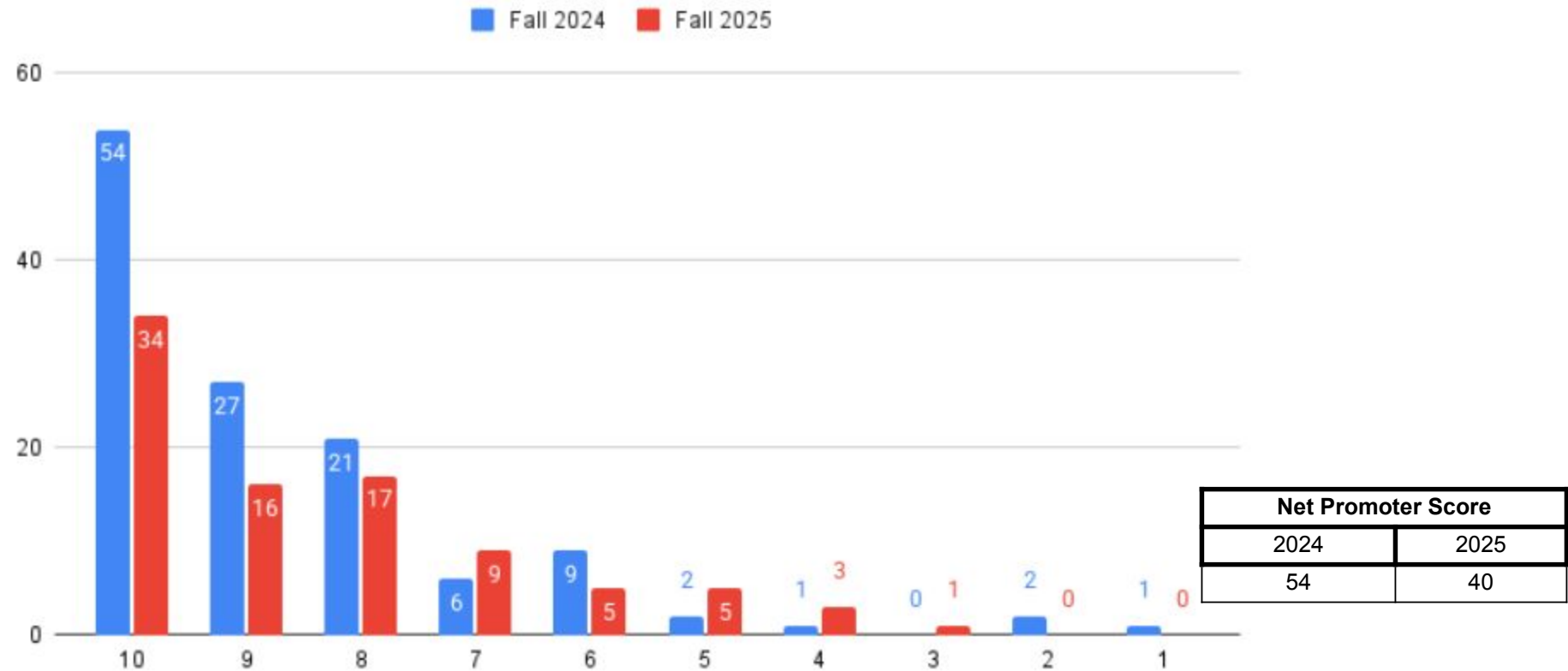
Number of Respondents	
Fall 2024	123
Fall 2025	95

## I would recommend STEM to my friends or family as a place to work.

95 responses

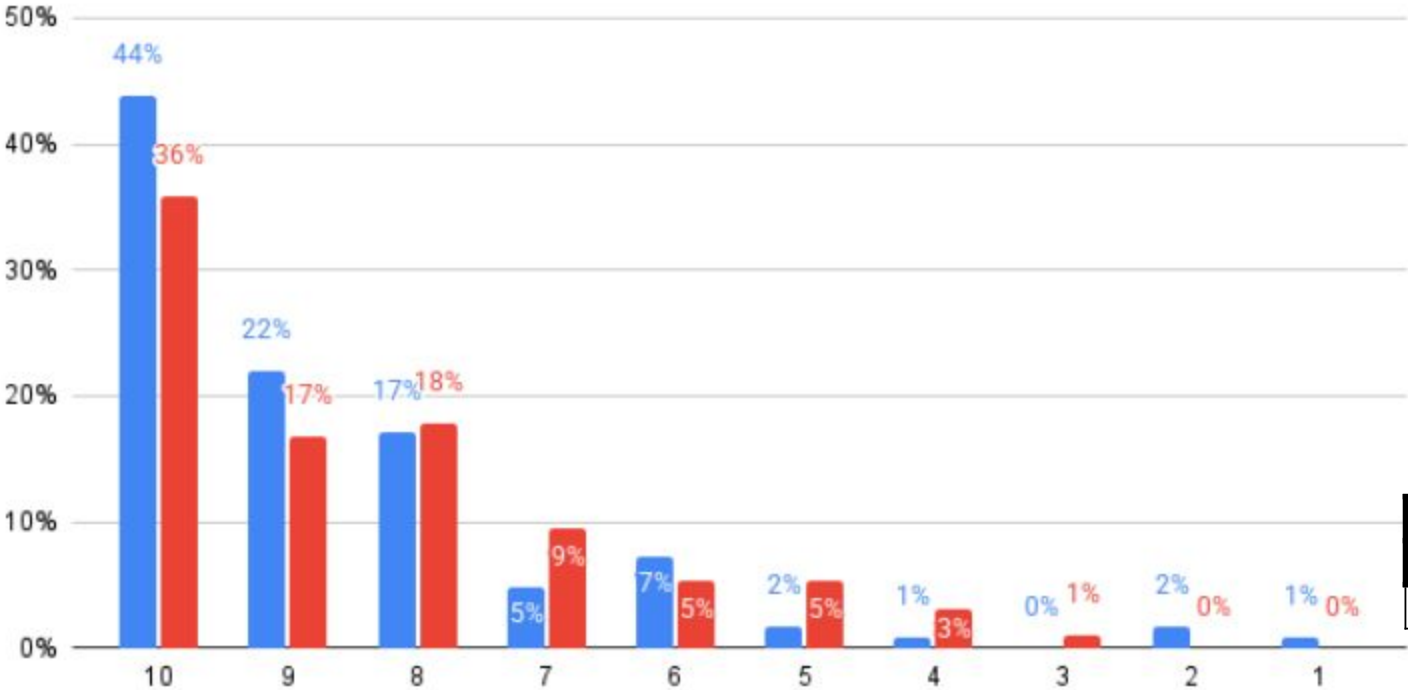


I would recommend STEM to my friends or family as a place to work.



I would recommend STEM to my friends or family as a place to work.

Fall 2024    Fall 2025



Number of Respondents	
Fall 2024	121
Fall 2025	90

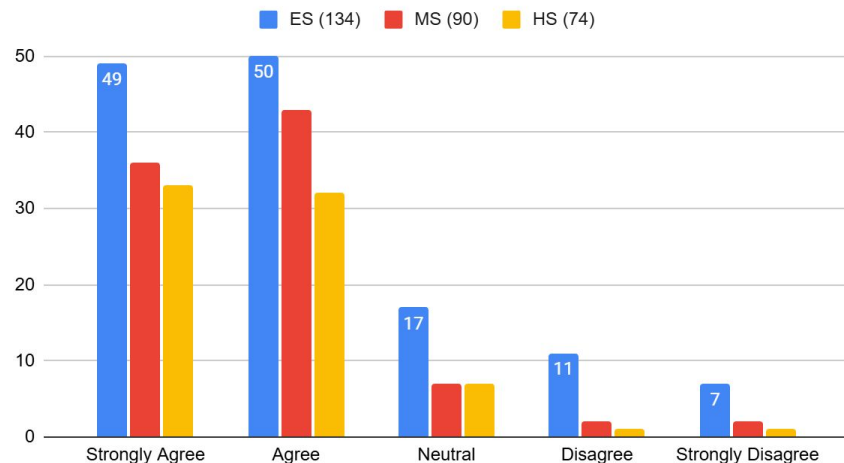
Net Promoter Score	
2024	2025
54	41

# **25/26 Fall SAC Survey Results**

## Academics

# My student is academically challenged

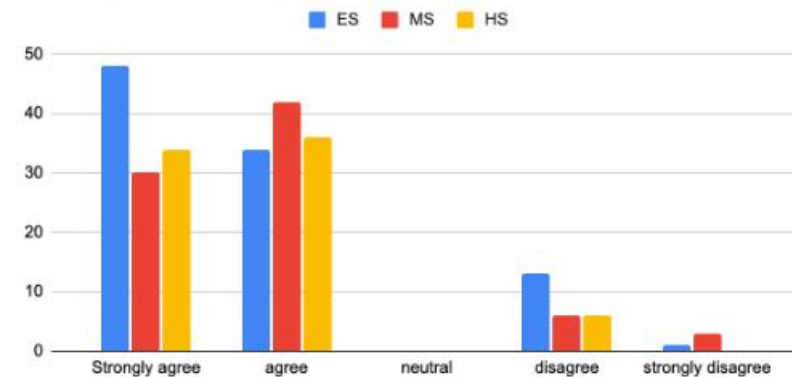
My student is academically challenged at STEM.



Fall 2025 (298 responses)

My student is academically challenged through rigorous curriculum at STEM.

ES- 88 responses, MS- 80 responses, HS- 76 responses



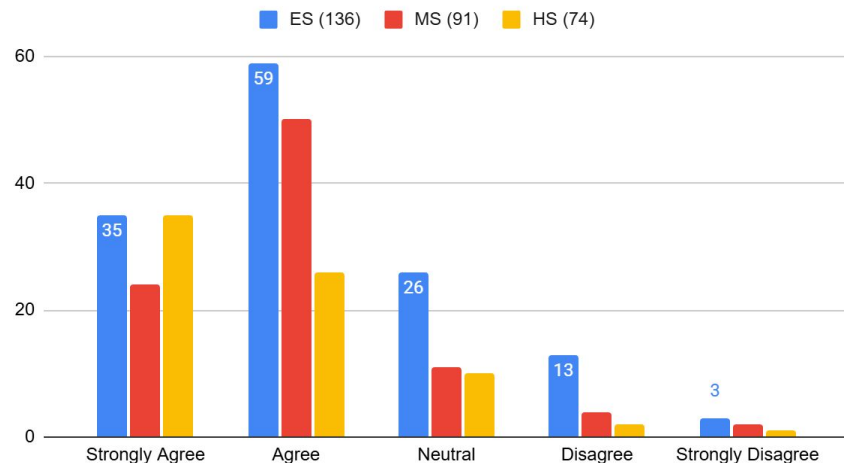
Spring 2025 (244 responses)



## Academics

# The curriculum is rigorous

The curriculum at STEM is rigorous.

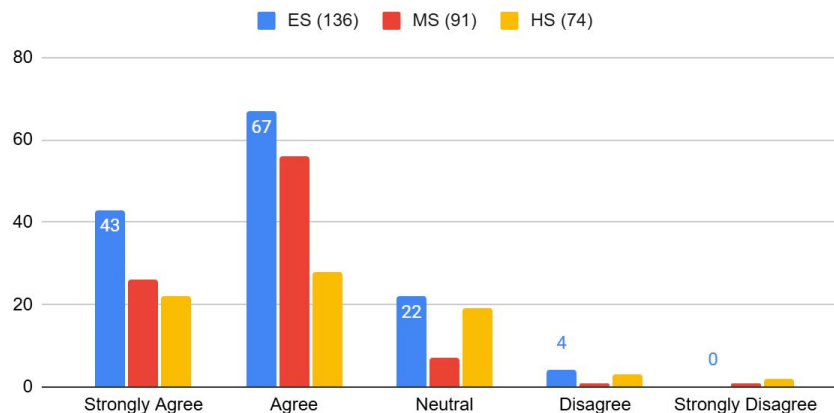


Fall 2025 (301 responses)

## Academics

# Real-world concepts are incorporated

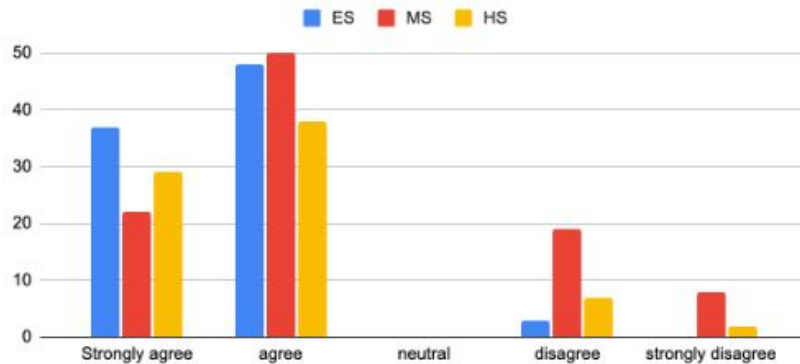
STEM concepts such as real world application, problem based learning, and integrated technology are effectively embedded into courses.



Fall 2025 (301 responses)

STEM concepts such as real world application, problem based learning, and integrated technology are effectively embedded into all courses.

ES- 88 responses, MS- 80 responses, HS- 76 responses

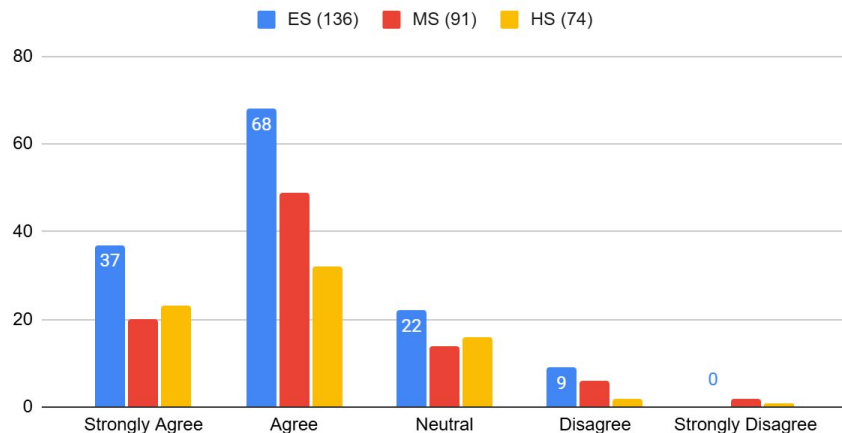


Spring 2025 (244 responses)

## Academics

# The workload is in line with expectations

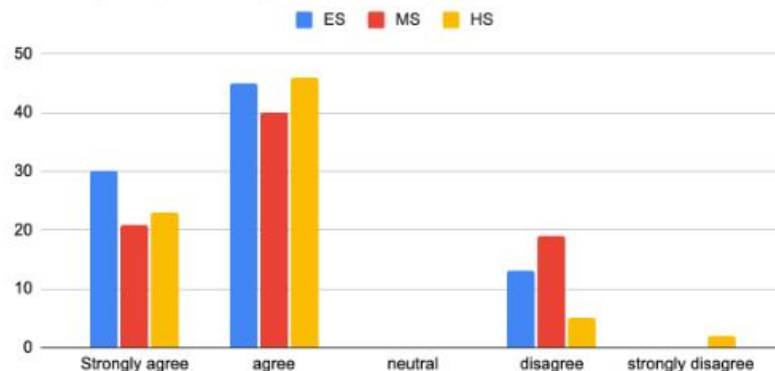
The workload is in line with the rigor that you expect from students at STEM.



Fall 2025 (301 responses)

The workload is in line with the rigor that you expect from students at STEM.

ES- 88 responses, MS- 80 responses, HS- 76 responses

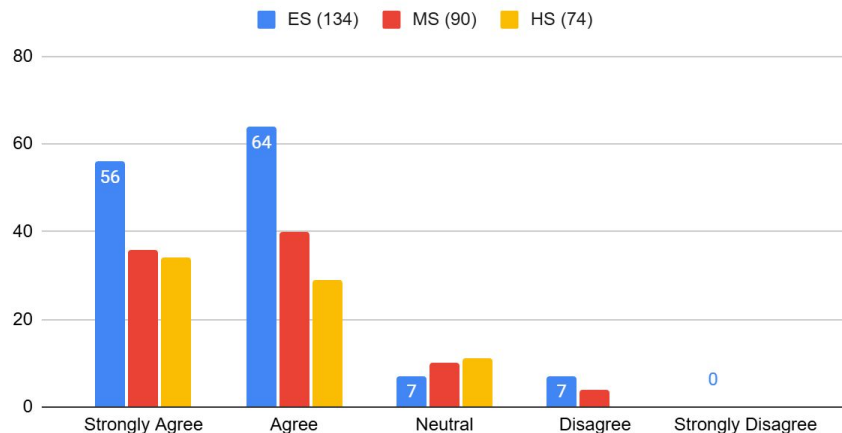


Spring 2025 (244 responses)

## Student Support

# Teachers are supportive of individual needs

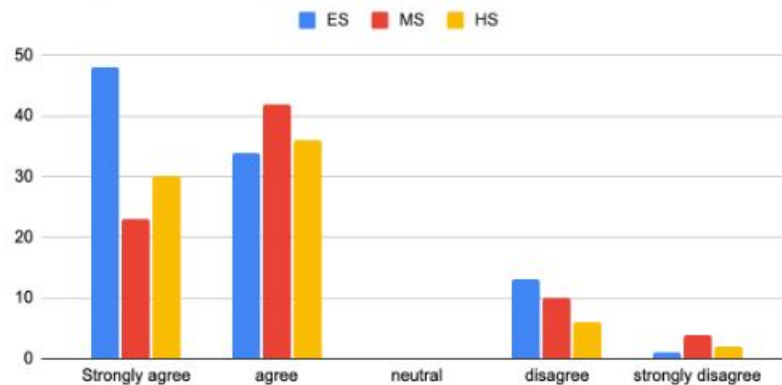
Raw Score- Teachers are supportive of the individual needs of my student.



Fall 2025 (298 responses)

Teachers are supportive of the individual academic needs of my student and I feel these needs are being met.

ES- 88 responses, MS- 80 responses, HS- 76 responses

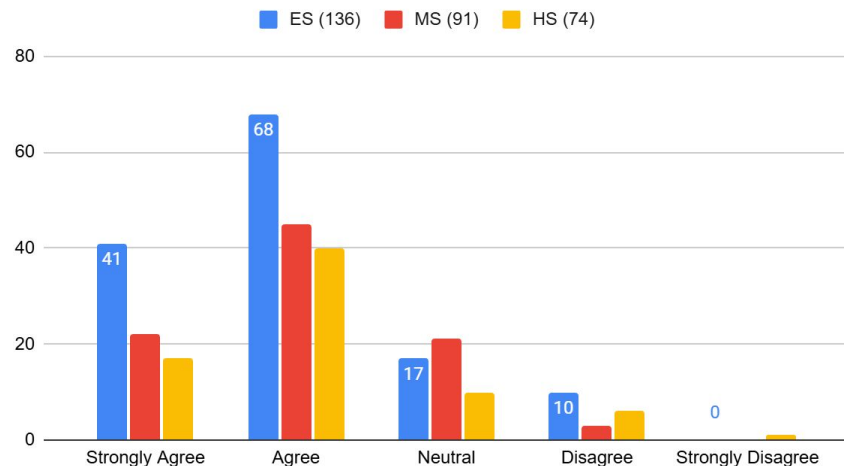


Spring 2025 (244 responses)

## Student Support

# The social and emotional needs of my student are being met

The social and emotional needs of my student are being met.

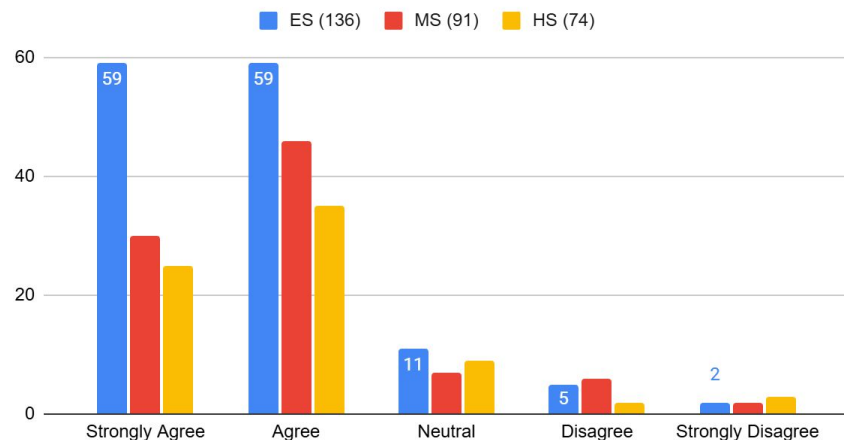


Fall 2025 (301 responses)

## Communication

# The teaching staff is responsive

Raw Score- The teaching staff is responsive and emails are typically returned within two business days.

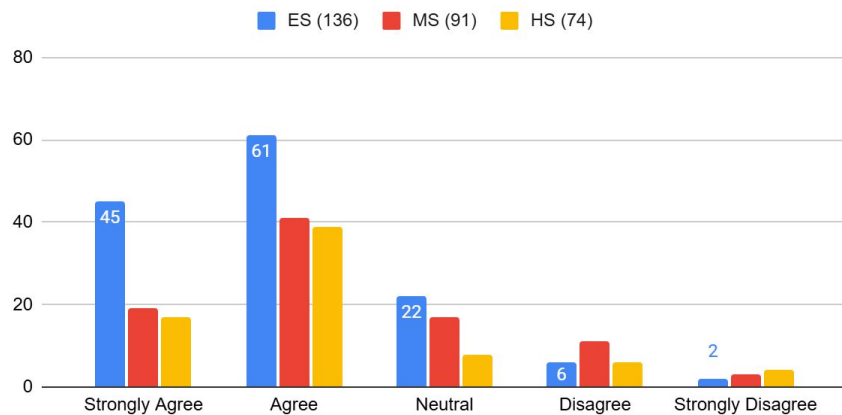


Fall 2025 (301 responses)

## Communication

# The teaching staff uses Canvas effectively for feedback and grades

Raw Score- The teaching staff uses the grade-level-specific learning management system (Canvas/Google Classroom/Mastery Connect) effectively for assignment feedback and reporting of grades within a...

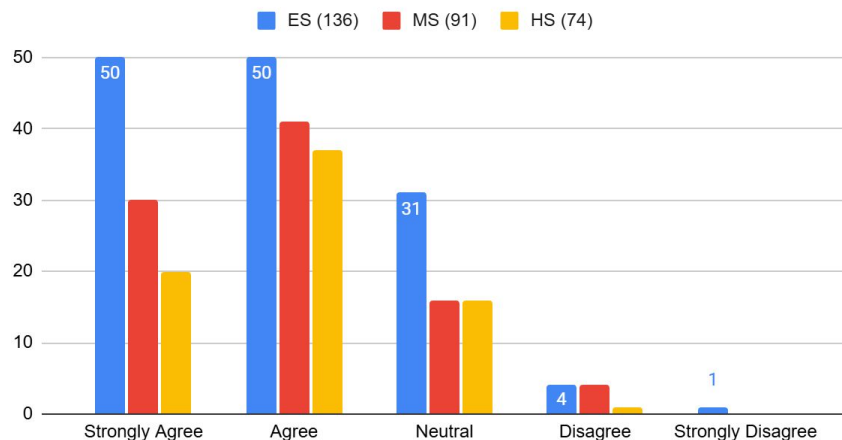


Fall 2025 (301 responses)

## Diversity

# Culture diversity is recognized

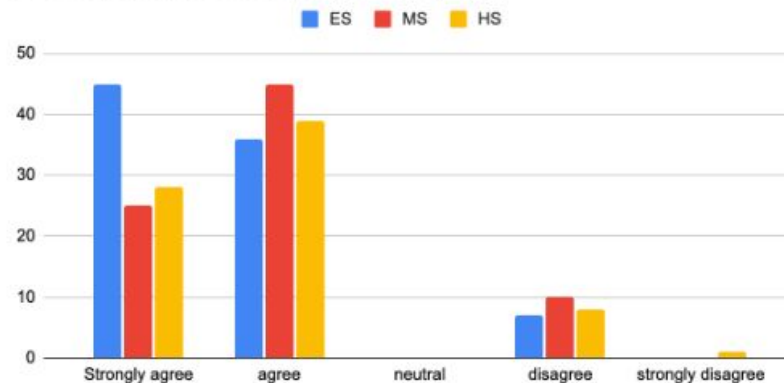
The school's racial and cultural diversity is recognized and openly discussed in a constructive way that includes staff and families.



Fall 2025 (301 responses)

The school's racial and cultural diversity is recognized and openly discussed in a constructive way that includes staff and families.

ES- 88 responses, MS- 80 responses, HS- 76 responses



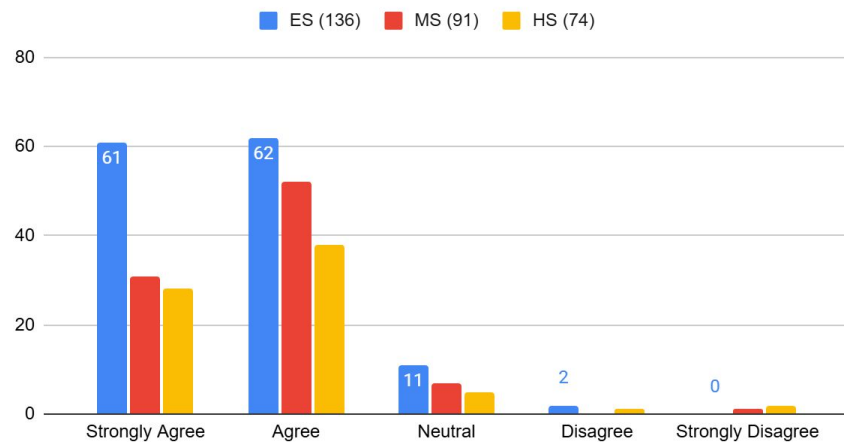
Spring 2025 (244 responses)



## Security

# Security measures promote safety

Security measures are in place that promote a culture of safety across the school community.



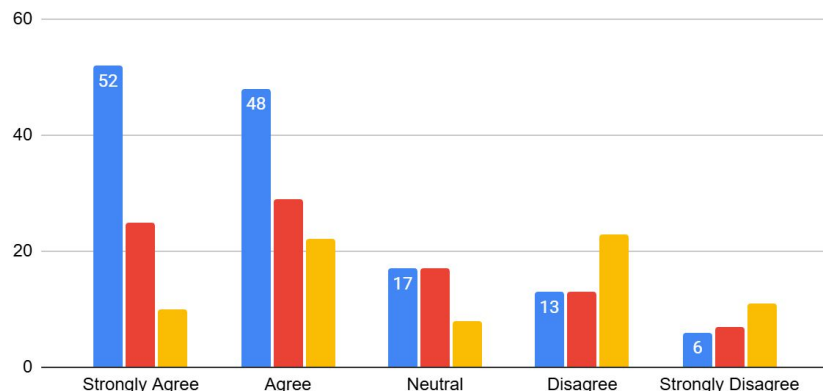
Fall 2025 (301 responses)

## Topical Question

# New School Day Schedule

Raw Score- The new (2025-2026) school day schedule (starting and ending times) works well for my student(s) and family.

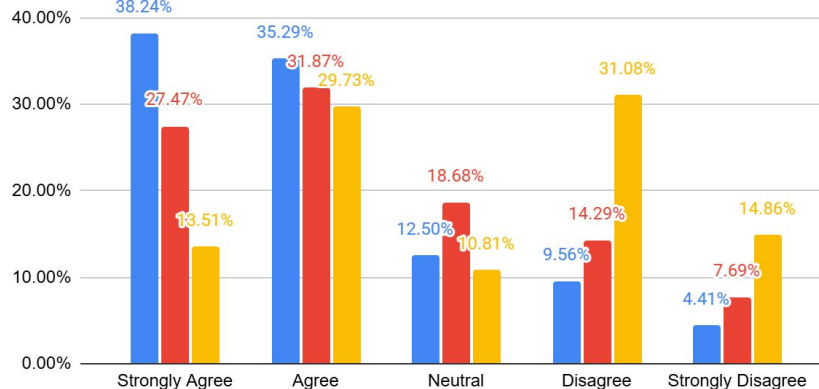
■ ES (136) ■ MS (91) ■ HS (74)



Fall 2025 (301 responses)

Percent score- The new (2025-2026) school day schedule (starting and ending times) works well for my student(s) and family.

■ ES (136) ■ MS (91) ■ HS (74)

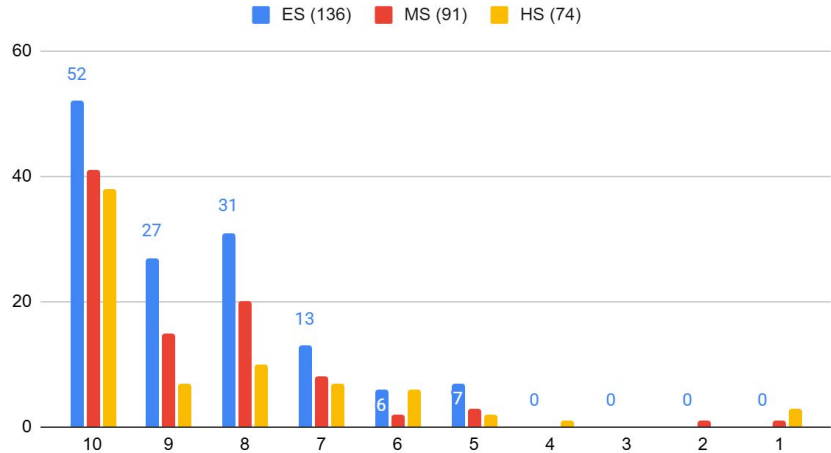


Fall 2025 (301 responses)

# Rating

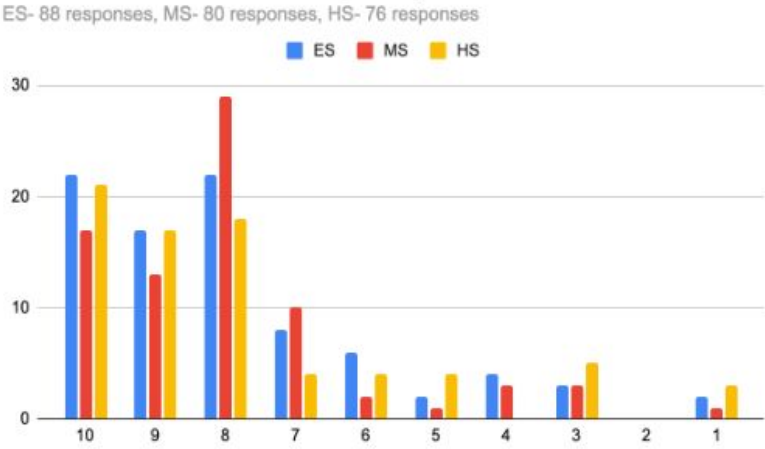
## I would recommend STEM

I would recommend STEM to my family and friends.



Fall 2025 (301 responses)

I would recommend STEM to my family and friends.

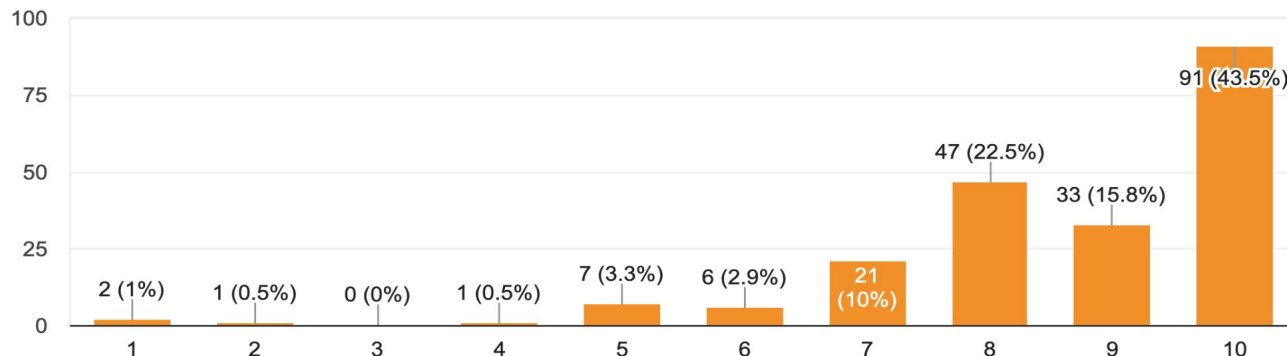


Spring 2025 (244 responses)

# 25/26 FALL SAC SURVEY

I would recommend STEM to my family and friends.

209 responses



**Net Promoter Score- Total Response Data**  
**51**

Full Survey Results to Be Shared in January

# **25/26 Fall Survey Comments Summary**

## Elementary School

# What is STEM doing well?

1. Rigorous and engaging curriculum (19 responses)
2. Caring, kind, and supportive teachers and support staff (17 responses)
3. Clear and timely communication from the school and teachers (12 responses)
4. Student academic and emotional needs are being met (12 responses)
5. Safe environment and strong community feel (11 responses)
6. Fun field trips and school events (7 responses)

# Elementary School

## How can STEM improve?

1. Curriculum (14 response)
  - More transparency in what students are being taught
  - Desire for homework
2. Communication (12 responses)
  - Inconsistent communication from teachers
  - Long emails and confusion about events
3. Driveline and Dismissal (8 responses)
  - Requests for improved driveline flow and staggered times
4. Lack of gifted and advanced learning support (7 responses)
  - Poor communication from G/T staff; ALP goals not meaningful
  - Desire for more differentiation and rigorous work (especially in the area of math)
5. Extracurricular options (7 responses)
  - Include more sports programs and STEM-themed options
6. Student support and bullying (4 responses)

# Elementary School Recommendations

1. Improve communication from teachers about curriculum such that parents know how they can be helping their children at home
2. Improve usefulness of ALP to engage gifted students and help them reach their growth potential
3. Explore offering additional after-school activities related to sports



## Middle School

# What is STEM doing well?

1. Inclusive and supportive community/environment (18 responses)
2. Strong curriculum and variety of courses (16 responses)
3. Caring, responsive teachers (12 responses)
4. Responsive and effective communication (10 responses)
5. Variety of enrichment and extracurricular activities (6 responses)

# Middle School

## How can STEM improve?

1. Communication (24 responses)
  - Lack of clarity on assignments, deadlines, student progress
  - Events not coordinated and/or communicated in a timely manner
2. More challenging curriculum (11 responses)
  - More STEM-depth in teachers and coursework
3. Canvas and grading and feedback (10 responses)
  - Use of Canvas to see deadlines, test dates, missing assignments
  - Timely feedback on graded assignments
4. More sports and need for outdoor activities (7 responses)
5. Further limiting of phones/screen time (4 responses)
  - Gaming at school

# High School

## What is STEM doing well?

1. Challenging curriculum and variety of course offerings (19 responses)
2. Supportive and engaged teachers and leadership (14 responses)
3. Happy students and supportive community (7 responses)
4. Variety of enrichment and extracurricular activities (3 responses)
5. Great communication (3 responses)

# High School

## How can STEM improve?

1. Communication (15 responses)
  - Need for better, more timely communication about events and volunteer opportunities
  - Confusion about fundraising policies
2. Academic Day Schedule (9 responses)
  - Start and dismissal times
  - Half-days, silver days (shortened class periods are not meaningful)
  - Lunch times
3. Grading and Feedback (7 responses)
  - More timely grading and follow-up with students on assignments
4. Staffing and Professional Development (5 responses)
  - More coaching and educational development opportunities
  - Support for teachers with the new, longer workday schedule
5. Need for more parent involvement (3 responses)

# High School Recommendations

1. Re-evaluate academic calendar (value of half days) and schedule (late dismissal time) to meet hours in class requirements
2. Provide training opportunities to teachers to improve their STEM-focus and depth of knowledge
3. Encourage teachers to post grades for assignments within 2 weeks of the due date

# 2025 - 26 ENROLLMENT: JANUARY 2026

Elementary	Middle	High	Total*	Potential**
526 525 (-1)	494 486 (-8)	431 431 (0)	1,451 1,441	1,441

Elementary School		
	12/25	01/26
Kinder	84	84
First	80	81
Second	69	68
Third	82	81
Fourth	106	104
Fifth	106	107

Middle School		
	12/25	01/26
Sixth	169	166
Seventh	165	161
Eighth	160	159

Pending Enrollments	
Choice	-
Admin Transfers	-

High School		
	12/25	01/26
Ninth	127	128
Tenth	113	114
Eleventh	97	95
Twelfth	92	92
13/14	2	2

\*11/6 Enrolled;

\*\*Projecting adding new student after 10/1 through Admin Transfers/Choice Enrollment.

# 2026 - 27 OPEN ENROLLMENT APPLICATIONS: ROUND 1

Elementary	Middle	High	Total*	Anticipated R1 Enrollment
257 227 (-30)	106 119 (+13)	69 47 (-22)	432 393 (-39)	205 204 (52%)

Elementary School		
	25-26	26-27
Kinder	146	105
First	22	19
Second	19	23
Third	21	25
Fourth	28	23
Fifth	21	32

Middle School		
	25-26	26-27
Sixth	52	59
Seventh	46	43
Eighth	8	17
Notable		
Mackintosh Applications		15
Tour Registrations (Families)		166 187

High School		
	25-26	26-27
Ninth	64	41
Tenth	3	2
Eleventh	1	4
Twelfth	1	0
13/14	0	0

\*12/1 Submitted Applications  
Did Not Change From December Board  
Report

# 2026 - 27 OPEN ENROLLMENT ACCEPTANCES: ROUND 1

Elementary	Middle	High	Total*	Anticipated R1 Enrollment
Y: 160 E: 57 (35%)	Y: 100 E: 39 (39%)	Y: 35 E: 14 (40%)	Y: 295 E: 110 (37%)	205 204 (52%)

Elementary School					
	#	NR	N	Y	E
K	105	16	13	76	31
1st	19	4	3	12	2
2nd	23	4	2	17	8
3rd	25	3	3	19	6
4th	23	7	0	16	3
5th	26	3	2	21	7

Middle School					
	#	NR	N	Y	E
6th	59	7	5	47	14
7th	45	3	2	39	19
8th	17	1	2	14	6

Trends	
Accepted	25: 205 (50%) 26: 295 (76%)
Enrolled	25: NA 26: 110 (37%)*

High School					
	#	NR	N	Y	E
9th	42	9	2	31	12
10th	2	1	0	1	0
11th	4	0	0	3	2
12th	-	-	-	-	

\*12/17 Acceptances; 12/31 Completed Enrollments (Due 1/7)

# - Offers

Y - Accepted Offers

N - Declined Offers

NR - No Response

E - Accepted offers that completed enrollment



# Coversheet

## CIO Update

<b>Section:</b>	IV. KOSON Schools
<b>Item:</b>	B. CIO Update
<b>Purpose:</b>	Discuss
<b>Submitted by:</b>	
<b>Related Material:</b>	CIO Board Presentation 20260106.pdf

# CIO UPDATE



Board Meeting | January 6, 2026

# CONTENTS

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- 1. Homeschool**
- 2. HS Relocation**
- 3. Student Led Showcase**

**Thank you!**



# Coversheet

## Policy Updates

<b>Section:</b>	IV. KOSON Schools
<b>Item:</b>	C. Policy Updates
<b>Purpose:</b>	Discuss
<b>Submitted by:</b>	
<b>Related Material:</b>	Policy_Enrollment_2026_Draft.pdf NEW - Policy_Home School Enrichment Enrollment_2026_Draft.pdf

## Enrollment Policy

### STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH POLICY Enrollment

#### I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to define the enrollment process and requirements for STEM School Highlands Ranch (STEM). STEM is a free, public charter school authorized by the Douglas County School District (DCSD) and serves grades Kindergarten through 12.

#### II. POLICY

##### A. Open and Choice Enrollment

STEM ~~conducts~~ ~~participates in DCSD's~~ annual open enrollment and choice enrollment processes, ~~adhering to all applicable dates and deadlines~~. Parents/guardians must submit an application to enroll their student(s) in STEM. STEM utilized DCSD's open enrollment application software platform for open enrollment.

##### B. Prioritizing Applicants

When the number of eligible applicants during the **first round** open enrollment period exceeds the spaces available in a particular program, grade or school, as determined by the Executive Director or designee, applications will be prioritized by grade level on the annual prioritized list by the priorities listed below.

- First Priority: **STEM School Highlands Ranch Community** (Siblings of current STEM students, **Founding Families** and children and grandchildren of current STEM staff **An Enrollment Priority Request must be indicated on the enrollment application.** -
- Second Priority: **Students attending STEM School Home School Enrichment program at the time of application submission.**
- ~~Third~~ Priority: Student applicants who are DCSD Residents
- Fourth Priority: Student applicants who are not DCSD residents.

Enrollment priority does not guarantee enrollment if there is no availability at the applicant's grade level. Due to enrollment priorities, STEM does not release information regarding a particular applicant's position on the list. Founding Families, and staff members must ~~indicate and complete the Enrollment Priority Request Form in~~ **on the enrollment application** order to provide proof they meet these enrollment priority criteria prior to the **end of the** First Round Open Enrollment Application period.

## Enrollment Policy

Applicants not accepted during enrollment by STEM during the First Round Open Enrollment Application period will automatically be placed on the annual prioritized list and will have priority over those applicants by applying during the Second Round Open Enrollment Application period.

In addition, for Second Round Open Enrollment, sibling applicants of a student who has accepted an enrollment offer and completed the enrollment process for the same school year will receive sibling priority placement on the annual prioritized list. Following the close of the First Round Open Enrollment period, qualifying sibling applicants will be placed immediately at the top of the annual prioritized list from the First Round Open Enrollment period and before all other First Round applicants on the annual prioritized list and Second Round applicants who do not qualify for a priority category. If a qualifying sibling application is submitted during the Second Round Open Enrollment period, the application will be moved to this sibling priority position on the annual prioritized list at the time of submission.

No enrollment priority categories apply during the Second Round Open Enrollment Application period other than the sibling priority described above. All other applications are considered in the order received, subject to space availability.

For purposes of this section, completing the enrollment process means the family has accepted the offer and satisfied all required enrollment requirements established by DCSD and STEM. Sibling priority placement under this provision shall supersede the priority of applicants who submit applications during the Second Round Open Enrollment period.

STEM's annual prioritized list will be purged upon the close of the Second Round Open Enrollment period of each year, in accordance with DCSD policies. Applicants not offered enrollment must reapply the following year, as the list does not carry over from year to year.

### C. STEM Interest List

STEM offers prospective families the opportunity to complete the STEM Interest Form to receive notifications about open enrollment dates and enrollment related information. Completing the STEM Interest Form is separate from the DCSD/STEM Open and Choice Enrollment processes, and is not considered an open or choice enrollment application. The STEM Interest Form does not guarantee enrollment nor does it obligate families to enroll in STEM.

### D. Admissions and Enrollment Phase

#### Open Enrollment Round 1

Once issued an offer of enrollment during the First Round Open Enrollment Application period on the first Friday in December, parents/guardians must accept the offer by the First Round Open Enrollment Application Acceptance and Enrollment period deadline of the third Friday in December. If either the offer date or the acceptance and enrollment deadline falls on a school holiday, the applicable date will be adjusted to the previous business day. ~~As per the DCSD~~



## Enrollment Policy

~~Open Enrollment process, STEM offers a First Round Open Enrollment Application period and a Second Round Open Enrollment Application period. Once issued an offer of enrollment during the First Round Open Enrollment Application period, parents/guardians must accept the offer by the First Round Open Enrollment Application period deadline.~~

### Open Enrollment Round 2

Once issued an offer of enrollment during the Second Round Open Enrollment Application period, parents/guardians must accept the offer within 48 hours **and complete the enrollment phase, by returning all enrollment forms and documents within five working days of when the enrollment offer was issued.**

## F. Enrollment Acceptance and Family Responsibilities

Failure to complete and return all required registration and enrollment forms by the deadline may result in the enrollment offer becoming void and the opening will be offered to the applicant next on the annual prioritized list, if applicable. Under DCSD guidelines, by accepting an offer of enrollment at STEM, you have established STEM as your student's assigned school through 12th grade.

Parents/guardians are responsible for providing a reasonable way for STEM to reach them regarding enrollment and are also responsible for informing the school of any change to their contact information. While STEM will attempt to notify families, the school is not responsible for the inability to contact families should they be unreachable (i.e., traveling, inaccurate information, etc.). Failure to respond to the enrollment offer by the deadline may result in the enrollment offer becoming void and the opening will be offered to the applicant next on the annual prioritized list.

### ~~E. Enrollment Phase~~

~~To complete the enrollment phase, parents/guardians must complete and return all registration **and** enrollment forms within five working days of when the enrollment offer was issued. Failure to complete and return all required registration and enrollment forms by the deadline may result in the enrollment offer becoming void and the opening will be offered to the applicant next on the annual prioritized list. Under DCSD guidelines, by accepting an offer of enrollment at STEM, you have established STEM as your student's assigned school through 12th grade.~~

## ~~G~~F. Enrollment for Students Receiving Special Education Services

Requests from the parents/guardians of students receiving special education services for choice enrollment to STEM shall be considered in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. Consideration of whether or not a student receiving special education services is able to enroll in a school of choice shall be implemented in a two-step process. The first step



## *Enrollment Policy*

of the process is the Admissions Phase and the second step is the Enrollment Phase. In order for a student receiving special education services to enroll and attend a school of choice, the student must be admitted after completion of the Admissions Phase of the process and then must be approved for enrollment during the Enrollment Phase of the process.

During a school's Admissions Phase of the process, including any lottery or similar process, school shall not in any way inquire into the disability status of a student. If a student receiving special education services is admitted through the Admissions Phase of the process, the student must still be approved for enrollment into the school of choice. During the Enrollment phase of the process, the student's current Individualized Education Program (IEP) shall be reviewed to determine if the student's IEP can be appropriately implemented at the requested school or program so the student can be provided a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). If there is a determination that the student's IEP cannot be implemented at the requested school, student enrollment may be denied and the student may be assigned to another school where the student's IEP can be implemented as developed by the IEP team. Decisions to assign the student to another school shall be made with due consideration for the impact on the child's total education program and must include parent/guardian participation.

### **HG.** Vacancies

Should a vacancy become available prior to the end of the Second Round Open Enrollment Application period, the vacancy will be filled as specified above. Should a vacancy become available between the end of the Second Round Open Enrollment Application period and October 1st, the vacancy may be filled through the Choice Enrollment process. Should a vacancy become available after October 1st, it will be the decision of the Executive Director or designee to fill that vacancy or leave it open until the following school year.

### **IH.** Choice Enrollment

Following the close of the Second Round Open Enrollment Application period, STEM may offer choice enrollment to new DCSD and non-DCSD students throughout the school year based on availability. New DCSD students are those who have moved into DCSD after the Second Round Open Enrollment Application period has closed and/or have not yet enrolled in a DCSD school. For eligible students, STEM offers a STEM School Highlands Ranch New Student Choice Application process available on the STEMK12.org website. **Once issued an offer of enrollment during the Choice Enrollment period, parents/guardians must accept the offer within 48 hours and complete the enrollment phase by returning all enrollment forms and documents within five working days of when the enrollment offer was issued.**

## Enrollment Policy

### J. Transfers

Students may choose to enroll in STEM ~~after the Second~~~~after Second~~ Round Open Enrollment Application period closes; however, for students already enrolled in DCSD, the process for administrative transfers in accordance with DCSD Policy JCA/JFB-R shall be followed.

Approved by the STEM School Board on \_\_\_\_\_.  
(dd/mm/yyyy)

STEM School Highlands Ranch

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature, Board Secretary)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Printed name, Board Secretary)

Adopted: 2019

Revised: January 2023

Revised: August 2023

Revised: October 2023

Revised: October 2024

Revised: April 2025

Revised: February 2026

# **Koson Schools Policy**

## **STEM School Home School Enrichment Enrollment**

### **I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to define the enrollment process and requirements for the STEM School Highlands Ranch Home School Enrichment Program. The Home School Enrichment Program is a supplemental, part time educational program designed to serve students in kindergarten through grade 8 who are educated through a home based education program in accordance with state law. Participation in the Home School Enrichment Program does not constitute full time enrollment at STEM School Highlands Ranch and does not establish STEM School Highlands Ranch as a student's assigned school.

### **II. POLICY**

#### **A. Program Eligibility**

The Home School Enrichment Program serves students in kindergarten through grade 8 who are educated through a home based education program that complies with all applicable state home education requirements. Families must provide documentation demonstrating compliance with state home education laws, which may include a Notice of Intent or other legally recognized documentation. Participation in the Home School Enrichment Program is supplemental only and does not establish STEM School Highlands Ranch as the student's assigned school.

#### **B. Open Enrollment**

Enrollment in the Home School Enrichment Program is subject to program capacity as determined annually by school administration. Enrollment is offered on a first come first served basis upon the opening of the Home School Enrichment Open Enrollment Application, provided all eligibility requirements are met and all required documentation is submitted. The Home School Enrichment Open Enrollment Application opens annually on the third Thursday in January. In the inaugural enrollment year only, for the 2026 to 2027 school year, the application will open on the first Thursday in March. The school will publish enrollment timelines and application access information through official school communication channels.

Because the Home School Enrichment Program does not establish STEM School Highlands Ranch as a student's assigned school, enrollment for this program is administered separately from Douglas County School District open and choice enrollment processes. Enrollment decisions for the Home School Enrichment Program are made in accordance with applicable

nondiscrimination laws and policies and are not based on race, creed, color, sex, disability, national origin, or any other protected status.

### **C. Enrollment Start Dates**

Enrollment in the Home School Enrichment Program may begin on the first instructional day of the fall semester in August or on the first instructional day of the spring semester in January.

### **D. Enrollment Outside Standard Start Dates**

Enrollment requests outside the first instructional day of a semester require prior approval from the Chief Innovation Officer, the Home School Director, or a designated representative. Approval is based on available space, staffing capacity, instructional continuity, and program considerations. Enrollment approved outside standard semester start dates will incur tuition and fees as set annually by the Koson Board of Directors.

### **E. Enrollment Acceptance and Family Responsibilities**

Once offered enrollment in the Home School Enrichment Program, parents or guardians must accept the offer and complete all required enrollment steps within timelines established by the program. Failure to accept an enrollment offer or return required enrollment documentation by the stated deadline may result in the offer becoming void and the available seat being offered to another student. Parents or guardians are responsible for providing accurate and current contact information and for responding to program communications in a timely manner. While the school will make reasonable attempts to contact families, the school is not responsible for an inability to reach a family due to inaccurate or outdated contact information.

### **F. Tuition Free Participation**

Participation in the Home School Enrichment Program is tuition free only when the student is enrolled in the program on or before October 1 of the applicable school year and the student is not enrolled in another program that receives per pupil revenue. Families seeking tuition free participation must provide documentation verifying the student is not enrolled in another per pupil revenue receiving program.

### **G. Tuition and Fees**

Tuition and fees apply when a student does not meet the conditions for tuition free participation described in this policy. Tuition and fees also apply to any enrollment approved outside standard semester start dates. Tuition and fees are established annually by the Koson Board of Directors and published by the school.

### **H. Continued Participation**

Families must maintain compliance with all applicable state home education requirements and adhere to program expectations, attendance requirements for enrolled enrichment courses, and all applicable school policies. Families are responsible for notifying the school of any change in enrollment status that may affect eligibility for tuition free participation.

## **I. Withdrawal**

Families may withdraw from the Home School Enrichment Program at any time by providing written notice in accordance with school procedures. Tuition and fee obligations, including refunds when applicable, follow the published tuition and fee schedule for the applicable school year.

## **J. Relationship to STEM School Highlands Ranch Enrollment**

Participation in the Home School Enrichment Program does not guarantee enrollment in the STEM School Highlands Ranch full time brick and mortar program. Students participating in the Home School Enrichment Program who apply for full time enrollment at STEM School Highlands Ranch are subject to the school's standard open enrollment and prioritization policies in effect at the time of application.

## **K. Policy Review**

This policy is reviewed periodically and may be revised by the STEM School Highlands Ranch Board of Directors.

# Coversheet

## CIO Mid Year Review Report

<b>Section:</b>	IV. KOSON Schools
<b>Item:</b>	D. CIO Mid Year Review Report
<b>Purpose:</b>	Discuss
<b>Submitted by:</b>	
<b>Related Material:</b>	S_E_Presentation_on_Mid-Year_Check-In.pdf

2025-2026

# KOSON CIO SUPPORT + EVALUATION

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**CIO Goals 2025-2026**

# PROCESS REVIEW

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# 3 KEY MOMENTS

## 1. BEGINNING-OF-YEAR GOAL SETTING

- CIO & Support and Evaluation Committee set annual goals/evidence aligned with the annual strategic plan
- Board reviews goals
- Board votes to approve goals

## 2. MID-YEAR CHECK-IN

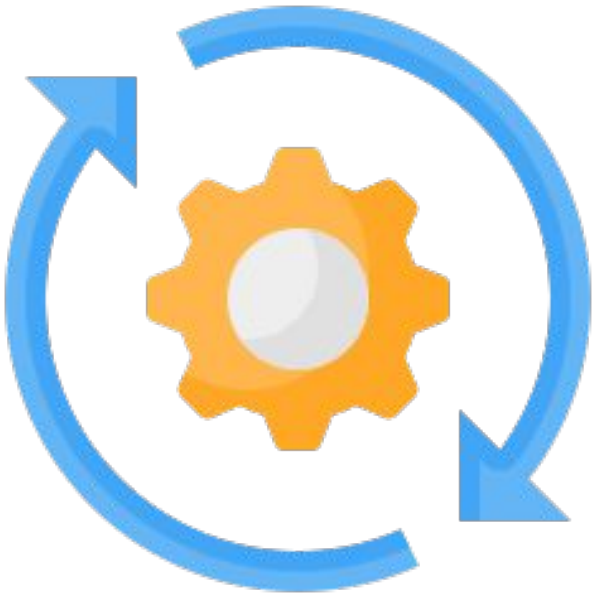
- CIO assesses progress towards goals and shares the reflection with the board
- [Executive Session] Board synthesizes commendations and recommendations for a mid-year report
- Board votes on mid-year report

## 3. END-OF-YEAR EVALUATION


- CIO's direct reports complete the Board on Track CIO survey
- CIO completes the Board on Track End-of-Year Self Assessment
- CIO provides the board with an end-of-year report on the outcomes of the goals
- Board completes the Board on Track End-of-Year CIO Assessment
- [Executive Session] Board synthesizes commendations and recommendations based on the four reports
- Board votes on end-of-year report



# KEY DOCUMENT



## Links to the Following



Links to CIO Goals, Self-Reflections, and Board Feedback

2025-2026 School Year

Section	Description	Date Completed
<a href="#">CIO's Annual Goals 2025-2026</a>	Documentation of the CIO's goals for the year, which are voted on by the Board.	Aug - CIO completes Sept - Present to board Oct - Board votes on goals
<a href="#">CIO's Mid-Year Self-Reflection</a>	CIO's reflection (shared with the Board) on progress he is making towards the goals	Nov - CIO completes
<a href="#">Mid-Year Board Report</a>	The Board's report on the CIO's mid-year check-in, including commendations and opportunities. This is voted on by the Board	Dec - Board drafts report Dec - Draft report shared with CIO Jan - Present report to board Feb - Board votes on report
<a href="#">EOY CIO Report to Board</a>	CIO's EOY report (shared with the board) on the status of the annual goals and feedback to the board.	Mar - CIO completes
<a href="#">EOY Board Report on CIO</a>	The Board's report on the CIO's EOY evaluation. This is voted on by the Board	Apr - Board drafts report Apr - Draft report shared with CIO May - Present report to board Jun - Board votes on report

1

- CIO GOALS
- MID-YEAR SELF REFLECTION
- MID-YEAR BOARD REPORT
- EOY CIO EOY REPORT
- EOY BOARD REPORT

**CIO Goals 2025-2026**

# BOY GOAL-SETTING

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# OVERVIEW OF CIO GOALS

**1. STRENGTHEN  
SYSTEMS & PROCESSES**

**2. ELEVATE  
LEADERSHIP CAPACITY**

**3. DEEPEN  
COMMUNITY  
ENGAGEMENT**

**4. DEVELOP  
NETWORK ASSETS**

# 1. STRENGTHEN SYSTEMS & PROCESSES

## DESCRIPTION

Continue building and refining systems that support Koson's growth and ensure efficient management of STEM—laying the foundation for future network schools.

## WHY IT MATTERS:

Strong systems create stability and scalability, ensuring Koson schools deliver exceptional education without sacrificing efficiency.

## SUCCESS METRICS:

- Annual initiative roadmap in ClickUp (timelines, owners, outcomes; reduced overlaps)
- Sequencing plan for  $\geq 5$  major initiatives (pacing, priorities, checkpoints)
- 2–3 new network-wide processes per department improving efficiency
- $\geq 80\%$  positive staff feedback on pacing, prioritization, workload

## 2. ELEVATE LEADERSHIP CAPACITY

### DESCRIPTION

Enhance leadership at all levels through clarity, professional development, and strengthened accountability.

### WHY IT MATTERS:

Clear, capable, and accountable leaders empower staff, inspire students, and drive results.

### SUCCESS METRICS:

- 100% documented role clarity for shared services & ED leadership roles
- 100% of leaders with IPDPs ( $\geq 2$  measurable goals each)
- $\geq 90\%$  adherence to monthly check-ins and accountability updates
- $\geq 2$  cross-campus leadership sessions with  $\geq 80\%$  satisfaction

# 3. DEEPEN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## DESCRIPTION

Build stronger connections between the community and Koson's mission, focusing on STEM School Highlands Ranch.

## WHY IT MATTERS:

Schools thrive when communities are engaged—building trust, awareness, and shared purpose ensures long-term support.

## SUCCESS METRICS:

- Volunteer participation +20% YoY (Baseline event attendance tracked)
- Industry & higher-ed partnerships +15%
- ≥80% positive parent/community feedback & +5 NPS vs. prior year
- ≥4 signature engagement events (Anniversary, Master Plan launch, HS forum, Gala)
- Fundraising donors +15% YoY; 2 new giving vehicles

# 4. DEVELOP NETWORK ASSETS

## DESCRIPTION

Build high-value assets/services to equip Koson for growth and future schools.

## WHY IT MATTERS:

Strategic assets prepare us for expansion, giving new schools tools and structures to succeed from day one.

## SUCCESS METRICS:

- PBL articulation distinguishing Koson from other models
- Example + rubric for a high-quality PBL unit
- Identify best PBL units (all grades)
- Business plans for preschool, summer camps, homeschool programs (with projections)
- ≥3 baseline operating templates (budget models, policies, onboarding) finalized
- Governance/structure report with recommendations



# CLOSING

**THIS YEAR IS ABOUT...**

**STRENGTHENING SYSTEMS**



**GROWING LEADERS**



**ENGAGING COMMUNITY**



**BUILDING THOSE ASSETS**



**KOSON CIO CIO SUPPORT & EVALUATION:  
2025-2026**

# MID-YEAR CHECK-IN

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# Purpose & Context

## Purpose

- Share key themes from the mid-year CIO check-in
- Surface priority focus areas for January–June
- Highlight opportunities to strengthen leadership capacity and governance support

## Context

- Reflects CIO self-reflection, Board executive session synthesis, and follow-up dialogue
- Focused on strategy, capacity, and long-term sustainability

# 3 KEY MOMENTS

## 1. BEGINNING-OF-YEAR GOAL SETTING

- CIO & Support and Evaluation Committee set annual goals/evidence aligned with the annual strategic plan
- Board reviews goals
- Board votes to approve goals

## 2. MID-YEAR CHECK-IN + CONTRACT DECISIONS ← *We are here*

- CIO assesses progress towards goals and shares the reflection with the board
- [Executive Session] Board synthesizes commendations and recommendations for a mid-year report
- Board votes on mid-year report

## 3. END-OF-YEAR EVALUATION

- CIO's direct reports complete the Board on Track CIO survey
- CIO completes the Board on Track End-of-Year Self Assessment
- CIO provides the board with an end-of-year report on the outcomes of the goals
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- [Executive Session] Board synthesizes commendations and recommendations based on the four reports
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# Key Dates in the Process

Nov 3	<b>Board Mtng:</b> Erin presents the mid-year process
Nov 13	<b>S&amp;E Comm. Mtng:</b> Meet to discuss CIO Contract
Nov 17	Matt sends his Mid-Year Reflection to the board.
Nov 17 - Dec. 2	Board members review Matt's mid-year reflection before the board meeting.
Dec. 3	<b>Board Exec. Session:</b> Discuss Matt's reflection and share commendations, advice, and next steps.
Dec. 11	<b>S&amp;E Comm. Mtng:</b> Share with Matt the summary of the board meeting. If needed, continue CIO contract talk
Jan. 6, 2026	<b>Board Mtng:</b> Erin presents the mid-year report. <b>Board Exec. Session:</b> Contract negotiations for CIO Contract Renewal
Feb. 3, 2026	<b>Board Mtng:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>Vote 1: Approve Mid-Year CIO Report</b></li><li>● <b>Vote 2: Approve CIO Contract</b></li></ul>

# Mid-Year Commendations

## **Strategic Creativity & Adaptability**

*Demonstrated innovative thinking, including advancing the high school expansion strategy.*

## **Positive Community Impact**

*Strengthened school culture with increased parent engagement and involvement.*

## **Visible Results & Strong Work Ethic**

*Delivered tangible progress across initiatives with sustained effort.*

## **Commitment to Distributed Leadership**

*Continued focus on developing leadership capacity across the organization.*

## **Building Effective Shared Services**

*Successfully identified, hired, and empowered talent to strengthen shared services.*

# Strategic Focus, January - June '26

## NEAR-TERM PRIORITIES

### Homeschool Program

*Stabilize and strengthen as a core offering*

### Academic Excellence

*Define indicators and implement a monitoring dashboard*

### High School Move & Identity

*Clarify positioning, messaging, and scheduling implications*

### Fundraising

*Advance efforts aligned to sustainability and growth*

## INTENTIONALLY DEFERRED

### Preschool

*Paused pending resolution of key unknowns*

# Leadership Capacity & Risk Awareness

## Capacity Observations

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- Strong elementary leadership foundation
- Opportunity to strengthen problem-based learning at secondary level
- Opportunity to improve STEM-industry alignment
- Growth mindset present; consistency of execution remains a focus

## Risk Mitigation

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- Clearer role expectations and accountability structures
- Ongoing alignment as strategic plans move into implementation

## Why This Matters...

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*Leadership clarity is essential to sustaining STEM HR as a premier problem-based learning school and enabling future program growth*



# Board Role & Ongoing Support

## PROACTIVE BOARD ENGAGEMENT

- Board advocacy and networking are strategic assets
- Earlier engagement strengthens authorizer and district relationships
- Board-to-board connections support responsiveness and trust

## SUPPORT FOR THE CIO

- Continued thought partnership with the CIO Committee
- Periodic strategic check-ins to support change management
- Shared commitment to clarity, alignment, and sustainable growth

# Coversheet

## Draft Renewal CIO Employment Agreement

<b>Section:</b>	IV. KOSON Schools
<b>Item:</b>	E. Draft Renewal CIO Employment Agreement
<b>Purpose:</b>	Discuss
<b>Submitted by:</b>	
<b>Related Material:</b>	Presentation - Draft CEO Renewal Agreement.pdf

# CEO Employment Agreement

## Proposed Changes for Board Discussion:

- Change title from CIO to CEO
- Propose multi-year agreement
  - Add TABOR clause
- Update Compensation paragraph to address multi-year
- Discuss at will vs detailed termination clause

# Coversheet

## Vote for Consent Agenda Items

<b>Section:</b>	VI. Consent Agenda
<b>Item:</b>	A. Vote for Consent Agenda Items
<b>Purpose:</b>	Vote
<b>Submitted by:</b>	
<b>Related Material:</b>	Academic_ Excellence One Pager_2025-2026.pdf Growth Task Force One Pager 2025-26.pdf Policy_IT-Student Data Privacy_2022.pdf Policy_Electronic Device Monitoring_2022.pdf Staff HandBook V7.pdf

## Board Committee One Pager

**Committee Name:** Academic Excellence

**Year:** 2025-26

**Purpose:** The purpose of the Academic Excellence Committee is to measure the academic results of the organization and monitor progress against the goals laid out in the strategic plan, organization's charter, accountability plan, and annual CIO goals. In order to be effective, the board and CIO have a clear and shared definition of "academic excellence" for the organization. Academic excellence includes academic achievement and growth, stakeholder surveys, graduation rate, discipline data, attendance.

**Scope of Work:** The Academic Excellence Committee will monitor organizational outcomes against stated goals. When academic-outcome data is presented to the board, it is presented in a comparative context (e.g., against comparables of how the organization has performed in the past, how other schools in the district are performing, and how districts across the state are performing ) so that the board can assess the organization's overall strength of performance meaningfully

- Monitoring CMAS assessment data against the UIP and SPF developed and managed by the School Accountability Committee.
- Monitoring a data dashboard that includes other school assessment and achievement data:
  - Other school assessment and achievement data such as PSAT, SAT, and iReady results
  - AP and CE course participation and achievement
  - Attendance, truancy/ absenteeism, discipline data
  - Graduation rates
- Monitor surveys of family, student and staff satisfaction and retention (in partnership with School Accountability Committee, Student Advisory, and Teacher Advisory)
- Review and recommend updates to school academic calendar and bell schedule for future school years
- Review and recommend updates to academic policies in partnership with the Governance committee as necessary

**Appointments and Composition:** Committee chair and board members are determined as a result of annual Board training and/or summer working sessions and membership confirmed at a Board meeting at the start of each school year, typically August. Committee staff members are assigned/selected by CIO and Executive Director as needed to support committee work. Committee composition typically includes two Board members, CIO, Executive Director, and assigned staff.

**Roles and Responsibilities Members (chair, members, etc):** Chair - Ishmeet Kalra (Board member), Adelita Campbell (Board member), Matt Cartier (CIO), LynAnn Kovalesky (Executive Director), Michelle Gasser (Director of Curriculum and Instruction), Alisa Jodeh (SAC representative).

### Yearly Goals:

1. Create Committee one page purpose document
2. Create a clear and shared definition of "academic excellence" for the organization.
3. Provide recommendations for data to be included in monthly Data Dashboard presented to Board.
4. Review a [calendar of assessments. Review CMAS results and UIP/SPF proposed by SAC to the Board.](#) Review results of other assessments through monthly Data Dashboard review
5. Review family/student/staff surveys in partnership with SAC, Student Advisory, and Teacher Advisory. Monitor results

through annual/biannual staff surveys and through staff retention data

6. Identify Board Policies that require updates and timeline for review/approval in partnership with Board Governance committee
7. Make recommendations to include topics for annual Board training to be held in June
8. **Develop a chart to indicate what types of items are for approval vs. updating. ([RACI Chart](#) - Responsible For, Accountable, Consulted, Informed)**

#### **Annual Calendar:**

1. [UIP](#) Review CMAS results and UIP/SPF presented by SAC to the Board
2. Discuss Spring and Fall survey data and goals. Update board on satisfaction and retention goals.
3. Discuss calendar proposal/bell schedule/graduation date for next academic year
4. Discuss any policy updates that need to be reviewed for upcoming year
5. Establish and then annually Review/Update monitoring data for data dashboard
6. Update board on any programming updates that require Board approval by October
7. Review/update Board at meetings throughout the school year

#### **Scheduled Recurring Meetings: Monthly**

# Growth Task Force

## One Pager

**Organization:** Koson Schools

**Task Force Name:** Growth Task Force

**Year:** 2025-26

**Date Created:** 10.29.2025

**Most Recent Modification:**

**Scheduled Recurring Meetings:** 3rdth Monday of each month

**Members:** Chair - Kevin Leung, Board Members - Gina Wing CIO - Matt Cartier

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of the Growth Task Force is to serve as a strategic advisory group to the Koson Board, focused on supporting the long-term growth and impact of Koson Schools. The Task Force acts as a braintrust for expansion and innovation, providing guidance on business growth initiatives such as new programs, schools, partnerships that position Koson Schools as a destination for world class problem based, STEM education.

This group exists to advise, review, and recommend strategic growth priorities to the Board and senior leadership — ultimately serving at the pleasure of the Board.

### **Scope of Work:**

The Growth Task Force will:

- Support and refine a multi-year growth strategy aligned with the organization's mission and vision
- Serve as a collaborative forum for ideation, problem-solving, and continuous improvement in all growth-related initiatives
- Assess opportunities for campus expansion and facility development that enhance student access and experience including new academic programs and enrichment opportunities that reinforce and sustain the mission and vision.
- Strengthen industry and community partnerships that expand real-world learning and workforce development as it relates to opening new locations and supporting growth initiatives.
- Evaluate strategies to increase brand visibility, market position, and enrollment demand; providing insight into demographic trends, competitive landscape, and emerging innovations

### **Not in Scope of Work:**

- The Growth Task Force does not oversee or execute fundraising, donor solicitation, grants, or revenue-generating campaigns. Any fundraising initiatives remain under separate policies and governance structures.

### **Long Term Priorities:**

1. Clear pathway for network growth with intentional pacing and strategic priorities.
2. A reputation for future-ready excellence and premier programming that attracts families

and partners regardless of school or program offering

### **Yearly Priorities:**

1. Complete One Pager
2. Completion of 10 Year Master Plan
3. Set Growth Goals in Connection with Strategic Plan
  - a. Homeschool Enrichment Program
  - b. HS Relocation Project
  - c. Summer Camps
  - d. Begin work on developing preschool
  - e. Begin work on Student Showcase
  - f. Research and complete due diligence for Pueblo and other potential start-ups
4. Research other problem based STEM schools and charter networks in preparation for growth and programmatic improvements
5. Complete the RACI chart for the committee

### **Decision Making Process:**

The Task Force will operate by consensus.

### **Appointments and Composition:**

Task Force leadership and Board participation will be determined during annual Board sessions, with membership reaffirmed at the first Board meeting of each school year (typically July).

### **Membership will typically include:**

- 2 Board members
- CIO and/or designated members of the Executive Leadership Team
- Staff selected based on alignment to growth priorities (e.g., enrollment, community partnerships, communications)

### **Roles & Responsibilities**

<b>Role</b>	<b>Description</b>
Chair	Leads meetings, sets agenda with CIO, ensures recommendations move forward to the Board
Board Members	Provide governance perspective, ensure alignment to charter school mission & accountability
CIO	Accountable for execution of approved growth strategies
Task Force Members	Provide expertise, insights, and innovative thinking as part of the braintrust



**Growth Strategy RACI Matrix, RACI Chart — DRAFT (Need to review)****(R - Responsible, A - Accountable, C - Consult, I - Inform)**

<b>Strategic Growth Activities</b>	<b>Board</b>	<b>Growth Task Force</b>	<b>CIO</b>	<b>Executive Director (ED)</b>
Long-term strategic growth vision & goals	A	C	R	C
Approving major expansion decisions (new campuses, major facilities)	A	C	R	C
Strategic enrollment growth framework	C	C	A/R	R
Identification & prioritization of new pathways/program expansions	I	C	A	R
Market positioning & brand visibility strategies	I	C	A	R
Industry & community partnership expansion	I	C	A/R	A/R
Demographic & competitive landscape analysis	I	C	A	R
Innovation pilots & future-focused initiatives	I	C	A/R	R
Execution of approved strategic growth initiatives	I	CI	A	R
Data tracking & reporting dashboard for growth metrics	I	C	A/R	R
Enrollment marketing & recruitment operations	I	I	C	A/R
Stakeholder engagement (parents, staff, district, partners)	I	C	A	R
Communications aligned to growth strategy	I	C	A	R
Quarterly reporting on progress toward growth goals	A/R	C	R	R
Risk assessment (mission drift, resource strain, scalability)	A	C	R	C

## *Information Technology and Student Data Privacy Policy*

### STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH POLICY Information Technology and Student Data Privacy

#### I. PURPOSE

To support its educational mission, STEM School Highlands Ranch (STEM) may provide information technology (IT), such as computers, networks, Internet access, and email accounts, to its students. The STEM Board believes that IT should be used at STEM as a learning resource to educate and to inform, and that STEM has an obligation to teach its students to be responsible IT users.

Subject to this policy, STEM staff shall be free to select and implement IT which STEM, deems best furthers the STEM mission.

While parents and students themselves are ultimately responsible for student behavior at school and student use of STEM IT, STEM will make every reasonable effort to ensure that students use STEM IT appropriately and responsibly. To this end, STEM has implemented content filtering measures that direct student learning and restrict student access to inappropriate material, in accordance with applicable law.

Administrators, teachers, and staff have a professional responsibility to work together and with parents to help students develop the intellectual skills needed to evaluate and choose information sources, to identify information appropriate to the age and developmental levels of the students, and to evaluate and use information to meet their educational goals.

Because all STEM IT is owned, leased, or licensed by STEM, STEM is responsible for all content stored or retained on any STEM-owned IT device or on the STEM's networks (together referred to as "STEM IT activity"). STEM therefore has the right to monitor all School IT activity and students have a limited expectation of privacy in any information they access, receive, or create using or on STEM IT.

STEM IT may periodically fail or be interrupted, leading to loss of data or service interruption, and the School therefore makes no warranties of any kind related to its IT.

STEM shall develop and maintain operational policies addressing

- (1) monitoring and tracking of school-issued and student-owned computers;
- (2) student use, rights and responsibilities relating to computers used at STEM;
- (3) an "instructional technology" policy regarding use of technology in learning, including integrating technology for collaborative purposes, consistent with the STEM mission; and
- (4) the training of STEM staff with respect to student laptops and privacy, and the administration, oversight, and enforcement of such policies and regulations.

*Information Technology and Student Data Privacy Policy***II. POLICY**

The STEM Board authorizes the Executive Director to develop rules and procedures ("Administrative IT Policies") for staff and student use of technology which are consistent with this policy and the following standards.

1. All Administrative IT Policies shall comply with this policy.
2. Before adoption of monitoring software of any nature, STEM shall specifically identify the need for such software and whether there are less intrusive alternatives that can accomplish the same goal or need.
3. Student generated computer data ("SGCD") is data generated by a student while using a computer. Information or data contained on any such computer is "personal computer data" or "PCD". PCD includes specific "user logging information" ("ULI"). "Logging" is the process by which a system collects data about a computer network and the individuals using the network. STEM shall treat both SGCD and PCD as "records" as defined by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA").
4. Software that has the ability to collect PCD or SGCD shall not be used or implemented prior to the adoption of Administrative IT Policies governing use of such software.
5. STEM shall obtain informed consent from each student's parent or guardian prior to the installation of any software on any student-owned computer and prior to implementation of any technology which has the ability to collect or monitor PCD, so that prior to the giving of such consent students and their families are fully informed of the ability of any such software or technology to collect and monitor such data and to protect such data.
6. Any technology which permits viewing or collecting of PCD shall not permit such monitoring or collection beyond any legitimate educational interests.
7. Keystroke monitoring technology shall not be used or implemented in the absence of a specific legitimate educational purpose which cannot be achieved without this technology and without specific consent from each student's parent or guardian.
8. STEM shall not log or access PCD or SGCD other than for legitimate educational purposes. STEM shall maintain a record or log of all access or logging which records each instance of access, the data accessed, the identity of the accessing party, and the legitimate educational purpose for such access.
9. The exceptions allowing STEM staff to access PCD, other than where consent is given, shall be limited to situations where there is a reasonable suspicion of violation of either a law or school policy.
10. STEM staff shall complete training regarding technology and technology policies prior to use or implementation of any such technologies.
11. For students (a) who are unable or unwilling to bring personal computers to STEM or (b) whose parent or guardian do not consent to the use or installation of monitoring software on a personal computer, STEM shall use its best efforts to make necessary accommodations to ensure that such student's education is not adversely affected.
12. For computers issued by STEM, students and their parents shall be required to sign acceptable use agreements, which will detail appropriate and inappropriate use of STEM-owned computers.

### *Information Technology and Student Data Privacy Policy*

13. Remote monitoring of any kind, including activation of webcams, screen shots, audio, and video, shall be prohibited.

14. All procedures shall comply with applicable state and federal law.

B. In addition to rules specifically concerning IT, general policies, regulations, and rules governing student conduct apply to the use of IT. Violating such policies, regulations, or rules may result in the loss of the privilege to use some or all of the School's IT, discipline (which can include suspension and expulsion), reimbursement to the School for unauthorized charges or costs, civil legal proceedings, and referral to law enforcement authorities. The School may provide examples of prohibited uses of IT in handbooks or Administrative IT Policies.

#### Sources:

20 U.S.C. 1232, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

47 U.S.C. 201 et seq., Communications Decency Act of 1995

47 U.S.C. 231 et seq., Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 2000

C.R.S. 22-87-101 et seq., Children's Internet Protection Act

DCSD Policy JICD, Student Use of District Information Technology

Approved by the STEM School Board on 11/10/2022.  
(dd/mm/yyyy)

STEM School Highlands Ranch

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

Michelle Horne  
(Printed name, Board secretary)

Adopted: 2013

Revised: October 2022

## *Electronic Device Monitoring Policy*

### STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH POLICY Electronic Device Monitoring

#### I. PURPOSE

Electronic devices are vital learning tools in the STEM environment. In order to better facilitate oversight by teachers of student electronic device use, to eliminate the distraction and danger of unsupervised use of the Internet, to eliminate the disruption caused by the use of unauthorized or inappropriate applications during instruction time, and to enhance teacher instruction capabilities in the classroom setting, student electronic devices used in classrooms at STEM School Highlands Ranch (STEM) shall all have monitoring software installed. The software is not intended to monitor student electronic device activity outside of STEM's network at any time for any reason.

#### II. POLICY

##### Monitoring Capabilities & Restrictions

The STEM administration shall have authority to select the student computer monitoring software of its choice and revise the selection as new technologies become available. The software shall be installed directly onto all STEM-issued computers that are intended to be used by students and/or the student's personal computer(s). The STEM monitoring software shall only be active and functional while the computer is connected to the STEM network and/or during school hours.

While any computer is connected to the STEM network, the monitoring software should ideally allow STEM teachers or administrators to do the following:

- Give assessments and receive results instantly;
- Place the teacher screen onto student computers for close-up demonstrations and to lock the screen in place during instruction;
- Share student screens with classmates;
- Send messages to, and receive messages from, students;
- View and monitor student computer screens on their teacher or administrator computer;
- Control student computers from the teacher or administrator computer (for example, keyboard, mouse, screen);
- Allow or block certain web sites on student computers; . Allow or block applications on student computers;
- Send and receive files to/from students;
- View internet browsing history on student computers (subject to the restrictions set forth below).

## *Electronic Device Monitoring Policy*

Teachers and administrators shall not use Monitoring software to do the following:

- Monitor or review student computer use (including without limitation internet activities, keystrokes, application usage, or files) that occurs while the student computer is not at school;
- View a student using the student's computer camera;
- Monitor keystrokes at any time.

### Use of Monitoring Software on Personal Student Electronic Equipment

The use of personal student computers at STEM is a privilege, not a right. In order for a student to use a personal computer at STEM, the computer must have the monitoring software installed and regularly updated as deemed necessary by School administration. Students are not required to have the monitoring software installed on their personal computers that remain outside of the STEM facility. However, personal student computers without the monitoring software installed will not be allowed to be used in the classroom.

Monitoring software will not be installed on any personal student computer without the express and written consent of that student's parent or guardian using a monitoring software permission form. All STEM computers used by students shall have the monitoring software installed.

As noted above, the monitoring software shall not be used to monitor a student's computer use except when the student is on STEM grounds and is expected to be using the computer in conjunction with classroom instruction or school work. To the extent that the monitoring software can be configured or used to monitor or review computer use that occurs while the student is not on STEM grounds, STEM personnel shall not use such software to monitor or review student computer use (or track any history of such use), including internet browsing history and keystroke history relating to activities that occurred off STEM grounds.

The monitoring software may provide the capability for STEM personnel to remotely control a student's computer while on the School's network. School personnel shall not use this capability except to assist a student in the performance of his or her assignments and shall not use this capability without first providing specific notice to the student. Such notice may be provided verbally or in writing and immediately before the capability is engaged.

### *Electronic Device Monitoring Policy*

#### Use of Monitoring Software on STEM School Computers

Monitoring software shall be installed on all computers owned by STEM and intended to be used by students. As with personal student computers, the monitoring software on STEM computers shall not be used when the computer is not connected to the STEM network. In the rare and unlikely event that a student must take a STEM computer home, STEM shall only monitor the student's use of the STEM computer during school hours.

Approved by the STEM School Board on 11/10/2022.  
(dd/mm/yyyy)

STEM School Highlands Ranch

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

Michelle Horne  
(Printed name, Board secretary)

Adopted: 2013

Revised: October 2022





# STEM SCHOOL

## HIGHLANDS RANCH



# STAFF

# HANDBOOK

PUBLISHED OCTOBER 2025



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>4</b>	<b>Welcome/Introduction</b>	<b>26</b>	Attire and Personal Hygiene
<b>5</b>	Our Core Values	<b>27</b>	<b>Staff Ethics</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Employment at Will</b>	<b>27</b>	Check in/check Out
<b>7</b>	<b>Equal Opportunity and Commitment to Diversity</b>	<b>27</b>	Children of Staff and Faculty
<b>7</b>	Equal Opportunity	<b>27</b>	Family and Romantic Relationships in the Workplace
<b>8</b>	Commitment to Diversity	<b>28</b>	Personal Property
<b>8</b>	<b>Colorado POWR Act</b>	<b>29</b>	Political Activity
<b>9</b>	School's Response to Reports of Harassment or Discrimination	<b>29</b>	Substance Abuse Policy
<b>9</b>	Complaint and Whistleblower Policy	<b>29</b>	Smoking, Vaping, and Tobacco Use
<b>10</b>	POWR Act Record Keeping	<b>29</b>	Speaking to the Media
<b>10</b>	Examination of Personnel Files	<b>30</b>	Staff Transporting Students
<b>11</b>	<b>Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) and Reasonable Accommodation</b>	<b>30</b>	Relationships with Students
<b>11</b>	Religious Accommodation	<b>30</b>	<b>Staff Meetings</b>
<b>12</b>	Pregnancy Accommodation	<b>30</b>	<b>Visitors</b>
<b>13</b>	Lactation Accommodations	<b>31</b>	<b>Classroom/Campus Expectations and Policies</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>Equal Pay for Equal Work Act</b>	<b>31</b>	Confidential Information
<b>14</b>	Wage History and Disclosure of Pay Rate	<b>31</b>	Parent and Guardian Communication
<b>14</b>	Job Postings	<b>32</b>	Searches and Inspections
<b>15</b>	EPEW Job Opportunities Notices	<b>32</b>	<b>Equipment and Technology Responsibilities</b>
<b>17</b>	EPEW Post Selection Notices	<b>33</b>	Internet Usage
<b>18</b>	EPEW Recordkeeping Requirements	<b>35</b>	E-mail
<b>18</b>	<b>Job Application Fairness Act Harassment</b>	<b>35</b>	Protecting Student Information
<b>18</b>	<b>Harassment</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>Social Media Policy</b>
<b>18</b>	Types of Harassment	<b>36</b>	Common Code of Online Conduct
<b>19</b>	Sexual Harassment	<b>37</b>	PROPWA
<b>19</b>	Title IX Sexual Harassment	<b>37</b>	<b>General School Safety</b>
<b>20</b>	Managers and Supervisors	<b>38</b>	Weapons
<b>20</b>	Retaliation Prohibited	<b>38</b>	Injuries on the Job
<b>20</b>	Reporting Harassment	<b>38</b>	Workplace Violence
<b>20</b>	Investigation	<b>38</b>	Health and Safety Reporting
<b>21</b>	<b>Genetic Information Non-discrimination (GINA) Policy</b>	<b>39</b>	Protection of School Employees
<b>21</b>	<b>HIPAA Compliance</b>	<b>39</b>	Grievance Policy and Procedures
<b>21</b>	<b>Weather Policy</b>	<b>40</b>	Grievance Procedures
<b>22</b>	<b>Delayed Openings &amp; Virtual Learning Days</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>School Law</b>
<b>22</b>	Teacher Responsibilities-Virtual Learning	<b>42</b>	Child Abuse or Neglect Reporting
<b>23</b>	<b>Innovation Policy</b>	<b>42</b>	Definition of Child Abuse
<b>23</b>	<b>Job Descriptions</b>	<b>42</b>	Definition of Neglect
<b>23</b>	<b>Professional Responsibilities and Expectations</b>	<b>42</b>	Reporting Procedures
<b>23</b>	Professional Development and Career Growth	<b>43</b>	Family Education Rights and Privacy Act
<b>24</b>	Professional Evaluation	<b>44</b>	<b>Business Office: Purchasing, Travel Expenses</b>
<b>24</b>	Corrective Action and Discipline	<b>44</b>	Purchases
<b>25</b>	Separation of Employment	<b>44</b>	Reimbursement of Expenses
<b>25</b>	Job Abandonment/no Call No Show	<b>44</b>	Travel Expense Reporting
<b>25</b>	<b>Professionalism</b>	<b>44</b>	Per Diem
<b>25</b>	Attendance and Punctuality	<b>45</b>	Cash Advances
		<b>45</b>	Check Requests
		<b>46</b>	<b>Employment</b>
		<b>46</b>	Classification
		<b>46</b>	Workweek and Work Day
		<b>47</b>	Meal and Rest Periods
		<b>47</b>	Voting

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

48	Compensation	64	<b>Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)</b>
48	Compensation Dates	65	FMLA Notice and Leave Request Process
48	Recording Your Time	65	Certification of Need for FMLA Leave
48	Compensatory Time	66	Reinstatement
48	Remote Work	66	Spouse Aggregation
49	Snow Day Compensation	66	Alternative Employment
49	Mandatory Deductions From Paychecks	66	Interaction With State and Local Laws
49	Errors in Pay	67	Abuse of Leave
49	Overtime	67	Designation of Leave
49	Employment Offer Letters	67	Retaliation
50	Employee Privacy	67	<b>Colorado Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program (FAMLI)</b>
50	Video Surveillance	68	Review and Receipt Signed Acknowledgement
50	<b>Privacy-social Security Numbers</b>		
51	<b>Mandatory Qualifications</b>		
51	<b>Employment Renewal</b>		
52	<b>Criminal Activity/arrests</b>		
52	<b>Personnel Data Changes</b>		
52	<b>Outside Employment</b>		
53	<b>Benefits Continuation (COBRA)</b>		
53	<b>Employee Work Product and Intellectual Property</b>		
53	<b>Solicitation</b>		
54	<b>Gifts</b>		
55	<b>Employee Benefits I</b>		
55	Insurance		
55	Life, Short Term Disability, Long Term Disability and Accidental Death and Dismemberment		
55	Pera Retirement		
55	Worker's Compensation Insurance		
55	Employee Assistance Program (EAP)		
55	Right to Modify or Change Benefits		
56	<b>Time Away From Work</b>		
56	Sick/HFWA Time		
57	<b>Employee Benefits II</b>		
57	Public Health Emergency Leave		
59	<b>Employee Benefits III</b>		
59	HFWA Records		
59	The HFWA Precedence		
59	Personal Time		
60	Holidays		
60	Blackout Days		
60	Bereavement Leave		
62	Military Leave		
62	Jury Duty and Witness Duty Leave		
62	Leave for Victims of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking		
63	Crime Victim Leave		
63	Extended Leave		
63	Short Term Disability		

# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

## WELCOME TO THE STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH!

We are about to begin a very rewarding journey that will both challenge your skills as an educator and allow you to mold and shape the young minds of the future leaders of this country. We must never forget the importance of the work we are doing. Whether you are a teacher, office or business employee, custodian, or administrator, you have a tremendous influence on the development of our students. It is through daily interactions that our students understand how the professional world works and it is up to us to make sure we model our behaviors effectively.

Therein lies the purpose of this staff handbook. Rather than a list of rules and expectations, use this document as a guide to what it looks like when a dynamic system is operating at maximum efficiency. This document may be modified or improved at the discretion of the School as situations dictate. It is our belief that this handbook represents the qualities of a successful educational and professional environment.

This handbook cannot anticipate every situation nor answer every question about employment at STEM. This handbook is NOT an employment contract and DOES NOT create contractual obligations of any kind. While this handbook does not take the place of an employment agreement, it does provide a more detailed description of the relationship the School expects to develop with its employees.

This handbook is not intended to violate any local, state, or federal law. No provision or policy applies or will be enforced if it conflicts with or is superseded by any applicable requirement or prohibition contained in federal, state, or local law, or regulation. Furthermore, nothing in this handbook prohibits an employee from reporting concerns to, filing a charge or complaint with, or making lawful disclosures to, providing documents or other information to, or participating in an investigation or hearing conducted by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), or any other federal, state, or local agency charged with the enforcement of any law. The laws regulating employment change on almost an annual, and at times more frequent, basis, with new statutes, regulations and court rulings interpreting, changing or adding to the applicable body of legal rules. Whenever an applicable law requires something different than what is provided for in this handbook or the practices, agreements, policies, or similar rules of the School, the law shall take precedence.

This handbook supersedes any previous handbook issued by STEM School Highlands Ranch. The School may be referred to herein as the “employer” or “school” or “company” or other terms with a similar meaning.

If you have any questions about the content or interpretation of this handbook, contact the Human Resources department, your supervisor, or school administration .

Let’s work together as a team to lift each other up, support one another, and learn from one another. Welcome to a great year!

# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

## **Mission**

"Never Stop Innovating"

## **Our Vision**

We envision a world of exponential possibilities where every child develops the innate knowledge, skills, creativity, and character to thrive, lead, and succeed in an ever-changing future.

## **Our Goal**

Our goal is not only to prepare students to thrive in the constant world of reinvention, but to lead it.

## **OUR CORE VALUES**

### **Prioritize Students**

Every decision we make is focused on ensuring students thrive, lead, and succeed. The community that surrounds students exists for the purpose of their growth and development.

### **Build A Strong Community**

We are more than a school, we are a community. We all have equal value and seek to encourage each other to maximize our unique strengths, gifts, and passions. The true power of a charter school is in the strength of its community.

### **Do Right, Always**

Honesty, trust, and ethical decision-making guide our actions, fostering respect, accountability, and a safe environment, even in challenging circumstances or when recognition is absent.

### **Embrace Innovation**

Never Stop Innovating. Innovation thrives on continuous growth, bold problem-solving, and a willingness to push boundaries, transforming ideas into meaningful progress.

### **Take Steady Steps**

We play the long game with people and projects by implementing strategic planning, clear communication, systems and process, ample resources, and appropriate pacing - setting a strong foundation for a supportive environment for our community to thrive.

### **Lead With Care**

Dedicated to making a difference through personal ownership, care, and compassion, creates lasting impact in our students, colleagues, and community.

### **Elevate the Standard**

A commitment to continuous growth, where skills are refined, applied, and adapted to achieve the highest standards and empower everyone to reach their fullest potential.

### **Laugh Together**

Having fun makes the team work! Creating an environment where joy is encouraged. Strengthens our teams, fosters a positive culture, and fuels creativity, making everyone feel valued, energized, and motivated to contribute.



# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

## EMPLOYMENT AT WILL

Employment at the School is on an at-will basis unless otherwise stated in a written individual employment agreement signed by the Executive Director and authorized by the Board of Directors.

Employment on an at-will basis means that either the employee or the company may terminate the employment relationship at any time, for any reason, with or without notice.

Nothing in this employee handbook creates or is intended to create an employment agreement, express or implied. Nothing contained in this or any other document provided to the employee is intended to be, nor should it be, construed as a contract that employment or any benefit will be continued for any period of time. In addition, no company representative is authorized to modify this policy for any employee or to enter into any agreement, oral or written, that changes the at-will relationship.

Any salary figures provided to an employee in daily, monthly, or annual terms are stated for the sake of convenience or to facilitate comparisons and are not intended to and do not create an employment contract for any specific period of time. Nothing in this handbook or any other School document, policy, or practice should be understood as creating a contract, a guarantee of employment or continued employment, a right to termination only "for cause," a progressive discipline requirement, or any other promise that alters the at-will nature of the employment relationship. Any such promise or perception of a promise are disclaimed by the School, and any such assertion can only be effective if evidenced by a signed writing by an authorized agent of the School, meaning it must be approved by the School's Board of Directors.

Nothing in this statement is intended to interfere with, restrain, or prevent lawfully protected activities. Such activity includes employee communications regarding wages, hours, or other terms or conditions of employment. School employees have the right to engage in or refrain from such protected activities.



# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

## EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY

### EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

The School provides equal employment opportunities to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, creed, ancestry, national origin, citizenship, sex or gender (including pregnancy, childbirth, and pregnancy-related conditions), gender identity or expression (including transgender status), sexual orientation, marital status, religion, age, disability, genetic information, service in the military, or any other characteristic protected by applicable federal, state, or local laws and ordinances. Equal employment opportunity applies to all terms and conditions of employment, including hiring, placement, promotion, termination, layoff, recall, transfer, leave of absence, compensation, and training.

In compliance with the Colorado Crown Act, any references in any handbooks or policies of the School or practices related to prohibiting discrimination on the basis of an individual's race shall include a person's hair texture, hair type, hair length, or a protective hairstyle that is commonly or historically associated with race. Specifically, without limitation, such hairstyles as braids, locs, twists, tight coils or curls, cornrows, Bantu knots, Afros, and headwraps. The School expressly prohibits any form of unlawful employee harassment or discrimination based on any of the characteristics mentioned above. Improper interference with the ability of other employees to perform their expected job duties on the basis of a protected class status is absolutely not tolerated.

The School will endeavor to make a reasonable accommodation of an otherwise qualified applicant or employee related to an individual's physical or mental disability, sincerely held religious beliefs and practices, and/or any other reason required by applicable law, unless doing so would impose an undue hardship upon the School's operations.

Any employees with questions or concerns about equal employment opportunities in the workplace are encouraged to bring these issues to the attention of the Human Resources department. The company will not allow any form of retaliation against individuals who raise equal employment opportunity issues in good faith. Employees who feel they have been subjected to any such retaliation should bring it to the attention of Human Resources. The School will conduct a prompt and thorough investigation of all allegations of discrimination, harassment, retaliation, or any violation of applicable laws or this policy in an appropriate manner. The School will take appropriate corrective action, if warranted. The School prohibits retaliation against staff members who, in good faith, provide information about, complain about, or assist in the investigation of any complaint of discrimination or violation of applicable laws or this policy. Any employee who violates this policy commits misconduct for which appropriate discipline may be imposed, up to and including employment termination. If the person to whom an employee would report is involved in alleged discriminatory harassment, the employee is NOT required to report to that person and may instead go directly to the CIO, or to the President of the Board of Directors if the alleged offender is the CIO.

# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

Retaliation means adverse conduct taken because an individual, in good faith, reported an actual or a perceived violation of this policy, opposed practices prohibited by this policy, or participated in the reporting and investigation process described below. "Adverse conduct" includes, but is not limited to:

- Shunning and avoiding an individual who reports harassment, discrimination, or retaliation;
- Express or implied threats or intimidation intended to prevent an individual from reporting harassment, discrimination, or retaliation; or
- Denying employment benefits because an applicant or employee reported harassment, discrimination, or retaliation or participated in the reporting and investigation process.
- Other examples of retaliation include firing, demotion, denial of promotion, unjustified negative evaluations, increased surveillance, harassment and assault.

Complaints of discrimination should be filed according to the procedures described in the Harassment and Complaint Procedure.

## COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY

The School is committed to creating and maintaining a workplace in which all employees have an opportunity to participate and contribute to the success of the school and are valued for their skills, experience, and unique perspectives. This commitment is embodied in school policy and the way we do business at the School and is an important principle of sound business management.

## COLORADO POWR ACT

In accordance with the Colorado POWR Act, unlawful, employment-based harassment includes any unwelcome physical or verbal conduct or any written, pictorial, or visual communication directed at an individual or group of individuals because of that individual's or group's membership in, or perceived membership in, a legally protected class that is subjectively offensive to the individual alleging harassment and objectively offensive to a reasonable individual who is a member of the same protected class. Unlawful, employment-based harassment does not include petty slights, minor annoyances, and lack of good manners, unless they meet the definition of harassment when taken individually or in combination and under the totality of the circumstances. In addition to any other legally protected classes, "marital status" shall be considered a protected class, except that marital status may be considered in situations in which one spouse directly or indirectly would exercise supervisory, appointment, or dismissal authority or disciplinary action over the other spouse; one spouse would audit, verify, receive, or be entrusted with moneys received or handled by the other spouse; or one spouse has access to the employer's confidential information, including payroll and personnel records.

# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

In accordance with Colorado's POWR Act, conduct or communication constitutes unlawful, employment-based harassment if:

- Submission to the conduct or communication is explicitly or implicitly made a term or condition of the individual's employment.
- Submission to, objection to, or rejection of the conduct or communication is used as a basis for employment decisions affecting the individual.
- The conduct or communication has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with the individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Consideration of the nature of the work or the frequency with which harassment occurred in the past in determining whether certain conduct rises to the level of prohibited harassment, but the totality of the circumstances may include the frequency, duration, and location of the conduct or communication; the number of individuals involved; and the type or nature of the conduct or communication, and whether it is threatening, involves epithets or slurs, or reflects stereotypes.

## SCHOOL'S RESPONSE TO REPORTS OF HARASSMENT OR DISCRIMINATION

The School takes unlawful harassment and discrimination very seriously and is committed to having a program that takes reasonable steps to prevent harassment, deter future harassers, and protect employees from harassment. In all instances of reported unlawful, employment-based harassment, the School will take prompt, reasonable action to investigate or address alleged discriminatory or unfair employment practices, and will take prompt, reasonable remedial actions, when warranted, in response to complaints of discriminatory or unfair employment practices.

In addition to any other reporting mechanisms available to employees, if any employee has been the victim of or has knowledge that unlawful, employment-based harassment may have occurred, he or she is to report that information to his or her supervisor or to his or her supervisor's supervisor if the supervisor is the alleged offender. If the School leader is the alleged offender then the report may be made to the School's Board of Directors. Prompt and reasonable action will be taken to investigate and remedy, when warranted, in response thereto.

Retaliation against any employee who, in good faith, reports or participates in an investigation related to allegations of unlawful, employment based discrimination or harassment is prohibited.

## COMPLAINT AND WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY

The School requires STEM Board of Directors members, employees, contract laborers, consultants, students, parents and guardians to observe high standards of professional and personal ethics in the conduct of their duties and responsibilities. Law and District policies in accordance with the School charter contract.



# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

It is the School's policy to promptly investigate any complaint about the School as appropriate to the nature of the information in the complaint. This Complaint and Whistleblower Policy is intended to encourage and enable persons to raise serious concerns within the School prior to seeking resolution outside of the School.

The School's Compliance Officer is responsible for reporting to the CIO and HR Director the status of compliance matters on no less than a quarterly basis. This report will include the number of investigations currently open and number of investigations closed since prior report and other matters deemed appropriate.

## POWR ACT RECORD KEEPING

As required by the POWR Act, the School will preserve employment records for a period of five years from the later of the date the employer created or received the employment record, the date the personnel action giving rise to the personnel record occurred, or the final disposition of a charge of discrimination or related action. The term "personnel or employment record" includes the following:

- Requests for accommodation.
- Written and oral employee complaints of discrimination, harassment, or unfair employment practices.
- Submitted job applications.
- Records related to hiring, promotion, demotion, transfer, layoff, termination, rates of pay or other terms of compensation, and selection for training or apprenticeship.
- Records of training provided to or facilitated for employees.

Employers must maintain a designated repository of all written and oral complaints of discrimination, harassment, or unfair employment practices, including the date of the complaint, the identity of the complaining party, the identity of the alleged perpetrator, and the substance of the complaint.

## EXAMINATION OF PERSONNEL FILES

The School maintains a personnel file on each employee. Personnel files are the property of the School, and access to the information they contain is restricted. Generally, only administrators, the Executive Director, Human Resources, the Board of Directors, and the employee are allowed to review information in a personnel file. Employees who wish to review a specific document in their file should submit a request in writing to the appropriate Director, Principal, or Human Resources. With reasonable advance notice, employees may review such documents in the School's offices and in the presence of Human Resources or designee. The requirements of the Colorado Open Records Act ("CORA") will also be followed with regards to personnel files.

# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

## AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) AND REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

The School is committed to the fair and equal employment of individuals with disabilities under the ADA. It is the School policy to provide reasonable accommodation to qualified individuals with disabilities unless the accommodation would impose an undue hardship on the company. The School prohibits any harassment of, or discriminatory treatment of, employees or applicants based on a disability or because an employee has requested a reasonable accommodation.

In accordance with the ADA, reasonable accommodations will be provided to qualified individuals with disabilities to enable them to perform the essential functions of their jobs or to enjoy the equal benefits and privileges of employment. An employee or applicant with a disability may request an accommodation from the Human Resources department and should specify the limitations imposed by his or her disability, any appropriate medical documentation, and what accommodation is requested to perform the essential functions of the job and submit supporting documentation explaining the basis for the requested accommodation to the extent permitted and in accordance with applicable law. The company then will review and analyze the request, including engaging in an interactive process with the employee or applicant, to identify if such an accommodation can be made or if any other possible accommodations are appropriate. The School is not required to make your specific requested accommodation and is not required to provide any accommodation that would constitute an undue hardship on the School. If medical documentation regarding the disability and possible accommodations is requested, the employee is responsible for providing such information. All information obtained concerning the medical condition or history of an applicant or employee will be treated as confidential information, maintained in separate medical files, and disclosed only as permitted by law.

It is the School's policy to prohibit harassment or discrimination based on disability or because an employee has requested a reasonable accommodation. The School prohibits retaliation against employees for exercising their rights under the ADA or other applicable civil rights laws. Employees should use the procedures described in the Harassment and Complaint Procedure to report any harassment, discrimination, or retaliation they have experienced or witnessed.

## RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION

The School respects the religious beliefs and practices of all employees and will make, on request, an accommodation for such observances when a reasonable accommodation is available that does not create an undue hardship.

An employee seeking an accommodation because his or her religious beliefs or practices conflict with any aspect of his or her employment must submit a written request for the accommodation to the Human Resources department. An employee's written accommodation request shall include the type of religious conflict that exists and the employee's suggested accommodation.

# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

Following an employee's request for accommodation, Human Resources will engage in an interactive process with the employee to determine whether an accommodation is available that is reasonable and that would not create an undue hardship on the School.

It is the School's policy to prohibit harassment or discrimination based on religious beliefs or because an employee has requested a reasonable accommodation. The School prohibits retaliation against employees for exercising their rights to religious accommodation or other applicable civil rights laws. Employees should use the procedures described in the Harassment and Complaint Procedure to report any harassment, discrimination, or retaliation they have experienced or witnessed.

## **PREGNANCY ACCOMMODATION**

The School is committed to the policy of nondiscrimination on the basis of pregnancy under all applicable laws, including but not limited to Colorado's Pregnancy Fairness Act and the federal Pregnant Workers Fairness Act. To the extent required by applicable laws, the School will provide reasonable accommodation to pregnant staff members for known limitations related to pregnancy, childbirth, or other related medical conditions in accordance with the federal Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (PWFA). The accommodations outlined in this policy are for illustrative purposes only and are not comprehensive. The school will follow all the definitions and requirements of applicable laws, the PWFA, and related regulations.

Examples of potential reasonable accommodations include:

- Frequent breaks
- Sitting/standing
- Schedule changes, including part-time work and paid or unpaid leave
- Remote work
- Providing reserved parking
- Light duty assignments
- Making existing facilities accessible or modifying the work environment (e.g., moving an employee's work space or providing protective equipment)
- Job restructuring
- Temporarily suspending one or more essential job functions
- Acquiring or modifying equipment, uniforms or devices
- Adjusting or modifying examinations or policies

# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

If you require an accommodation, notify Human Resources. If the need for a particular accommodation is not obvious, or the school does not already have sufficient information, you may be asked to include relevant information such as:

- The reason you need an accommodation
- A description of the proposed accommodation
- How the accommodation will address limitations caused by pregnancy, or related medical conditions

The School will not require you to accept any accommodations without engaging in the interactive process to accurately understand your limitations and explore potential accommodations. The School is not required to make your specific requested accommodation and is not required to provide any accommodation that would constitute an undue hardship on the School. The School will not deny a job or other employment opportunities to a qualified employee or applicant based on the person's need for a reasonable accommodation; require an employee to take leave if another reasonable accommodation can be provided that would let the employee keep working; retaliate against an individual for reporting or opposing unlawful discrimination under the PWFA or participating in a PWFA proceeding (such as an investigation); or interfere with any individual's rights under the PWFA.

If unpaid leave is provided as a reasonable accommodation, it will run concurrently with leave under the federal Family and Medical Leave Act and/or any other leave where permitted by law.

The School will comply with state or local laws that provide additional protections beyond the PWFA.

## LACTATION ACCOMMODATIONS

The School will provide a reasonable amount of break time to accommodate employees who wish to express breast milk for their child. The School shall provide employees who are lactating with breaks as defined by the individual, and a clean, private space (other than a restroom) for milk expression that is in close proximity to their work or study area. Note that Colorado state law supports up to two years after birth, but the School will continue to provide lactation support as long as desired by the employee. Where applicable, unpaid break time, or permitting an employee to use paid break time or mealtime, shall be allowed for the employee to express milk. The supervisor and employee shall work together cooperatively to establish times for the employee to express milk as often as needed and determined by the employee.

# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

## EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK ACT

The School will not discriminate between employees on the basis of sex, or on the basis of sex in combination with another legally protected class status, by paying an employee of one sex a wage rate less than the rate paid to an employee of a different sex for substantially similar work, regardless of job title, based on a composite of skill; effort, which may include consideration of shift work; and responsibility, unless the basis for such disparity is one of the following, reasonably applied reasons, which account for the entire wage differential:

- The School's seniority system;
- The School's merit system;
- The School's system that measures earnings by quantity or quality of production;
- The geographic location where the work is performed;
- Education, training, or experience to the extent that they are reasonably related to the work in question; or
- Travel, if the travel is a regular and necessary condition of the work performed

## WAGE HISTORY AND DISCLOSURE OF PAY RATE

In determining an employee's pay the School will not inquire about or rely on the wage history of the prospective employee. The School will not discriminate or retaliate against prospective employees for failing to disclose their wage history. The School will not discharge, discipline, discriminate against, coerce, intimidate, threaten, or interfere with an employee or other person because the employee or person inquired about, disclosed, compared, or otherwise discussed the employee's pay rate.

## JOB POSTINGS

The School will disclose in all job postings, including but not limited to "job opportunities" as described herein, a good faith description of the hourly rate or salary compensation (or a range thereof, with lower and upper limits) that the School plans to pay for the position; a general description of any bonuses, commissions, or other forms of compensation that are being offered for the job; and a general description of all employment benefits the School is offering for the position, including health care benefits, retirement benefits, any benefits permitting paid days off (including sick leave, parental leave, and paid time off or vacation benefits), any other benefits that must be reported for federal tax purposes, but not benefits in the form of minor perks; and how and when to apply, except that if the School discloses that it accepts ongoing applications, no deadline is required. An application deadline may be extended if the original deadline was a good-faith expectation of what the deadline would be, and the posting is promptly updated with any deadline extension.

# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

The School may ultimately pay more or less than the posted range, so long as the posted range was the School's good-faith and reasonable estimate of the range of possible compensation at the time of the posting.

## EPEW JOB OPPORTUNITIES NOTICES

The School will make reasonable efforts to announce, post or otherwise make known, in writing, any job opportunities to all current employees (even if they aren't interested, eligible, or qualified) on the same calendar day and prior to making a selection decision. Applications may only be open to employees who meet the minimum qualifications, and the School may screen applicants based on that criteria.

The School will meet its notice/posting duty when it is "considering" filling a vacancy, whether the School is considering multiple candidates (e.g., through open applications) or just one person (e.g., a promotion or material change in duties) – whether or not the School uses a formal process (interviewing, external posting, etc.) or informal process.

A "job opportunity" means a current or anticipated vacancy for which the School is considering a candidate or candidates or interviewing a candidate or candidates or that the School externally posts.

1. A "Vacancy" can be either a Vacated Position or Newly Created Position, defined as follows:
2. A "Vacated Position" the School intends to fill that is open, or held by a departing employee. A "Newly Created Position," which can be either a) when an entirely new position is created, or b) when an existing position is changed enough to make it a different position. Changes creating a different position include changing authority, duties, or opportunities materially, with or without title or pay changes; or changing both title and pay. Changing title alone, without changing authority, duties, or opportunities materially, or changing pay alone, without changing authority, duties, or opportunities materially, is not a Newly Created Position. Career Development or a Career Progression are not a Newly Created Position.

The School is not required to meet a notice/posting requirement for career progression, career development, acting-interim-temporary positions, or confidential replacements of current employees unaware of their separation.

"Career progression" means a regular or automatic promotion based on time in a specific role or other objective metrics that an employee satisfies without competition.

"Career development" means a promotion to update an employee's job title or to compensate the employee to reflect work performed or contributions already made by the employee, such that an employee's own duties simply grow enough to change their existing position.



# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

To qualify as a “career development” the existing work or contributions need not be the employee’s official duties — and usually aren’t; but the existing work or contributions can’t already be part of a different position the employee is being promoted into, because then the employee is being moved into another position’s vacancy, not just having their own position grow.

“Acting-interim-temporary” positions can only be for up to nine months, unless the same position was held by an acting-interim-temporary hire for seven months of the previous year. Other employees must be notified if an acting-interim-temporary hire is for a position not scheduled to end in nine months.

“Confidential replacements of current employees unaware of their separation” means the School will not provide notice when required to replace a current employee who (for reasons other than to avoid notice duties), isn’t yet aware of their coming separation, but if the confidentiality need ends (e.g., the departing employee learns of the separation), the School will promptly comply with all notice requirements. If any employees are told of the job opportunity, all employees who meet the minimum qualifications or have jobs “substantially similar” to any employees being told of the opportunity will also be told.

The School may disclose the planned termination to employees with bona fide Human Resources, decision-making, or deliberative roles in a termination, or in hiring a replacement employee, without triggering the duty to tell other employees.

Job opportunity notices will include the job title, compensation and benefits, means by which employees may apply for the position, and the anticipated closing date for applications. One notice can cover multiple opportunities, if employees get it in time to express interest in any of them. If a specific person is expected to be selected, the School may (but isn’t required to) identify the expected selection, as long as it still notifies all employees in time for them to apply before a decision is finalized. The School need not post these notices externally, but still must give internal notice of job opportunities (to all employees, with required disclosures) before the hiring decision.

These notices will be made for a minimum period long enough that employees can reasonably access it and apply, and will be made, at a minimum, available internally to employees, in the following manner:

1. In writing (which can be electronic, such as an email or intranet posting);
2. By any method that reaches all employees and lets employees know where to find the notice — and if a method that doesn’t reach all employees is used (like an online post inaccessible to employees without internet), then alternate methods must also be used to assure notice to all;
3. To all employees on the same calendar day; and
4. Enough in advance of a hiring or promotion decision that employees receiving notice may apply.

# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

If notice is posted rather than provided to employees, it must be posted for long enough that employees can reasonably access it. The requirement to notify all employees on the same calendar day doesn't prohibit the School from notifying certain employees in advance of a general notice, for example, if the School assesses a particular employee's interest in a promotion before notifying other employees of the opportunity.

## EPEW POST SELECTION NOTICES

The School shall make reasonable efforts to announce, post, or otherwise make known, within 30 calendar days after a candidate selected begins working, the following information to, at a minimum, the employees with whom the School intends the selected candidate work with regularly (meaning those who, as part of their job responsibilities, either communicate or collaborate about work at least monthly; or have a reporting relationship, i.e., supervisor/ supervisee):

1. The name of the candidate selected;
2. The selected candidate's former job title if selected while already employed by the School;
3. The selected candidate's new job title;
4. Information on how employees may demonstrate interest in similar job opportunities in the future, including identifying individuals or departments to whom the employees can express interest in similar job opportunities.

The post selection notifications may be provided individually for each hire, or by grouping all hires within the past 30 days together into one post-selection notice. If an employee informs the School in writing, on his/her own initiative, and voluntarily that he/she believes disclosing his/her name and/or former job title would put his/her health or safety at risk, the School will not disclose those items. Employees need not disclose what the risk is, or why they believe there is a risk, and the School will not interfere with or retaliate against an employee who exercises this right. If this opt-out is exercised, the School will still provide a post-selection notice to notify employees that the position is filled and to inform employees on how to express interest in future job opportunities.

For positions with career progression, the School will disclose and make available to all eligible employees the requirements for career progression and details of each position, including the requirements for career progression, terms of compensation, benefits, full-time or part-time status, duties, and access to further advancement. Career progression notices will be provided, either online or in hard copy (i.e. in an employee's new hire packet would suffice, or a company intranet page accessible by all eligible employees), to eligible employees, meaning those in the position that, when the requirements in the notice are satisfied, would move from their position to another position listed in the notice. The School may comply by providing this information to a broader range of, or all, employees. Career progression notices will be made available to eligible employees shortly after beginning any position within a career progression.

Nothing in this policy will be construed to require a violation of a selected candidate's privacy rights under applicable local, state, or federal law or in a manner that would place the candidate's safety at risk.



# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

## EPEW RECORDKEEPING REQUIREMENTS

The School will keep records of each employee's job description and compensation, including salary or hourly wage, benefits, and all bonuses, commissions, and other compensation for the duration of the employment plus two years after the end of employment. The records kept must include any changes to job description or compensation over time, job descriptions and wage rate history for each employee.

## JOB APPLICATION FAIRNESS ACT

Pursuant to the Job Application Fairness Act, the School will not include questions on a job application or ask job applicants to disclose their age, which includes not asking their: date of birth; dates of attendance at an educational institution; dates of graduation from an educational institution; or other inquiries similarly likely to disclose or create an inference as to an applicant's age, except the School may request additional application materials like licensure, certifications, school transcripts, or other requisite evidence of experience or qualifications. However, if the School does so, it must notify applicants that they may redact age-related information (i.e. dates of school attendance or graduation, dates of licensure, etc.). Nothing in this policy will restrict the School's ability to verify an applicant's compliance with age requirements imposed by or pursuant to: a bona fide occupational qualification related to public or occupational safety; a federal statute or regulation; or a state or local statute or regulation based on a bona fide occupational qualification.

## HARASSMENT

The goal of the School is to provide a workplace free from tensions involving matters that do not relate to the education of our students. In particular, an atmosphere of tension created by non-work-related conduct, including ethnic, racial, disability, religious, sexual or gender-related, or any other protected class status remarks, animosity, or unwelcome sexual advances or other such conduct that does not belong in the workplace. As such, the School will not tolerate any form of harassment related to any protected class. It will not tolerate retaliation for refusing unwelcome, harassing overtures, for reporting instances of harassment, or for providing statements or evidence related to alleged harassment.

## TYPES OF HARASSMENT

Harassment may be verbal (epithets, derogatory statements, slurs, innuendo), physical (unwelcome touching, assault, gestures, physical interference with one's work), or visual (posters, drawings, faxes, e-mail, texts). It may involve, but is not limited to, unwelcome sexual advances or unwelcome invitations to participate in offensive conduct. Harassment may originate from employees, supervisors, students, parents, or others visiting the School. In whatever form and from whatever source, it is forbidden. Questions about this policy should be directed to the Executive Director, Human Resources, Director, or Principal for guidance and assistance. The School, as a general manner, will not tolerate harassment of any kind but there is a legal difference if the harassment is on the basis of an individual's membership in a protected class.

# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

## SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, when:

- Submission to such conduct is made explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment.
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for decisions affecting an individual's employment.
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.
- All employees are expected to conduct themselves in a professional and businesslike manner at all times. Conduct which may violate this policy includes, but is not limited to, sexually implicit or explicit communications whether in:
  - Written form, such as cartoons, posters, calendars, notes, letters, e-mails.
  - Verbal form, such as comments, jokes, foul or obscene language of a sexual nature, gossiping or questions about another's sex life, or repeated unwanted requests for dates.
  - Physical gestures and other nonverbal behavior, such as unwelcome touching, grabbing, fondling, kissing, massaging, and brushing up against another's body.

This policy applies to all employees, including directors, principals, and staff, as well as non-employees such as students, visitors, customers, clients, vendors, consultants, contractors, volunteers, etc.

## TITLE IX SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The School does not discriminate on the basis of sex and prohibits sex discrimination, including sexual harassment, in any education program or activity that it operates, as required by Title IX and its regulations, including in admission and employment. Inquiries about Title IX may be referred to the School's Title IX Coordinator, the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, or both.

The School's Title IX Coordinator can be contacted at [compliance@stemk12.org](mailto:compliance@stemk12.org). You can also send a written statement to: the School Highlands Ranch Attn: Compliance Officer, 8773 S Ridgeline Blvd. Highlands Ranch, CO. 80129.

# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

## MANAGERS AND SUPERVISORS

Managers and supervisors must deal expeditiously and fairly when they have any knowledge of protected class harassment within their departments, whether or not there has been a written or formal complaint. They must:

Take all complaints or concerns of alleged or possible harassment seriously no matter how minor or who is involved.

Immediately report all incidents to their director, principal, or Human Resources so that a prompt investigation can occur. If the director or principal is involved in the alleged harassment, the report should be made to Human Resources.

Take any appropriate action to prevent retaliation or prohibited conduct from recurring during and after any investigations or complaints.

Managers and supervisors who knowingly allow or tolerate protected class harassment or retaliation, including the failure to immediately report such misconduct, are in violation of this policy and subject to discipline.

## RETALIATION PROHIBITED

No employee will be subject to retaliation, intimidation, or discipline because of making a good faith complaint of harassment, reporting harassment, or participating in a harassment investigation.

## REPORTING HARASSMENT

Every employee has the right and is encouraged to tell another to stop behavior that the employee believes to be discriminatory, harassing and/or offensive. Persons so told should comply immediately and graciously with such requests or seek direction from their supervisor.

If the employee believes that they have experienced harassment, or believes that they have witnessed harassment, the Employee must immediately notify Human Resources, Executive Director, or CIO. If the CIO is the alleged offender a report may be made to the Board of Directors.

Employees should not assume the administration is already aware of the situation. Employees should not assume it is someone else's duty to report.

An employee who knowingly makes a false, meritless, or malicious claim of harassment shall be subject to discipline, up to and including termination.

## INVESTIGATION

To preserve the highest level of confidentiality, Human Resources, Executive Director, Principal, or department director who is not involved in the alleged harassment, may promptly and objectively investigate. If the results of the investigation confirm that harassment has occurred, appropriate discipline, including termination, may be imposed at the sole discretion of the School.

# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

## GENETIC INFORMATION NON-DISCRIMINATION (GINA) POLICY

The Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 (GINA) prohibits covered employers from requesting or requiring genetic information of an individual or an individual's family member, except as specifically allowed by this law. To comply with GINA, the School asks that employees not provide any genetic information when responding to a request for medical information for purposes of leaves of absence or otherwise.

"Genetic information" as defined by GINA, includes an individual's family medical history, the results of an individual's or family member's genetic tests, the fact that an individual or an individual's family member sought or received genetic services, and genetic information of a fetus carried by an individual or an individual's family member or an embryo lawfully held by an individual or family member receiving assistive reproductive services. If you have any questions about the information to be provided, please contact the Human Resources department.

## HIPAA COMPLIANCE

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) provides rights and protections for participants and beneficiaries in group health plans. HIPAA includes protections for coverage under group health plans that limit exclusions for pre-existing conditions; prohibit discrimination against associates and dependents based on health status; and allow a special opportunity to enroll in a new plan to individuals in certain circumstances. HIPAA also requires that health insurance providers/administrators limit the release of health information to the minimum necessary required for care, or as outlined in the group health plan's Privacy Notice.

## WEATHER POLICY

At STEM School Highlands Ranch, the safety of our students, staff, and families is a top priority. In the event of inclement weather, the Executive Director has the authority to implement a virtual learning day, delayed start, or full school closure as needed.

The Executive Director may choose to follow the closing procedures of the Douglas County Highlands Ranch Feeder Area or make decisions independently to best support the STEM community.

# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

## DELAYED OPENINGS & VIRTUAL LEARNING DAYS

If Douglas County School District announces a Late Start due to snow and/or icy road conditions, STEM may implement a Virtual Learning Day instead.

- On Virtual Learning Days, 20% of instruction in each class will be conducted synchronously (live online instruction).
- For elementary students, 20% of synchronous learning will take place specifically in Math and ELA.
- The school building will be closed to students on these days.
- Families will be notified via email and/or Finals site text messaging.

If a Late Start is called due to cold temperatures, STEM may:

- Proceed with a normal school day (standard start and end times), or
- Implement a delayed start, depending on the specific circumstances.

We encourage all employees to regularly update their contact information and follow school communications for timely updates during inclement weather.

**Snow Day:** When DCSD declares a snow day, the School building will typically be closed. No assignments or classes will be held.

**Essential Workers:** Certain staff members designated as essential workers may be required to report to work on snow days or during Virtual Learning Days, as determined by school leadership. Essential workers will be notified of their status and expectations in advance.

### Teacher Responsibilities on Virtual Learning Days:

1. Prepare and circulate Virtual Learning Day assignments in advance.
2. Conduct synchronous learning sessions as scheduled.
3. Be available during regular school hours to answer student questions and provide support.
4. Code student work submitted on Virtual Learning Days as "activity."
5. Provide additional time (a few days) for students without internet access to complete assigned work.

### Communication:

- The School will follow DCSD's announcements regarding school closures and delays, unless otherwise decided by the Executive Director..
- Staff should check the DCSD website ([www.dcsdk12.org](http://www.dcsdk12.org)) for official announcements.
- The School will also communicate any closures or Virtual Learning Day implementations through our standard communication channels.
- Any decisions that differ from DCSD will be clearly communicated to all staff and families.

# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

This policy ensures that learning can continue even when weather conditions prevent in-person attendance, maintaining educational continuity and safety for all students and staff, while allowing for necessary flexibility in unique situations.

## INNOVATION POLICY

At the School, we believe that innovation thrives on open communication and diverse perspectives. We actively encourage all employees to share their ideas for organizational improvement with any school leader, not just their direct supervisor. Whether you have a suggestion for enhancing our educational programs, improving operational efficiency, or creating a better work environment, your input is valuable. Feel free to communicate your ideas in person, via email, or by phone to any member of the leadership team or the Human Resources department. Your creativity and insights play a crucial role in our continuous growth and success as an educational institution.

## JOB DESCRIPTIONS

The School attempts to maintain a job description for each position. If you do not have a current copy of your job description, you should request one from your supervisor.

Job descriptions prepared by the School serve as an outline only and are subject to modification by the School at any time for any reason. Each employee is expected to comply with the directives of the School, regardless of what is outlined in a job description. Due to School needs, you may be required to perform job duties that are not within your written job description. Furthermore, the School may have to revise, add to, or delete from your job duties per School needs. On occasion, the School may need to revise job descriptions with or without advance notice to staff members, and the School may do so at its discretion. If you have any questions regarding your job description or the scope of your duties, please speak with your Supervisor

## PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXPECTATIONS

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CAREER GROWTH

At the School, career research and development is essential to upholding the mission and vision of the School. It is the goal of the School to provide professional development opportunities that strengthen our commitment to quality education, create opportunities for innovation, enhance job satisfaction, and increase effectiveness in the classroom. Most importantly, impactful Professional Development measures its success by the success of the school's students and by whether or not the professional development alters instructional practice in a manner that boosts student achievement.

Each year, every employee at the School will participate in a year long Professional Development program. Teachers will identify their goals and objectives needed for professional growth, specific strategies for reaching these goals, and concrete assessment metrics to evaluate success. These goals must focus on both individual and school-wide priorities.



# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

All goals must aim to increase student academic achievement, create a positive learning environment, and must be informed by data collected and analyzed by the school. Therefore, improvement objectives must include specific and measurable goals for advancement in fulfilling the school's mission. Intentional and active staff participation in our professional development is expected to meet the practical needs and strengths of our employees, and to ensure that our professional development program is directly connected to the daily work of teachers and students.

At the start of each academic year, employees will meet with their supervisors to set their goals for instruction and/or professional improvement. These goals will drive our school wide professional development for the year. The Teacher Growth and Support Team will actively assist teachers in achieving their professional and student learning goals.

## PROFESSIONAL EVALUATION

Communication between employees and supervisors or managers is very important. Discussions regarding job performance are ongoing and often informal. Employees should initiate conversations with their supervisors if they feel additional ongoing feedback is needed.

Generally, formal performance reviews are conducted annually. These reviews include a written performance appraisal and discussion between the employee and the supervisor about job performance and expectations for the coming year.

## CORRECTIVE ACTION AND DISCIPLINE

The School expects and is committed to supporting high quality conduct from employees. If an employee does not meet the School's professional expectations, including attendance, punctuality, personal conduct, and general compliance with the Schools policies and procedures, disciplinary action and/or dismissal may result.

Disciplinary action may call for any number of actions, including without limitation, verbal warnings, written warnings, corrective action plans, suspension, or termination of employment, depending on the severity of the problem and judgment of School Administration.

Employee discipline does not follow prescribed steps, progressions, or timeline. Instead, each situation is analyzed independently with factors like employee performance, action, behavior, and/or impact determining the appropriate disciplinary action. Consideration will be given to the seriousness of the offense, the employee's intent and motivation, harm caused, and the environment in which the offense took place.

# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

## SEPARATION OF EMPLOYMENT

Should you decide to leave your employment with us, we ask that you send a letter of resignation to [HR@stemk12.org](mailto:HR@stemk12.org) and your supervisor, as soon as possible, in order to supply ample time for transition that best supports the continued support of the School students. Your thoughtfulness will be appreciated and may be noted favorably should you ever wish to re-apply for employment with the School. Notice allows sufficient time to calculate final pay and other monies and benefits to which an employee may be entitled.

In most cases, Human Resources will conduct an exit meeting on or before the last day of employment to collect all company property and to discuss final pay. If applicable, information regarding benefits continuation through the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) will be sent to the employee's home address.

## JOB ABANDONMENT/NO CALL NO SHOW

An employee who is absent for a period of four days without notifying their direct Supervisor will be considered to have resigned without notice effective on the initial date of absence. Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis and at the sole discretion of the administration.

## PROFESSIONALISM

### ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

To maintain a safe and productive work environment, the School expects employees to be reliable and punctual in reporting for scheduled work. On occasion, the administration may request a later departure time to accommodate a one-time meeting, event, or school duty. Staff must also attend other meetings, conferences, and duties as typically inherent in their position or as specifically requested by the School.

Employees who are going to be absent, late, or need to leave work during their usual work time must contact their supervisor as soon as possible prior to the start of the work day. Absenteeism, tardiness, and early departure place a burden on other employees and on the School. Excessive absenteeism, tardiness, and early departure may result in disciplinary action, including termination of employment.



# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

## ATTIRE AND PERSONAL HYGIENE

All School staff are expected to dress professionally as models for students of successful and serious professionals. An employee's appearance reflects both on the employee as an individual AND also the School. The School expects its employees to take pride in their appearance and achieve a positive educational and business-like image when representing the School.

It is the intent of the School to establish general guidelines for dress. Employees are asked to comply with the following principles in choosing work apparel that is appropriate to the work being performed:

- Maintain a neat and clean appearance, keeping dress modest and moderately conservative. Clothing should be in good repair.
- Maintain a business/professional appearance and dress in a manner consistent with work responsibilities.
- Dress as perceived to be appropriate in an educational organization with the School's defined educational objectives.
- Examples of clothing not allowed include: jeans with rips or tears, hats, sweatpants or workout gear, military attire, leggings or yoga pants that are not covered by appropriate tops/dresses, tank tops, muscle shirts, excessively short skirts, spaghetti strap dresses/tops, midriff tops. The omission of a specific item or appearance standard does not automatically permit its wear.
- Employees whose work routinely requires that they perform physical activity may wear appropriate casual attire that is in good repair, including jeans and closed-toe casual shoes such as athletic shoes. (For example, the PE teacher could wear athletic shoes and warm-up suits.)
- Employees should always consider safety in choosing their work attire.
- Exceptions: Staff are free to wear jeans. Dress must be "business casual" with jeans, with the exception of College Fridays once per month and the School Spirit Days.

**Personal Hygiene:** All employees are expected to maintain appropriate personal hygiene standards, including:

1. Cleanliness: Regular bathing or showering to avoid body odor.
2. Oral hygiene: Clean teeth and fresh breath.
3. Grooming: Well-groomed hair, including facial hair. Hair should be clean and neatly styled.
4. Fragrances: Use of perfumes, colognes, or other scented products should be minimal and not overpowering, as some individuals may be sensitive to strong scents.
5. Nails: Clean and well-maintained.

# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

## STAFF ETHICS

### CHECK IN/CHECK OUT

Should the Employee need to leave the School building during his/her assigned lunch or planning period, the Employee must sign out and sign back in at the main office.

### CHILDREN OF STAFF AND FACULTY

All children of employees will be expected to uphold the same behavioral standards and procedures as their student peers. Faculty or staff children must be supervised by their parent or a designated adult at all times, including if the children are in School before or after standard School hours. Please be aware of your role as a parent and staff member. Do not make requests of other staff members that you would not make of a teacher in another school. The School adult community needs specific times and places dedicated exclusively to their adult work and to adult conversations. As such, children, including children of faculty and staff, are prohibited from being in either the copy room or the faculty lounges.

### FAMILY AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS IN THE WORKPLACE

The School welcomes employment applications from current employees' family members and such applicants may be considered for employment on the basis of qualifications. However, immediate family members or individuals in an amorous relationship with a current employee may not be hired if employment would create a direct or indirect supervisor/subordinate relationship between the new employee and current employee, as such would constitute a conflict of interest, unless adjustments (at a minimum that the supervisor will not participate in any decisions or evaluations that impact the employment or pay of the subordinate) can be made to the satisfaction of the CIO or Board President (if the CIO is involved in the conflict) to resolve the conflict of interest.

Similarly, employees may not be assigned, transferred, or promoted to a position if it will create a direct or indirect supervisor/subordinate relationship between employees who are immediate family members or in an amorous relationship. The creation, even for current employees, of a direct or indirect supervisor/subordinate relationship of this kind constitutes a conflict of interest.

Employees are required to disclose to the Principal and/or CIO any immediate family relationship or amorous relationship with anyone who is in their direct or indirect supervisor/subordinate chain of command as soon as possible after the relationship causing the conflict of interest is created. If the relationship involves the CIO, he or she must report the conflict of interest to the President of the School Board of Directors, who will then ensure the conflict of interest is properly resolved.

Employees who become immediate family members or enter into an amorous relationship after being hired may continue their employment, and do not have to disclose it, until it involves a direct or indirect supervisor/subordinate relationship.

# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

If a supervisor/subordinate relationship between immediate family members or employees in an amorous relationship should occur, attempts may be made to adjust the supervisor/subordinate relationship to resolve any conflicts of interest. If adjustments (at a minimum that the supervisor will not participate in any decisions or evaluations that impact the employment or pay of the subordinate) cannot be made to the satisfaction of the CIO or Board President, one of the individuals may be subject to reassignment or termination.

For purposes of this policy the term “immediate family” includes: spouse/civil union partner, parent, child, sibling, in-law with respect to each of these categories, aunt, uncle, niece, grandparent, grandchild, and their respective spouses, parents, and children.

For purposes of this policy an “amorous relationship” exists when two individuals mutually and consensually understand a relationship to be romantic and/or sexual in nature.

While not prohibited, the School strongly discourages amorous relationships between an employee and the parent of a student because such relationships, and/or the dissolution of such relationships, have the potential to create conflicts of interest or the potential for the perception by others that there is favoritism, disfavoritism, or bias in decisions affecting the student. If there is such an amorous relationship, or the dissolution of such relationship, the employee must notify his/her supervisor or HR. The School may take actions, like reassigning a student to a different class or having an employee recuse from any decision-making regarding the student, to the extent feasible and appropriate to minimize any potential conflicts or perceptions of a conflict of interest or bias. Whether the School takes such actions or not, employees are required to maintain expectations of professionalism, comply with any applicable conflicts of interest policies, and act in a manner that is fair, ethical, and objective.

In accordance with the requirements of the POWR Act in implementing this policy, an employee’s “marital status” shall be considered a protected class, except that marital status may be considered in situations in which one spouse directly or indirectly would exercise supervisory, appointment, or dismissal authority or disciplinary action over the other spouse; one spouse would audit, verify, receive, or be entrusted with moneys received or handled by the other spouse; or one spouse has access to the employer’s confidential information, including payroll and personnel records.

## PERSONAL PROPERTY

Employees should not bring large sums of money, jewelry, or other valuables to work. The School will not be responsible for personal property that is lost, stolen, or damaged on School property. Similarly, employees park at their own risk and the School will not be responsible for theft or damage to any vehicles parked on the School property. Also, the School will not be responsible for personal property left in vehicles that are lost, damaged, or stolen.

# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

## POLITICAL ACTIVITY

The School encourages employees to actively pursue political activity. However, employees may NOT:

- Use the School resources to promote a political agenda, including using the School issued computers or the School's internet access.
- Endorse or contribute to any political party or candidate while performing assigned duties.
- Imply that the School endorses any political action or viewpoint.
- Coerce, attempt to coerce, command, or require any other employee, student or member of the School community to pay, lend or contribute anything of value to a party, committee, organization, agency or person for political purpose.

## SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY

In order to preserve a healthy and safe environment for staff and students, the School prohibits the possession, distribution, use, or being "under the influence" of alcohol, marijuana or any illegal narcotic, drug, or controlled substance on its premises. The legal use of prescribed drugs is permitted on the job only if it does not impair the employee's ability to perform the essential functions of the job effectively and in a safe manner, which does not endanger the Employee or other individuals in the workplace. Employees who report to work under the influence of alcohol, marijuana or of an illegal drug, narcotic or controlled substance may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including immediate discharge. Such violations may also have legal consequences.

## SMOKING, VAPING, AND TOBACCO USE

Smoking, vaping, and the use of tobacco products are prohibited in all buildings and on the property (including the parking lot). Staff is expected to set a positive example for students concerning the use of tobacco by following the School's policy and state laws regarding tobacco possession and use. The use of tobacco products, e-cigarettes, vaping devices and any nicotine by staff on all School property and during all School sponsored activities, even those off of School property, is prohibited. The use of tobacco products, e-cigarettes, vaping devices and any nicotine while driving or sitting in School owned vehicles is prohibited, both on and off of School property.

## SPEAKING TO THE MEDIA

All inquiries by the media and outside agencies regarding the School and its operations must be referred to the CIO and Executive Director. Employees must notify the CIO, Executive Director, and/or the President of the Board, in the event of a potential media event and must otherwise make no public comment. Employees who want to write and/or publish an article, paper, or other publication on behalf of the School must obtain written authorization from the CIO, Executive Director, and/or Board of Directors before publication.

# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

## STAFF TRANSPORTING STUDENTS

School staff members are prohibited from driving students (other than their own children) unless prior authorization has been obtained from the Executive Director.

## RELATIONSHIPS WITH STUDENTS

Employees are strictly prohibited from engaging in personal relationships with students that are, or give the impression of being, outside the scope of a professional adult/student relationship. This prohibition applies both on and off School grounds.

Employees who violate this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination, in the sole discretion of the School. Violations of this policy may result in the notification of law enforcement authorities and/or the filing of a child abuse report. In addition, the parents of the student involved will be notified of the situation and the actions taken by the School.

## STAFF MEETINGS

Staff meetings are crucial for maintaining communication, fostering collaboration, and ensuring the continuous improvement of our educational practices. Your attendance and active participation contribute significantly to the success of our School community. The School values collaboration and professional development. To support these goals, we conduct regular staff meetings. The following guidelines apply to all staff meetings:

- **Mandatory Attendance:** All staff meetings are mandatory. This includes:
  - Early release professional days.
  - Staff update meetings.
  - Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings.
- **Schedule:**
  - Meetings will typically occur before/after School hours.
- **Absences:**
  - Any absence from a staff meeting requires prior permission from your direct supervisor.
  - If you are unable to attend a meeting, it is your responsibility to: a) Inform your supervisor as soon as possible b) Obtain any information or materials shared during the meeting.

## VISITORS

All visitors must report to the main office before going to any other part of the School. All individuals wishing to enter the School will be required to submit their driver's license or proof of identification to be scanned before entering. Staff should address visitors to determine whether they are authorized to be in the building.

# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

## CLASSROOM AND CAMPUS EXPECTATIONS AND POLICIES

### CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

Many employees will have access to information which is of a confidential nature. Such information should not be shared with unauthorized personnel or other members of the community not related to the student in question (e.g., other students, parents of other students or board members).

As a general rule, student information should be shared only with the student, the student's parents/guardians, collaborating teachers (i.e., other teachers who teach the same student), and administrators who deal directly with the student.

In addition to being responsible for keeping all confidential student records in a secure, locked location, it is an employee's responsibility to be discreet and to protect student confidentiality when discussing individual students. It is unacceptable to discuss students in front of other students or parents. This mandates that all professional conversations about students happen in private locations, not in classrooms, hallways, the foyer, or the staff workroom. Violations of this policy may lead to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

No student files or academic records may leave the premises (excluding papers to be graded or grade books).

### PARENT AND GUARDIAN COMMUNICATION

It is the belief of the School that open lines of communication contribute to increased student success. Therefore, teachers must reply to parent communication within two business days. Teachers and administrators should document and save all communications with parents and guardians regarding academic issues, behavioral issues, or parental concerns. This applies to conferences, impromptu meetings, emails, and phone conversations. Staff should use the Parent Communication Log in IC to track these communications. If a parent raises a significant concern to a teacher or if a teacher and parent have a particularly contentious conversation, administration should be made aware of the communication.

Teachers are asked to always listen and try to understand parental concerns. However, if a parent or guardian is being unnecessarily rude, disrespectful, or confrontational with a teacher, the teacher has the right to end the conversation. In such circumstances, an administrator should always be notified. If a teacher is concerned about communication with a particular parent or guardian and feels that mediation is needed, that teacher can ask an administrator to be present when a conference or meeting is held.



# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

## SEARCHES AND INSPECTIONS

The School may question employees and others who are on its premises when it has reasonable suspicion of workplace misconduct or possession of prohibited items. If the School has such reasonable suspicion, the School may search or inspect the employee's person or personal belongings, including packages, parcels, purses, handbags, briefcases, lunch boxes or other possessions or articles to determine if misconduct or possession of prohibited items has occurred.

The School may also search its own property, including desks, closets, locker, office, desk and files, storage cabinets, or other School owned property being used by an employee at any time for any reason. As such, an employee has no expectation of privacy when using the School owned property to store items. Employees should have no expectation of privacy with respect to their use of the School information technology and communications systems, including but not limited to the School's network, internet, computer, and email. Cooperation in the conduct of lawful inspections is required as a condition of employment. Employees refusing to cooperate with or submit to a lawful search may be subject to discipline up to and including termination of employment.

## EQUIPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY RESPONSIBILITIES

As a condition of employment, the School will provide its staff access to technology and equipment necessary to perform their jobs. Employees will take all necessary precautions to keep this equipment safe and in good working condition. Employees will be responsible for the full replacement or repair cost of any equipment that is lost/stolen or damaged due to abuse or neglect while it is in employee's care.

### Usage Guidelines

- Do not loan School equipment to anyone.
- Secure and store School equipment when not in use.
- Do not check School equipment as checked luggage when traveling.
- Do not modify the configuration of the School equipment.



# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

## User Responsibilities

- My supervisor requires me to utilize this equipment to perform the duties of my job.
- I accept responsibility for the equipment issued to me by the School.
- I fully understand that I will be billed for the replacement/repair cost for any damage or loss occurring due to abuse or negligence.
- I understand that I will be billed for any unauthorized use i.e. Third Party Billing which may include, directory assistance, ringtone downloads, texted news alerts or other services which incur additional charge to the School. Such payment is due to the School upon request. If payment is not forthcoming, I authorize the School to deduct such payment from my monthly paycheck.
- I will care for and protect equipment from loss or damage and will notify IT staff of any damage or operational failures incurred.
- I understand that it is my responsibility to periodically return the equipment for routine maintenance.

Employees will sign a release indicating their acknowledgement of these responsibilities.

## INTERNET USAGE

During work time, access to global electronic information resources on the World Wide Web are to be used for the School purposes only. Data that is composed, transmitted, accessed, or received via the Internet (including email) must not contain content that could be considered discriminatory, offensive, obscene, threatening, harassing or intimidating. Examples of unacceptable content may include, but are not limited to, sexual comments or images, racial slurs or any other content that could reasonably offend someone on the basis of race, sex, sexual orientation or any other characteristic protected by law.

All Internet data that is composed, transmitted, or received via the School's computer communications systems is considered to be part of the official records of the School and, as such, is subject to disclosure to law enforcement or other third parties. Consequently, employees should always ensure that the business information contained in Internet email messages and other transmissions is accurate, appropriate, ethical, and lawful.

The equipment, services, and technology provided to access the Internet remain at all times the property of the School. As such, the School reserves the right to monitor Internet traffic, and retrieve and read any data composed, sent, or received through the School devices and stored in the School's computer systems.



# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

The School may, at any time, act to maintain, monitor or restrict use of impacted equipment and/or systems. The School may override staff passwords. Employees who make personal use of the School's technology, Internet connections and email do so at the risk that personal information may be revealed as a result.

Abuse of the Internet access provided by the School in violation of law or the School policies may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Employees may also be personally liable for violations of this policy. The following behaviors are examples of activities that are prohibited and can result in disciplinary action:

- Sending or posting discriminatory, harassing, or threatening messages or images
- Using the organization's time and resources for personal gain
- Stealing, using, or disclosing someone else's code or password without authorization
- Copying, pirating, or downloading software and electronic files without permission
- Sending or posting confidential material, trade secrets, or proprietary information outside of the organization
- Violating copyright law
- Failing to observe licensing agreements
- Engaging in unauthorized transactions that may incur a cost to the organization or initiate unwanted Internet services and transmissions
- Sending or posting messages or material that could damage the organization's image or reputation
- Participating in the viewing or exchange of pornography or obscene materials
- Sending or posting messages that defame or slander other individuals
- Attempting to break into the computer system of another organization or person
- Refusing to cooperate with a security investigation
- Sending or posting chain letters, solicitations, or advertisements not related to business purposes or activities
- Using the Internet for political causes or activities, religious activities, or any sort of gambling
- Jeopardizing the security of the organization's electronic communications systems
- Sending or posting messages that disparage another organization's products or services
- Passing off personal views as representing those of the organization
- Sending anonymous email messages
- Engaging in any other illegal activities

# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

## E-MAIL

School computers, Internet connections, email services, and electronic storage including, without limitation, any data or information transmitted through, by or into such computers, connections, services or storage shall be the exclusive property of the School. The School may, at any time, act to maintain, monitor or restrict use of these systems. Passwords may be overridden. Employees who make personal use of the School's technology, Internet connections and email do so at the risk that personal information may be revealed as a result.

## PROTECTING STUDENT INFORMATION

Because some students bring their own laptops, this is considered a BYOD, or Bring Your Own Device, educational organization. Because of this, students may be bringing technical devices to School that contain not only School-related information, but personal information as well. Thus, teachers and staff are not allowed to scan, review, or in any way collect information that could be considered personal in nature. When in doubt, assume the information is personal and it should not be reviewed.

If information on a student's device is relevant to activities at the School or Enrichment, meaning that it supports the assignments, assessments, projects, and other classroom activities or related homework, or is related to clubs, or Enrichment programs, then the material can be considered relevant to the School or Enrichment and it can be reviewed, monitored, assessed, collected and stored by teachers, staff and Enrichment coaches for only so long as School or Enrichment policies require.

While in the classroom or other parts of the School and Enrichment, student devices may be monitored to ensure that the student is attending satisfactorily to the classroom or program activities at any given time. Teachers and staff may only monitor the student's activities to ascertain that the student is, or is not appropriately focused. If the student is not, the teacher should of course correct the situation. This kind of monitoring shall not, however, in any circumstance include the monitoring or review of the student's past Internet activity, application usage, browsing history, or keystroke logging. If a teacher or staff member believes that such information has been collected either intentionally or unintentionally they must inform the Principal immediately so that the situation can be reviewed and corrected. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

## SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines to staff, students and parents on the use of social media at the School and Enrichment.

"Social media" means any form of online publication or presence that allows end users to engage in multi-directional conversations. Social media includes, but is not limited to: Facebook, MySpace, Ning, Twitter (X), Second Life, YouTube, blogs, wikis, social bookmarking, document sharing, Instagram, Snapchat, Tik Tok and email.

# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

## COMMON CODE OF ONLINE CONDUCT

All members of the School community should observe the following guidelines when using social media:

- Be transparent: Represent yourself honestly; never impersonate others.
- Be reflective: Think before posting; Respond factually, not emotionally.
- Be respectful: Avoid discriminatory, threatening, or bullying content.
- Be factual: Contribute valuable information, not just noise.
- Write well: Use proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
- Own your mistakes: Correct errors and apologize when necessary.
- Keep confidence: Respect others' privacy; remember that posts are public and enduring.
- Make proper attributions: Follow copyright laws and cite sources.
- Be smart: Be cautious about sharing personal information online.

Staff members are subject to the following specific rules regarding use of social media, including personal accounts.

**You Are Always a School Employee.** Regardless of the electronic media being used, where it is being used, the ownership of the media, and/or the use of disclaimers, all electronic communications and postings by employees reflect on the School. Social media seems private, but is public. As such, the School will treat anything posted by employees as a communication that reflects upon the School and may act accordingly, up to and including termination.

Employees are not to have any "teacher" or "school" or "class," or any other type of School-related social media presence that utilizes the School's name or logos, unless approved by the School. Employees may not use their professional email address for personal activities.

**Use Disclaimers.** While a disclaimer may not always be sufficient, it can be very helpful. When you are communicating in a personal capacity and not representing the School, clearly say so.

**Use School Media to Communicate with Parents and Students.** One of the greatest dangers to appropriate teacher-student and teacher-parent relationships is confusing the professional relationship with a personal friendship. All communications with parents and students must be made using the School's social media systems. Staff may not "friend" any student and must take appropriate steps to confirm that any friend requests they receive are not from a student. Use of personal accounts for side-communication raises an automatic concern that there must be a reason for not using School accounts and appropriate boundaries are not being maintained. Email to anyone in the School community should be School-related and conform to School acceptable use policies.

# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

Do not post photos or movies of colleagues without their permission. Do not use photos or movies taken at School without permission. Do not post photos or movies that contain students or any post that discusses students with any third party without written, current administrative and parent consent. FERPA is fully applicable to online information about students, and such information is presumed to be private. The Colorado Open Records Act (CORA) may allow parents to demand production of School email discussing their child.

**Behavior that is Unacceptable in Person is Unacceptable Online.** If you would not say it in person, do not say it online. Be sure to utilize professional boundaries between personal and professional conversations, topics and ideas.

**Represent the School Well.** Consider how to represent the School in the best light and what approach will build a stronger School community. Do not circulate rumors or unsubstantiated information about the School, employees, students, or other School affiliated persons or entities. You are fully responsible for what you post.

## PROPWA

Nothing in any School policy or handbook shall be construed or implemented in such a manner as to violate an employee's right to specifically defined expressive, concerted, or other protected activities under Colorado's Protections for Public Workers Act ("PROPWA"), except to the extent restrictions or actions are permissible thereunder.

## GENERAL SCHOOL SAFETY

Safety can only be achieved through teamwork. We encourage each staff member to practice safety awareness by thinking defensively, anticipating unsafe situations, and reporting unsafe conditions immediately. Staff have a responsibility to keep themselves updated on all information related to health and safety at School.

Please observe the following precautions:

- Inform the Principal of any emergency situation. If you are injured or become sick at work, no matter how slight, you must inform your supervisor immediately.
- Use, adjust, and repair machines and equipment only if you are trained and qualified to do so.
- Get help when lifting or pushing heavy objects.
- Understand your job fully and follow instructions. If you are not sure of the safe procedure, do not guess! Please ask your supervisor.
- Know the locations and proper use of first aid and fire-fighting equipment.
- If you observe any behavior from a student or colleague that seems abnormal or concerning, promptly inform your supervisor. Provide both a verbal report and a written account of your observations.

# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

## WEAPONS

The School believes that it is important to establish a clear policy that addresses weapons in the workplace. Specifically, the School prohibits all persons on School property from carrying a handgun, firearm, knife, chemical, explosive or detonating device or other weapon of any kind regardless of whether the person is licensed to carry the weapon. The only exception to this policy will be police officers, security guards, or other persons who have been given written consent by the School to carry a weapon on School property. Any employee who violates this policy will be subject to immediate termination.

## INJURIES ON THE JOB

Work-related injuries or illnesses must be immediately reported to the employee's immediate supervisor (or designee) regardless of how minor the injury or illness might be. If appropriate, the employee may be referred for medical treatment. Failure to promptly and appropriately report workplace injuries or illnesses and unsafe workplace practices or conditions will not be tolerated and may disqualify employees from workers' compensation benefits.

## WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

Violence by a staff member or anyone else against a student, parent, staff member or other person on School premises or any other location where a School-sponsored activity is taking place will not be tolerated. The purpose of this guideline is to minimize the potential risk of personal injuries to staff members at work and to reduce the possibility of damage to School property.

If you receive or overhear any threatening communications from a staff member or outside third party, report it at once. Do not engage in physical or verbal confrontation with a potentially violent individual. If you encounter an individual who is threatening immediate harm to a staff member or visitor to our premises, contact an emergency agency (such as 911 or SRO) immediately.

All reports of work-related threats will be kept confidential to the extent possible, investigated, and documented. Staff members are encouraged to report and participate in an investigation of any suspected or actual cases of workplace violence. Failure to report or fully cooperate in the School's investigation may result in discipline; however, there shall be no retaliation for good faith reports or employee participation in an investigation. Violations of this policy will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORTING

To the extent required by C.R.S. 8-14.4-101, et. seq., and as long as the concern is reasonable and in good-faith, the School will not retaliate against, or interfere with, an employee raising reasonable concerns, including informally, to the School, an administrator, other employees, the government, or the public, about workplace violations of government health or safety rules, or a significant workplace health or safety threat; opposing or testifying, assisting, or participating in an investigation or proceeding about retaliation for, or interference with, the above-listed conduct.

# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

Further, an employee will be allowed to voluntarily wear their own PPE (mask, faceguard, gloves, etc.) if the PPE provides more protection than equipment provided at the workplace; is recommended by a government health agency (federal, state, or local), and does not make the employee unable to do his/her job.

## PROTECTION OF SCHOOL EMPLOYEES

The School prohibits any assault upon, disorderly conduct toward, harassment of, the making knowingly of a false allegation of child abuse against, or any alleged offense under the "Colorado Criminal Code" directed toward a teacher or School employee or instances of damage occurring on the premises to the personal property of a School teacher or School employee by a student.

If this prohibited conduct occurs, the teacher or School employee may file a complaint with the School administration. The School administration will, after receipt of such report and proof deemed adequate to the School administration, suspend the student for three days, in accordance with School policies, and will initiate procedures for the further suspension or expulsion of the student where injury or property damage has occurred, as deemed appropriate by School administration.

The School administration will report the incident to the district attorney or appropriate local law enforcement.

## GRIEVANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

The School values open and proactive communication amongst and between the members of the School community. Issues that are not dealt with directly can become destructive to the School community and, therefore, detrimental to the learning process of our students. As adults we must model for our students a willingness to address conflict directly. As such, STEM's procedures (outlined below) for settling differences are designed to support prompt and equitable resolution of disagreements at the lowest possible faculty or administrative level. These procedures pertain to grievances of varied natures; they regulate how faculty and staff are expected to express grievances about other members of the professional community, including peers, supervisors or the administration.

All members of the School community have a right to be heard and assured of the opportunity for an orderly presentation and review of complaints and concerns without fear of reprisal. The Administration and Board both expect that conflict will be addressed and proactively dealt with following the fewest steps of the procedures below. However, should resolution not be obtained at the lowest faculty or administrative level, each member of the School community is guaranteed both substantive and procedural due process.



# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

## GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Explicit and direct grievance procedures are necessary to uphold the integrity of the organization. Streamlined procedures with the fewest possible points of contact enhance positive conflict resolution. The School is committed to ensuring that the following procedures are followed:

### 1. Direct Communication

- Address the issue with those directly involved.
- If a faculty or staff member bypasses this step, they will be redirected to begin here.

### 2. Supervisor Intervention

- If direct communication doesn't resolve the issue, involve the supervising administrator.
- The administrator will facilitate a meeting and develop conflict resolution goals.
- All supervisors must inform the Principal when a grievance reaches this stage.

### 3. Principal / Director Mediation

- If unresolved, a second mediation meeting may be arranged with the Principal present.

### 4. Formal Written Grievance

- If still unsatisfied, submit a formal written grievance to the Principal, including: a) Description of the incident or decision b) Relevant policy violations or concerns c) Previous resolution attempts d) Requested corrective action
- All grievances, including those about the Principal, must follow this step, except that if the grievance involves allegations of protected class harassment/discrimination or other unlawful conduct the complainant may direct his/her complaint directly to the next level of the process.
- The Principal has one week to respond/resolve the matter once all of the information is submitted. The Principal may extend this deadline at his/her discretion if more time is needed to adequately respond to the grievance.

### 5. CIO Review

- If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome after attempting to resolve the matter with the Principal, the complainant may submit the matter to the CIO. Any such submission must be done within five days of the Principal's response/resolution.
- To submit the matter to the CIO the complainant must provide all written documentation, including the original written grievance, to the CIO. The CIO will also request information from the Principal and any other relevant parties.
- The CIO has one week to respond/resolve the matter once all of the information is submitted. The CIO may extend this deadline at his/her discretion if more time is needed to adequately respond to the grievance.

# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

## 6. Board Review

- If the matter remains unresolved, the grievance may be submitted to the Board within 5 days of the CIO's response/resolution. The Board places great trust in its faculty and administrators to manage the affairs of the School and to serve our School community. The Board will not typically review grievances based on the discretionary day-to-day decision-making or good faith judgment calls made by faculty or administrators, unless it pertains to the CIO or School-wide policy and there is clear evidence of misconduct or a need to address a substantial issue.
- The written grievance may be submitted to the Board President or Secretary at least one week before the next Board meeting. The complainant must provide all written documentation, including the original written grievance, to the Board.
- The Board President, or a designee, will also request information from the CIO, the Principal, and/or any other relevant parties.
- Through the Board President, or designee, members of the Board may request an additional statement from the complainant, as well as any other information it deems relevant to research or request. The Board President, or designee, may appoint an investigator to collect additional information, or appoint a mediator, as appropriate, to attempt to resolve the concern.
- The Board President will determine whether or not to include the request to review on the agenda of the School Board's next meeting. An individual Board Member can make a motion to have it scheduled on the agenda during the Board's next meeting, and it will be added to that meeting with a requisite vote of the majority, following regular procedures.
- At all stages of this process Board members will take care to preserve expectations of privacy, including avoidance of public references to specific individuals or incidents, and may call an executive session to discuss any grievances for which an executive session is allowed. If the grievance involves a specific employee, that employee will be informed by the Board President before the meeting at which the issue may be discussed and will be asked if he or she wants the discussion to happen during open session instead of executive session.
- If the grievance is not reviewed or scheduled for review at the next regular meeting following receipt of the request to review, and the Board has made no other plans to review it, then it will be deemed resolved and the decision or planned course of action articulated by the CIO will be final.
- Grievances should not be raised during Public Comment at Board meetings.



# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

## Additional Notes:

- The Principal is responsible for resolving conflicts between faculty, staff, and administrators, except those pertaining to the Principal or School-wide policies.
- Once a grievance has been responded to or resolved it is deemed final unless/until there are new facts or circumstances.
- All grievances must be examined through the lens of the School's mission, applicable laws, and School policies.
- The Board of Directors is the final forum for conflict resolution after all other steps have been followed.
- If the person to whom an employee would report or submit a grievance is the alleged perpetrator of the concern being raised, including without limitation if the concern regards an allegation of discrimination or harassment, the employee is NOT required to report to that person and may instead go directly to the Human Resources department, to the CIO, or to the President of the Board of Directors if the alleged offender is the CIO.

## SCHOOL LAW

### CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT REPORTING

The Colorado Child Protection Act specifically requires School officials and employees to report (i) known or suspected cases of child abuse or neglect (including emotional, physical, or sexual abuse) or (ii) circumstances which might reasonably result in abuse or neglect. Reporting child abuse or neglect is a difficult yet extremely important responsibility for everyone involved. School employees are asked to follow these procedures.

### DEFINITION OF CHILD ABUSE

Child abuse is any act or omission which threatens the health or welfare of a child, regardless of whether it is physical, sexual, or emotional abuse. "Physical abuse" may be exhibited by evidence of skin bruising, bleeding, malnutrition, burns, fracture of any bone, or soft tissue swelling. "Sexual abuse" includes any touching of a child's private parts (the "swimsuit area"), whether above or below clothes, for the purpose of sexual gratification. "Emotional abuse" is the identifiable and substantial impairment (or substantial risk of impairment) of a child's intellectual and psychological functioning or development.

### DEFINITION OF NEGLECT

Neglect is considered to be failure on the part of a child's caretaker to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, supervision, education, or medical treatment.

### REPORTING PROCEDURES

If a teacher or other School employee suspects abuse or neglect, or observes circumstances which might reasonably cause abuse or neglect, the employee must report it immediately to county social services, local law enforcement agencies, or through the child abuse reporting hotline system at-

# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

1-844-CO-4-Kids. Such reporting must be done verbally over the telephone and in writing, and shall be documented on the appropriate "Child Abuse Reporting" form. All reports must be filed as soon as practicable after learning of the abuse or neglect. In most circumstances, the verbal report should be made within 24 hours and the written report within 48 hours. The appropriate Principal should also be informed when child abuse reports are made. However, note that reporting to a supervisor or any other School official does not relieve you of your individual responsibility to report to child services and/or law enforcement.

**Employee Obligations:** It is not the responsibility of School employees or officials to try to determine the cause of the suspected abuse or neglect, nor is it the responsibility of School officials or employees to prove that the child has been abused or neglected.

A person who reports child abuse or neglect in good faith is immune from civil or criminal liability. Further, the School employees are required to know the procedures for reporting suspected child abuse and/or neglect. All professional employees are required to report suspected child abuse to the proper authorities. Failure to do so may result in termination and/or prosecution. The School prohibits any School Administrator or other employee from retaliating or taking any adverse action against any employee for good faith reporting of reasonable suspicion of sexual or physical abuse or neglect.

## FAMILY EDUCATION RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT

Student education records are official and confidential documents protected by the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). FERPA applies to all schools receiving federal education funding, including the School. Non-compliance may result in the loss of those funds.

Confidential education records include without limitation student registration forms, contact information, graded papers, academic records (including report cards), discipline files, social security numbers linked to names, and student information displayed on a computer screen. All School employees are required to keep student information secure and confidential, and to protect students' rights.

Parents and students have rights regarding students' educational records.

- Parents have the right to inspect and review their own child's educational records (any records from which the student can be individually identified), to the exclusion of third parties. Students also have this right when they reach age 18.
- The School has committed to responding to parental requests for student information only when they have been put in writing, and then within a 72-hour window, unless more time is needed. Staff receiving such records requests should forward them to the Executive Director.
- Parents and eligible students have the right to request that the School correct records believed to be inaccurate or misleading.

# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

One exception the law allows is “directory information,” which includes things like name, address and telephone number. This information is provided in the School Student Directory for all families who stated in writing that they wanted to be included.

Failure to comply with FERPA will result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

One exception the law allows is “directory information,” which includes things like name, address and telephone number. This information is provided in the School Student Directory for all families who stated in writing that they wanted to be included.

Failure to comply with FERPA will result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

## BUSINESS OFFICE: PURCHASING, TRAVEL EXPENSES

### PURCHASES

All purchases must be pre-approved by the appropriate Department/Grade Level Lead and Director/Principal/Executive Director, before the School will be financially obligated. All items purchased using School funds belong to the School and must be labeled and inventoried. Purchases using School funds are School property and are not considered personal property of an employee.

### REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES

For financial accountability, the School is not able to reimburse staff for personal expenses. To be eligible for reimbursement, all purchases must be pre-approved by the appropriate department/Grade Level Lead and Director/Principal/Executive Director and the Business Office.

### TRAVEL EXPENSE REPORTING

Employees will be reimbursed for pre-approved business-related travel expenses, upon submission of accurate expense reports, including original receipts, to the Business Office.

Employees are requested to submit these reports within 10 calendar days to ensure proper accounting and prompt reimbursement. It is important to note that employees may not be reimbursed for business-related expenses that are not pre-approved.

### PER DIEM

The School may approve a per diem allowance for staff meal expenses during out-of-town business trips. The standard rate is \$40 per day, though this may vary based on the event location. To claim per diem, you must have incurred actual meal expenses, but you are not required to submit receipts or an expense report. After completing your travel, submit a Per Diem Worksheet to the Business Office, signed by the Chief Financial Officer or their designee. This worksheet serves as your request for the per diem reimbursement.

# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

## CASH ADVANCES

When staff is required to go out of the office on business, whether in-state or out-of-state, they may request a cash advance to cover anticipated expenses. If per-diem applies for meals, a cash advance could be requested to cover non-meal related expenses. The request is initiated by using a check request with a description of the event and expected expenses. As with any other check request, the expense must have been pre-approved by the Executive Director or his or her designee. Once the event or travel is over, an expense report should be completed within 10 calendar days, along with itemized receipts, and turned into one of the administrators. Cash advances will not be approved for any employee who has an outstanding cash advance that has not been accounted for. Cash advances may also be requested for approved purchases that will be made by an employee. Employees are liable for cash advances until their expense report with attached itemized receipts has been approved by the Business Office, or designee.

## CHECK REQUESTS

A Check Request Form must be used to initiate a prepayment of expense reimbursement. Generally, if one has received pre-approval to purchase something (via purchase order) and an employee personally paid for the purchase, the invoice should be forwarded to the Chief Financial Officer, or designee, and attached to a check request so that an expense reimbursement can be processed. The Check Request includes space for the purpose, amount and description of the purchase, and also asks the name of the program/account to which it should be charged; it should be signed by the proper authority outlined above.





# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

## EMPLOYMENT

### CLASSIFICATION

The School designates all employees as either exempt or nonexempt in compliance with applicable federal, state, and local law:

- **Exempt Employees.** Exempt employees are generally paid a fixed salary and are not entitled to overtime pay.
- **Non-exempt Employees.** Non-exempt employees are eligible for paid overtime at one and one-half times their regular rate of pay for all hours worked in excess of 40 hours per workweek, or 12 hours per workday (or 12 consecutive hours).

The School also assigns each employee to one of the following categories:

- **Regular Full-Time Employees.** Regular full-time employees are normally scheduled to work at least 30 hours per workweek, except for approved time off. (For health insurance only, full time employment refers to working at least 30 hours a week)
- **Regular Part-Time Employees.** Regular part-time employees are normally scheduled to work 30 hours or less per workweek. Part-time employees are not eligible for most Company benefits.
- **Temporary/Seasonal Employees.** Temporary employees are generally hired on a temporary or project-specific basis for a period of no more than 6 months, with either full or part-time hours. Seasonal employees are hired on a temporary basis during a time of year when extra work is available. Temporary/seasonal employees are not eligible for most Company benefits.

You will be informed of your classification, status, and responsibilities at the time of hire and at any time your classification, status, or responsibilities change. If you have a question regarding this information, contact a Human Resources representative. These classifications do not alter your employment at-will status.

### WORKWEEK AND WORK DAY

The School's normal business hours are Monday-Friday, 7:30 am – 4:00 pm. All full-time employees are expected to be on-site during these hours, although some employees may be scheduled for additional time. From time to time, employees may need to attend meetings, perform school duties, etc. as needed in order to facilitate and maintain normal business operations. The School's workweek for payroll purposes begins Monday at 12:00 a.m. and ends Sunday at 11:59 p.m.

# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

## MEAL AND REST PERIODS

The School strives to provide a safe and healthy work environment and complies with all federal and state regulations regarding meal and rest periods. Check with your supervisor regarding procedures and schedules for rest and meal breaks. The School requires employees to accurately observe and record meal and rest periods. If you know in advance that you may not be able to take your scheduled break or meal period, let your supervisor know; in addition, notify your supervisor as soon as possible if you were unable to or prohibited from taking an uninterrupted meal or rest period.

Employees are entitled to an uninterrupted and duty-free unpaid 30-minute meal period for all shifts exceeding five consecutive hours. If practical, these meal periods will be at least one hour after the start and one hour before the end of the shift. If this is not possible or is impractical, you will be permitted to eat an "on duty" meal while performing your work duties, and this meal period will be paid. Additionally, you are entitled to a paid 10-minute rest period for each four hours of work, or major fraction thereof, as follows:

#Work Hours:	Up to 2	>2 up to 6	>6 up to 10	>10 up to 14	>14 up to 18	>18 up to 22
#Rest Periods:	0	1	2	3	4	5

Rest periods must be in the middle of each four-hour work period unless it is impractical. It is not necessary that you leave School property for a rest period. Rest periods will be 10 minutes unless otherwise provided by applicable law. Required rest periods are "time worked" for the purposes of calculating minimum wage and overtime obligations.

## VOTING

The School encourages employees to participate in federal, state, county, and municipal elections. Employees should make every effort to vote before or after working hours. However, should the employee's work schedule not make it possible, employees will be allowed up to two (2) hours off with pay to fulfill their voting responsibilities.

Employees should request time off to vote from their manager at least two (2) days prior to Election Day. Advanced notice is required so that the necessary time off can be scheduled at the beginning or end of the work shift; whichever provides the least disruption to the normal work schedule.

# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

## COMPENSATION

The School closely monitors and aligns to the DCSD Salary Schedules for each employee group. As a charter school, we focus on meeting and or exceeding the district's compensation package. Each employee's experiences, background, and educational expertise is taken into consideration. Licensed staff can submit additional educational credits that can place them at the +15, +30, +45 areas on the matrix. Refer to the Education Step Increase application for more information.

## COMPENSATION DATES

Employees will be paid semi-monthly, on the 15th and last day of each month, or as otherwise designated by the Human Resources. If a payday is on a Saturday then staff will be paid on the Friday before. If a payday is on a Sunday, staff will be paid the following Monday. If a payday falls on a recognized holiday, staff will be paid on the following business day.

## RECORDING YOUR TIME

Nonexempt staff members must maintain an accurate record of all time worked. Employees should accurately record the time they begin and end their work day, as well as the beginning and ending time of each meal period. No one may record hours worked on another's timecard or timesheet. Altering, falsifying, tampering with time records, failing to record time, or recording time on another employee's time record may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of both employees. In the event of an error in recording your time, please report the matter to Human Resources immediately.

All required payroll documentation, including request for leave forms, personnel action forms, change of information requests and time keeping records must be received by the Human Resources department on or before the established monthly deadline for all employees. All time off must be recorded.

## COMPENSATORY TIME

Compensatory time is not allowed without prior written approval from the Executive Director or Human Resources. Compensatory time off is defined as time off with pay in lieu of overtime pay for irregular or occasional overtime work. Compensatory time is also a flexible work schedule/program (e.g. work from home, trading holidays or PTO days). All time away must be processed through Calamari, the current time off software. Altering, falsifying or tampering with pay records is strictly prohibited and shall result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

## REMOTE WORK

All hours worked from home or virtually require prior approval from the Executive Director or Human Resources.

# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

## SNOW DAY COMPENSATION

When DCSD calls a Snow Day, the School will also implement a Snow Day and only essential personnel (unable to work remotely) are required to work. When a Snow Day occurs, the School will pay hourly employees up to two (2) Snow Days per individual in each school year.

## MANDATORY DEDUCTIONS FROM PAYCHECKS

The School shall make all mandatory deductions from employee paychecks. These may include federal, state and local income taxes. The School will also withhold mandatory PERA contributions. Other deductions may include benefit premiums and 401k plans. These deductions will be itemized on the employee's pay stub. Modification to W4 exemptions require the completion of a new W4 form. The School will also honor all other legal deductions, including garnishments.

## ERRORS IN PAY

Employees are encouraged to review their pay stubs each pay period. If you become aware of an error in your pay or deductions, bring it to the attention of the Human Resources department immediately so that it can be corrected as soon as possible. During onboarding all employees sign a form stating authorization to correct payroll errors made by the employer. If employment ends and there is an outstanding overpayment, the remaining balance will be recovered from the employee's final pay. If funds are not available to recover from the employee's final pay, the employee will be notified in writing and repayment of these funds will be due within 30 days of the date of separation, unless a new repayment arrangement is made in writing. Unrecovered overpayments may be sent to a collections agency to recover payment in full. Further, if the employee fails to return any School property when requested to or upon separation from employment, the School will deduct the cost of any un-returned, lost, or excessively damaged items from an employee's paycheck. Any paycheck deductions will be made in compliance with all applicable laws, including, but not limited to, the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).

## OVERTIME

Overtime compensation is paid to all non-exempt employees in accordance with applicable federal and state laws. Non-exempt employees may not work overtime unless it has been approved in advance by a Director or Principal. Failing to obtain prior written approval for overtime may subject the employee to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

## EMPLOYMENT OFFER LETTERS

Before reporting for work, each employee shall sign an employment letter clearly acknowledging the terms and conditions of his or her employment with the School. This employment letter details specific job expectations, and a compensation package. Employment at-will is incorporated in all employee letters.



# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

## EMPLOYEE PRIVACY

It is the School's goal to respect the individual privacy of its employees and at the same time maintain a safe and secure workplace. When safety and security issues arise, employees may be requested to cooperate with an investigation. The investigation may include the following procedures to safeguard the company and its employees: searches of personal belongings, searches of work areas, searches of private vehicles on company premises, medical examinations, and the like. Failure to cooperate with an investigation is grounds for termination. Providing false information during any investigation may lead to discipline, including termination.

Employees are expected to use School facilities only for company business purposes. Accordingly, materials that appear on company hardware or networks are presumed to be for business purposes, and all such materials are subject to review by the company at any time without notice to the employees. Employees do not have to have any expectation of privacy with respect to any material on company property, including School provided technology. The School regularly monitors its communications systems and networks as allowed by law. Monitored activity may include voice, e-mail, and text communications, and Internet search and browsing history. Employees who make excessive use of the communications system for personal matters are subject to discipline. Employees are expected to keep personal communication to a minimum and to emergency situations.

## VIDEO SURVEILLANCE

As part of its security measures and to help ensure a safe workplace, the School has positioned video cameras to monitor various areas of its facilities. Video cameras will not be used in private areas, such as break rooms, restrooms, locker/dressing rooms, etc.

## PRIVACY—SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS

The School treats Social Security numbers (SSNs) as confidential information. We obtain, retain, use, and dispose of SSNs only for legitimate business reasons and in compliance with the law. SSNs are typically requested for essential purposes such as tax reporting, new hire reporting, or employee benefit enrollment.

Employees may only request, obtain, or create documents containing SSNs for authorized business reasons consistent with this policy. Unauthorized use, disclosure, or obtaining of SSNs may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. The School will cooperate with any government investigations regarding the unlawful handling of SSNs.

# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

## MANDATORY QUALIFICATIONS

Employment shall be contingent upon the Employee meeting and maintaining position-specific qualifications, including a CBI/FBI fingerprint-based Criminal Background Check acceptable to the School in its sole discretion and an Official Clearance Statement of Child Abuse and Neglect. Instructional staff are required to meet qualifications as defined by Colorado Law, under ESSA.

Employees shall participate in activities required by the School, and any and all training and certification maintenance requirements mandated by state law. Employees shall promptly report to the School any events that might cause failure of a future background check, including but not limited to any indictment, charge or arrest for a felony or for a misdemeanor involving misconduct with a school-age child or youth. Should an employee fail to satisfy any of the required qualifications listed herein, the School has grounds to terminate the employee.

Employees are responsible for ensuring that all position-specific license numbers and expiration dates are on-file in the Human Resources department.

## EMPLOYMENT RENEWAL

The School renewal decisions are based on a combination of criteria, including, but not limited to: self-evaluations, administrative reviews and evaluations, peer evaluations, mission-fit, adherence to the School's professional expectations, and strict adherence to implementing the School's chosen curriculum.

Employment at the School is continuous from year to year unless you are notified otherwise. We will issue new agreements only if there are changes to your salary, on-campus working days, or other relevant employment details for the upcoming year. Your employment automatically renews each year without requiring formal action, subject to any changes the School may communicate to you.

Any concerns about employment performance that may ultimately result in a non-renewal decision may be documented in the Employee's personnel file through the documentation of significant employment conversations or emails, corrective action plans, observation notes, and evaluations. A decision to non-renew an employee is not considered to be "firing" and occasionally may not be related to specific performance concerns, but instead to mission fit or resource allocation decisions.

Nothing in this section is to be construed as a promise of continued employment as the employment relationship remains at all times "at-will."

# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

## CRIMINAL ACTIVITY/ARRESTS

The School will report all criminal activity in accordance with applicable law. Involvement in criminal activity while employed by the School, whether on or off Company property, may result in disciplinary action including suspension or termination of employment. You are expected to be on the job, ready to work, when scheduled. Inability to report to work as scheduled may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, for violation of an attendance policy or job abandonment. The School reserves the right to conduct post-hire background checks for employees. Employees will be notified before the background check to ensure compliance with the Fair Credit Reporting Act

Pursuant to C.R.S. 22-1-130, the School may be required to notify parents if any employee had access to students in the previous 12 months and the employee is charged with (1) Felony child abuse, (2) a crime of violence, as defined in 18-1.3-406 (C.R.S.), (3) felony offense involving unlawful sexual behavior, (4) felony indecent exposure, as defined in 18-7-302 (C.R.S.), (5) felony domestic violence, or a (6) felony drug offense.

## PERSONNEL DATA CHANGES

It is the responsibility of the Employee to promptly notify the School of any changes in personal data including mailing address, telephone number, number and names of dependents, individuals to be contacted in the event of an emergency, educational accomplishments. Such information should be provided to Human Resources. Name change for professional use will only be allowed once Human Resources receives official documentation from a state or federal agency, this includes but is not limited to names used in emails, signatures, and payroll.

## OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT

The School expects all full-time employees to treat their position at the School as their primary employment, and dedicate all of the time and energy necessary to successfully perform the applicable job duties. While the School will not restrict the ability of an employee to take on outside employment (i.e. a second job), to the extent required by C.R.S. 24-34-402.5, such outside employment must not interfere with the employee's ability to perform his/her job duties with the School. Outside employment also must not create a conflict of interest or the appearance of conflict of interest. If an employee is considering outside employment he/she is encouraged to discuss it first with his or her supervisor to ensure the employee can do so while complying with the requirements of this policy.

# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

## BENEFITS CONTINUATION (COBRA)

The federal Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) gives employees and their qualified beneficiaries the opportunity to continue health insurance coverage under Company health plan when a “qualifying event” would normally result in the loss of eligibility. Some common qualifying events are resignation, termination of employment, or death of an employee; a reduction in an employee’s hours or a leave of absence; an employee’s divorce or legal separation; and a dependent child no longer meeting eligibility requirements. Under COBRA, the employee or beneficiary pays the full cost of coverage at Company’s group rates plus an administration fee. The School provides each eligible employee with a written notice describing rights.

## EMPLOYEE WORK PRODUCT AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Unless agreed to in a signed writing by an individual authorized by the School, all work products created by employees in the course or scope of his/her employment at School for use by/at School shall be the property of and under the control and ownership of the School. This includes, but is not limited to, course syllabi, unit plans, lesson plans, supporting curricular documents, student records, communications, and program design materials, to the extent created in the scope of employment with the School. As the owner, the School shall have the indefinite right to use such works at its discretion and in any manner. All material created, gathered, or otherwise received (including materials obtained at professional development training paid for by the School) are the express property of School. All work products must be backed up on the School’s network server on a weekly basis to assure protection of and access to the School’s intellectual property.

## SOLICITATION

Employees should be able to work in an environment that is free from unnecessary annoyances and interference with their work. To protect our employees and visitors, solicitation by employees is strictly prohibited while either the employee being solicited or the employee doing the soliciting is on “working time.” “Working time” is defined as time during which an employee is not at a meal, on break, or on the premises immediately before or after a shift.

Employees are also prohibited from distributing written materials, handbills, or any other type of literature on working time and, at all times, in “working areas,” which include all office areas. “Working areas” do not include break rooms, parking lots, or common areas shared by employees during nonworking time.

Nonemployees may not trespass or solicit or distribute materials anywhere on School property at any time.

Nothing in this policy is meant to, nor should it be interpreted to, in any way limit employees’ rights under any applicable federal, state, or local laws, including rights under Colorado PROPWA to engage in protected concerted activities with other employees to improve or discuss terms and conditions of employment, such as wages, working conditions, and benefits. Employees have the right to engage in or refrain from such activities.

# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

## GIFTS

An employee shall not accept from an outside party any gift, service, or other items of substantial value, which would tend to improperly influence a reasonable person in the employee's position to depart from the faithful and impartial discharge of the employee's duties. In accordance with C.R.S. 24-18-104, the following are permissible, so long as there is no connection, express or implied, between the gift and any official action of any employee:

1. An unsolicited item of trivial value;
2. A gift with a fair market value of fifty-three dollars or less.
3. An unsolicited token or award of appreciation as described in section 3(3)(c) of article XXIX of the state constitution;
4. Unsolicited informational material, publications, or subscriptions related to the performance of official duties of the employee;
5. Payment of or reimbursement for reasonable expenses paid by a nonprofit organization or state and local government in connection with attendance at a convention, fact-finding mission or trip, or other meeting as permitted in accordance with the provisions of section 3(3)(f) of article XXIX of the state constitution;
6. Payment of or reimbursement for admission to, and the cost of food or beverages consumed at, a reception, meal, or meeting that may be accepted or received in accordance with the provisions of section 3(3)(e) of article XXIX of the state constitution;
7. A gift given by an individual who is a relative or personal friend of the employee on a special occasion.
8. Payment for speeches, appearances, or publications that may be accepted by the employee in accordance with the provisions of section 3 of article XXIX of the state constitution that are reported pursuant to C.R.S. 24-6-203(3)(d);
9. Any other gift or thing of value the employee is permitted to solicit, accept, or receive in accordance with the provisions of section 3 of article XXIX of the state constitution, the acceptance of which is not otherwise prohibited by law.

# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

## EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

This Handbook summarizes the current benefit plans offered by the School. Refer to the actual plan documents and summary plan descriptions for eligibility information and for specific questions regarding the benefit plan. The School reserves the right to modify its benefits at any time.

### INSURANCE

Employees classified as full-time are eligible to participate in the various insurance plans offered by the School, including medical, dental, and eyecare. Employees must meet plan eligibility requirements and applicable waiting periods. Employees must complete enrollment paperwork within plan timeframes.

### LIFE, SHORT TERM DISABILITY, LONG TERM DISABILITY AND ACCIDENTAL DEATH & DISMEMBERMENT

Full time employees will qualify for life insurance, short-term disability, long-term disability, and accidental death & dismemberment benefits six months from the date of hire.

### PERA RETIREMENT

The School is a PERA employer and will deduct the required employee portion of the PERA Contribution from the Employee's paycheck as directed by statute. The School will also contribute the required employer portion of the PERA Contribution to PERA on the Employee's behalf as outlined in statute.

### WORKER'S COMPENSATION INSURANCE

On-the-job injuries may be covered by the School's Workers' Compensation insurance policy. This insurance is provided at no cost to the Employee. If the Employee is injured on the job, no matter how slightly, the Employee must report the incident immediately to the applicable Director or Principal so that workers' compensation coverage is not compromised. Additional details about workers' compensation are available through the Human Resources department.

### EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP)

All employees have access to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). This program provides services such as counseling, legal, financial, work/life services and wellness supports, free of charge. More information can be found within your benefits packet.

### RIGHT TO MODIFY OR CHANGE BENEFITS

The School reserves the right to change the benefits offered to the Employee at any time, subject to applicable laws. The Employee may be notified of any change in benefits.



# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

## TIME AWAY FROM WORK

### SICK/HFWA TIME

This policy is intended to comply with the Colorado Healthy Families and Workplaces Act ("HFWA"). Employees may use paid sick/HFWA leave hours as soon as they are earned. Sick/HFWA days are granted to employees at the start of employment and will be carried over to the next year, however an employee can only earn or use up to 48 hours of sick/HFWA leave per fiscal year (starting in July and ending in June). Unused hours will not be paid to an employee at any time, including at the end of any year or at separation of employment. Sick/HFWA time may be taken in one (1) hour increments. An employee is eligible to use paid sick/HFWA leave when:

- A. The employee:
  - Has a mental or physical illness, injury, or health condition that prevents the employee from working;
  - Needs to obtain a medical diagnosis, care or treatment of a mental or physical illness, injury or health condition; or
  - Needs to obtain preventative medical care;
- B. The employee needs to care for a family member who:
  - Has a mental or physical illness, injury, or health condition;
  - Needs to obtain a medical diagnosis, care or treatment of a mental or physical illness, injury or health condition; or
  - Needs to obtain preventative medical care;
- C. The employee or the employee's family member has been the victim of domestic abuse, sexual assault, or harassment and the use of leave is to:
  - Seek medical attention for the employee or the employee's family member to recover from a mental or physical illness, injury or health condition caused by the domestic abuse, sexual assault, or harassment;
  - Obtain services from a victim services organization;
  - Obtain mental health or other counseling;
  - Seek relocation due to the domestic abuse, sexual assault, or harassment; or
  - Seek legal services, including preparation for or participation in a civil or criminal proceeding relating to or resulting from the domestic abuse, sexual assault, or harassment; or
- D. Due to a public health emergency, a public official has ordered closure of:
  - The employee's place of business; or
  - The school or place of care for the employee's child and the employee needs to be absent from work to care for the employee's child.
- E. To grieve, attend funeral services or a memorial, or deal with financial and legal matters that arise after the death of a family member.
- F. To care for a family member whose school or place of care has been closed—or to evacuate the place of residence—due to inclement weather, loss of power, loss of heating, loss of water, or other unexpected occurrence or event that results in closure or the need to evacuate.

# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

## EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

Notwithstanding any other policy to the contrary, including without limitation any “blackout” dates, or notice requirements, the School will not prohibit use of paid sick/HFWA leave or retaliate against any employee for their lawful use of paid sick/HFWA leave. If an employee is dishonest about the reason for using leave the employee may be subject to discipline. When the need for leave is foreseeable, employees must make a good faith effort to provide advance notification and make a reasonable effort to schedule leave so as not to be unduly disruptive to their job requirements. If the need for leave is not foreseeable then the employees must provide notice as soon as practicable. The employee may be required to provide documentation of the reasons for taking the paid sick/HFWA leave for four or more consecutive days, in accordance with the HFWA.

Paid sick/HFWA leave will not be counted as an “absence” that may result in firing or another kind of adverse action. An employee will not be required to find a “replacement worker” or job coverage when taking paid sick/HFWA leave. If an employee separates from employment and is rehired within six months after the separation, the employee will have reinstated any paid sick/HFWA leave that the employee had earned but not used during the employee’s previous employment. Employees are not entitled to any financial compensation at any time in exchange for any unused paid sick/HFWA leave.

## PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY LEAVE

In addition, on the date a federal, state or local public health emergency is declared and until four weeks after the official termination or suspension of the public health emergency, each employee’s earned paid sick/HFWA leave will be supplemented, as necessary, to ensure that an employee may take the following amounts of paid sick/HFWA leave for the additional purposes defined below:

1. For employees who normally work forty or more hours in a week, at least eighty hours of paid sick/HFWA leave;
2. For employees who normally work fewer than forty hours in a week, at least the greater of either the amount of time the employee is scheduled to work in a fourteen-day period or the amount of time the employee actually works on average in a fourteen-day period.

Earned paid sick/HFWA leave counts toward the total described above, meaning the total described above is the new maximum, and not in addition to, existing accrued paid sick/HFWA leave. Employees may use supplemental leave before other forms of leave. Employees are only eligible for the supplemental paid sick/HFWA leave in the amount described above once during the entirety of a public health emergency.



# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

Additional purposes for taking paid sick/HFWA leave during a public health emergency include an employee who needs paid time off to:

1. Self-isolate and care for oneself because the employee is diagnosed with a communicable illness that is the cause of a public health emergency;
2. Self-isolate and care for oneself because the employee is experiencing symptoms of a communicable illness that is the cause of a public health emergency;
3. Seek or obtain medical diagnosis, care, or treatment if experiencing symptoms of a communicable illness that is the cause of a public health emergency;
4. Seek preventive care concerning a communicable illness that is the cause of a public health emergency; or
5. Care for a family member who is self-isolating after being diagnosed with a communicable illness that is the cause of a public health emergency; is self-isolating due to experiencing symptoms of a communicable illness that is the cause of a public health emergency; needs medical diagnosis, care, or treatment if experiencing symptoms of a communicable illness that is the cause of a public health emergency; or is seeking preventive care concerning a communicable illness that is the cause of a public health emergency; or
6. With respect to a communicable illness that is the cause of a public health emergency:
  - A. A local, state, or federal public official or health authority having jurisdiction over the location in which the School is located or the School determines that the employee's presence on the job or in the community would jeopardize the health of others because of the employee's exposure to the communicable illness or because the employee is exhibiting symptoms of the communicable illness, regardless of whether the employee has been diagnosed with the communicable illness;
  - B. Care of a family member after a local, state, or federal public official or health authority having jurisdiction over the location in which the family member's place of employment is located or the family member's employer determines that the family member's presence on the job or in the community would jeopardize the health of others because of the family member's exposure to the communicable illness or because the family member is exhibiting symptoms of the communicable illness, regardless of whether the family member has been diagnosed with the communicable illness;
  - C. Care of a child or other family member when the individual's child care provider is unavailable due to a public health emergency, or if the child's or family member's school or place of care has been closed by a local, state, or federal public official or at the discretion of the school or place of care due to a public health emergency, including if a school or place of care is physically closed but providing instruction remotely; or
  - D. An employee's inability to work because the employee has a health condition that may increase susceptibility to or risk of a communicable illness that is the cause of the public health emergency.

# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

## EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

After the four week period following a public health emergency, any remaining supplemental paid sick/HFWA leave will be removed from the employee's paid sick/HFWA leave total.

### HFWA RECORDS

The School will retain records for each employee for a two-year period, documenting hours worked, paid sick/HFWA leave earned, and paid sick/HFWA leave used. The School will provide documentation of the current amount of paid leave employees have (1) available for use, and (2) already used during the current benefit year, including any supplemental PHE leave. Information may be requested once per month or when the need for paid sick/HFWA leave arises.

The School will not require disclosure of details relating to domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking or the details of an employee's or an employee's family member's health information as a condition of providing paid sick/HFWA leave. Any health or safety information possessed by the School regarding an employee or employee's family member will be maintained on a separate form and in a separate file from other personnel information; be treated as confidential medical records; and not be disclosed except to the affected employee or with the express permission of the affected employee.

### THE HFWA PRECEDENCE

This policy should be read and understood in conjunction with the entirety of the HFWA. Any definitions, requirements, or details of the HFWA shall supersede this policy.

### PERSONAL TIME

Personal days are allocated to employees based on their position within the organization. The number of personal days granted to each employee is specified in their individual employment agreement. Please refer to your most recent agreement for details on your personal day allowance.

Any unused PTO days will be paid out in July at the per diem rate per unused day or a prorated amount based on hours remaining on the last day of employee agreement. Personal days must be used in full or half day increments only.

Please note that taking more Sick/Personal time than is provided each year may result in termination of the employee agreement.

# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

## HOLIDAYS

The School will observe the following holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Day
- President's Day
- Memorial Day
- Juneteenth National Independence Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Day after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day

The Human Resources department will notify employees of the day the school will be closed if the holiday falls on a weekend. All full time, 260 days employees will receive holidays off unless otherwise notified by the school.

## BLACKOUT DAYS

Blackout days are those for which employees may not request time off, unless the time off is for a qualifying reason under the Healthy Families and Workplaces Act. If an emergency arises, speak with the appropriate Director or Principal. Blackout dates shall be circulated by the Human Resources department or designee and include, but are not limited to, days before or after an extended school break (e.g. Fall Break, Winter Break, Spring Break) or a Federal holiday.

When the Employee plans to take a personal or sick day, the Employee shall complete a PTO Request Form, in Calamari or current time off software, prior to a planned day off and let their supervisor know. The Employee is also required to follow the substitute procedures.

In the case of an unplanned personal day (such as when sick), the Employee must email the Substitute Coordinator and request a substitute through the DCSD absence management website no later than 5:30 am on the day of absence. The Employee must also complete a PTO Request Form, although they do not need to wait for approval prior to requesting the substitute through the DCSD absence management website.

## BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

The School provides bereavement leave to allow employees time away from work for the death of an immediate family member.

# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

Full-time employees are eligible for up to three (3) paid days off for bereavement leave upon the death of an immediate family member. Part-time employees are eligible for prorated bereavement leave based on their scheduled hours.

For the purposes of this policy, “immediate family” is defined as:

- Spouse of domestic partner
- Child (including step-children)
- Parent (including in-laws)
- Sibling
- Grandparent
- Any other relation residing in the employee’s household
- Additional unpaid time off may be granted at the discretion of the Executive Director or Human Resources. Employees may use any accrued paid time off for additional bereavement leave if needed.

Requests for bereavement leave should be made as soon as possible to the employee’s supervisor. The School may require documentation such as an obituary notice or death certificate upon return to work.

Bereavement leave must be used within a reasonable time of the death, as approved by the Executive Director or Human Resources. Unused bereavement leave does not carry over from year to year.

The School complies with all applicable state laws regarding bereavement leave. This policy may be amended at any time.





# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

## MILITARY LEAVE

If you are called into active military service or you enlist in the uniformed services, you will be eligible to receive an unpaid military leave of absence. To be eligible for military leave, you must provide the Director or Principal with advance notice of your service obligations unless you are prevented from providing such notice by military necessity or it is otherwise impossible or unreasonable for you to provide such notice. Provided your absence does not exceed applicable statutory limitations, you will retain reemployment rights and accrue seniority and benefits in accordance with applicable federal and state laws. Please ask the Human Resources department for further information about your eligibility for Military Leave. If you are required to attend yearly Reserves or National Guard duty, you can apply for an unpaid temporary military leave of absence not to exceed the number of days allowed by law (including travel). You should give the Human Resources department as much advance notice of your need for military leave as possible so that we can maintain proper coverage while you are away. Under FMLA, eligible employees with a spouse, son, daughter or parent on active duty or called to active duty status in the National Guard or Reserves in support of a contingency operation may use a 12-week leave entitlement to address certain qualifying exigencies. Qualifying exigencies may include attending certain military events, arranging for alternative childcare, addressing certain financial and legal arrangements, attending certain counseling sessions, and attending post-deployment reintegration briefings. Eligible employees may also take up to twenty-six (26) weeks of leave to care for a covered service member during a single twelve (12) month period. A covered service member is a current member of the Armed Forces, including a member of the National Guard or Reserves, who has a serious injury or illness incurred in the line of duty on active duty. The injury or illness must make the service member medically unfit to perform his/her duties for which the service member is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy; or is in outpatient status; or is on the temporary disability retired list.

## JURY DUTY AND WITNESS DUTY LEAVE

The School recognizes jury duty as a civic responsibility of everyone. When summoned for jury duty, an employee is granted leave to perform their duty as a juror. It is also required to provide verification of your initial selection. If excused from jury duty during regular work hours, the employee is expected to report to work promptly. The School will pay an employee \$50 for the first three (3) days of jury duty if the employee is selected as a jury member. The School will only pay for this time if the employee was scheduled to work and after a juror service certificate is submitted. After the first three (3) days, employees will receive pay according to the state policy applicable at the time of service.

## LEAVE FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, AND STALKING

Colorado law defines domestic violence as “an act or threatened act of violence upon a person with whom the actor is or has been involved in an intimate relationship.” An intimate relationship is one between spouses, former spouses, unmarried couples (including domestic partners) or persons who are both the parents of the same child regardless of whether the parents have married or have lived together.

# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

Colorado's Mandatory Leave for Domestic Violence Act addresses domestic violence in the workplace. The statute has two main features; first, it allows an employee who is the victim of domestic abuse, stalking, sexual assault, or any other crime that the court finds to include an act of domestic violence, to take up to three working days of leave from work per calendar year, with or without pay, and second, it permits an employer to obtain a restraining order against a perpetrator of domestic violence.

The victim/employee can take up to three days off from work to protect him or herself by: (1) seeking a civil restraining order to prevent domestic violence; (2) obtaining medical or mental health treatment for him or herself or his/her children to address physical or psychological injuries which are the result of domestic abuse or sexual assault as defined by statute; (3) securing his/her house from a perpetrator or seeking new housing to escape a perpetrator; and (4) seeking legal assistance to address issues stemming from domestic abuse or sexual assault.

Eligibility: Applies only to employees who have been employed with the employer for 12 consecutive months or longer. The employee must exhaust any leave time before invoking the leave provided for under this act. Time off for Domestic Violence leave is considered unpaid. Holiday pay, bereavement leave, or employer's jury duty pay are not granted on Domestic Violence leave.

## CRIME VICTIM LEAVE

Unpaid leave is available to employees who are victims of certain felonies for the purpose of attending judicial proceedings related to the crime. In addition, employees who are immediate family members of the crime victim (e.g., spouse, child, parent), a registered domestic partner of the crime victim or a child of the victim's domestic partner, may take unpaid time off work to attend judicial proceedings related to the crime.

## EXTENDED LEAVE

In the event that an extended leave from work is necessary (i.e. Short Term Disability and/or FMLA), employees are required to schedule a meeting with your Director or Principal and the Human Resources department a minimum of twelve (12) weeks prior to the first day of your extended leave, when possible. Employees returning after an extended leave are asked to notify the Human Resources department of their return three days before returning to work.

## SHORT TERM DISABILITY

The School provides short-term disability coverage to regular, full-time employees who have completed six (6) months of continuous employment and who are unable to work due to illness, pregnancy, or injury are eligible. The employee must have exhausted all paid leave, including vacation, personal days, and sick leave. An employee receiving workers' compensation or disability pay under any state or federal plan is ineligible for this benefit. The short-term disability benefit payment is 60 percent of the employee's base weekly wages or salary is calculated on average earnings in the previous six months, to a maximum benefit of \$1,000 per week. There is a two week waiting period. For additional information, please review the benefits guide for details.

# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

## FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT (FMLA)

The FMLA grants unpaid leave to eligible employees. Human Resources is charged with determining whether the Employee is eligible for FMLA. This policy should be read and understood in conjunction with the entirety of the FMLA and applicable regulations. Any definitions, requirements, or details of the FMLA and applicable regulations shall supplement and/or supersede this policy.

To be eligible for protection under the FMLA, the Employee must have been employed at the School for at least 12 months (which may be nonconsecutive) and have worked at least 1,250 hours during that time. The maximum time allowed for FMLA is a total of 12 weeks (480 hours) in a 12-month period (or 26 weeks if caring for a recovering service member). The 12-month period is measured on a “rolling basis” from the first day of the Employee’s first leave. Although most leave should be taken in a single block of time, intermittent leave or reduced leave schedules also may be approved, where required.

FMLA will allow for unpaid leave for:

- The need to care for a spouse, child, or parent with a serious health condition;
- The inability to work because of a serious health condition;
- The birth, adoption, or placement for foster care of a child;
- The need for a spouse, child or parent of a military member to handle a “qualifying exigency” related to the military member’s call to covered active duty. Examples of a “qualifying exigency” may include short-notice deployment, military events and related activities, childcare and School activities, financial and legal arrangements, counseling by someone other than a healthcare provider, rest and recuperation, post-deployment activities, parental care, or other limited related events or activities; or
- The need to care for a spouse, child, parent, or next of kin who is a recovering service member or covered veteran with a serious health condition incurred in the line of duty.
- Any other reason required by the FMLA.

All employees are required to first use any earned vacation and sick/HFWA leave at the beginning of and concurrently with their Family Medical Leave, unless collecting Workers’ Compensation benefits. If collecting disability payments, the Employee’s sick leave and vacation leave may be used first to offset the disability payments. Full insurance benefits continue during FMLA leave unless the employee fails to pay his or her share of the cost.

# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

Once all personal/sick/HFWA leave is exhausted, all FMLA is exhausted, and/or the Employee does not qualify for FMLA, the Employee is required to return to work. Failure to return to work may be deemed voluntary job abandonment. The Executive Director and/or Human Resources may determine, on a limited case-by-case basis, if the circumstances or medical condition warrants additional leave. This is an administrative decision that is NOT APPEALABLE. Whether the leave is to be paid or unpaid is determined by the Executive Director and/or Human Resources. The Executive Director and/or Human Resources act as the final decision-making authority whether to grant or deny additional leave after all other leave has been exhausted. If an employee does not return to work following his or her leave, or does not continue to work after the end of leave for at least 30 days, the employee shall reimburse the school for insurance premiums paid during the leave unless the employee does not return due to the continuation or onset of a serious health condition beyond the employee's control.

## FMLA NOTICE AND LEAVE REQUEST PROCESS

If the need for leave is foreseeable because of an expected birth/adoption or planned medical treatment, you must give at least 30 days' notice. If 30 days' notice is not possible, give notice as soon as practicable (within one or two business days of learning of your need for leave). Failure to provide appropriate notice may result in the delay or denial of leave.

Also, if you are seeking intermittent or reduced schedule leave that is foreseeable due to planned medical treatment or a series of treatments for yourself, a family member, or a covered service member, you must consult with the School first regarding the dates of this treatment to work out a schedule that best suits your needs or the needs of the covered military member, if applicable, and the School.

If the need for leave is unforeseeable, provide notice as soon as possible. Normal call-in procedures apply to all absences from work, including those for which leave under this policy may be requested. Failure to provide appropriate notice may result in the delay or denial of leave.

Please contact Human Resources for appropriate request forms.

## CERTIFICATION OF NEED FOR FMLA LEAVE

If you are requesting leave because of your own or a covered relative's serious health condition, you and the relevant health care provider must supply appropriate medical certification. You may obtain Medical Certification forms from your Human Resource Team. When you request leave, the School will notify you of the requirement for medical certification and when it is due (at least 15 days after your request leave). If you provide at least 30 days' notice of medical leave, you should also provide the medical certification before leave begins. Failure to provide requested medical certification promptly may result in denial of FMLA-covered leave until it is provided.



# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

At our expense, the School may require an examination by a second health care provider designated by us. If the second healthcare provider's opinion conflicts with the original medical certification, we, at our expense, may require a third, mutually agreeable, healthcare provider to conduct an examination and provide a final and binding opinion. Subsequent medical recertification may also be required. Failure to provide the requested certification within 15 days, when practicable, may result in a delay of further leave until it is provided.

The School also reserves the right to require certification from a covered military member's health care provider if you are requesting military caregiver leave and certification in connection with military exigency leave.

## REINSTATEMENT

Upon returning to work at the end of the leave, you will generally be placed in your original job or an equivalent job with equivalent pay and benefits. You will not lose any benefits that accrued before leave was taken.

## SPOUSE AGGREGATION

If you and your spouse are both employed by the School, the total number of weeks to which you are both entitled in the aggregate because of the birth or placement of a child or to care for a parent with a serious health condition will be limited to 12 weeks per leave year. Similarly, spouses employed by the School will be limited to a combined total of 26 weeks of leave to care for a military service member.

This 26-week leave period will be reduced, however, by the amount of leave taken for other qualifying FMLA events. This type of leave aggregation does not apply to leave needed for your own serious health condition, to care for a spouse or child with a serious health condition, or because of a qualifying exigency.

## ALTERNATIVE EMPLOYMENT

While on leave of absence, you may not work or be gainfully employed either for yourself or others that is inconsistent with the stated purpose of your need for FMLA or interfere with your ability to return to work when the FMLA leave period ends, unless express, written permission to perform such outside work has been granted by the School. If you are on a leave of absence and are found to be working elsewhere without permission, you will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

## INTERACTION WITH STATE AND LOCAL LAWS

Where state or local family and medical leave laws offer more protections or benefits to employees, the protections or benefits that are more favorable to the employee, as provided by these laws, will apply.

# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

## ABUSE OF LEAVE

If you are found to have provided a false reason for a leave, you will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

## DESIGNATION OF LEAVE

If the school becomes aware of any qualifying reason for FMLA leave, the School will designate it as such. An employee may not refuse FMLA designation under this policy.

## RETALIATION

The School will not retaliate against staff members who, in good faith, request or take leave under this policy.

## COLORADO FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE INSURANCE PROGRAM (FAMLI)

The School has opted out of participation in the Colorado Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program (FAMLI Act). The School employees, however, may participate in this program at their own cost and in accordance with applicable regulations and requirements. Because the School has opted out of FAMLI, the use of FAMLI leave may not be job protected leave unless FMLA or other job protected leave simultaneously applies to the leave. FAMLI leave will run concurrently with an approved FMLA, Non-FMLA, or other allowable leave to the extent allowed by law. As required by applicable portions of FAMLI, an employee will not be required to use or exhaust any accrued vacation, sick/HFWA leave, or other paid time off prior to or while taking FAMLI leave or receiving FAMLI benefits.

Employees who wish to participate can self-elect FAMLI coverage.

Employees will be responsible for contributing .45% of their wage into the program. Self-elections into FAMLI are for three years. Additional information about the FAMLI Act can be accessed through the Human Resources department or online at <https://famli.colorado.gov/employers/local-governments>.

# STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH

## REVIEW AND RECEIPT SIGNED ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the School Staff Handbook Revised on October 6, 2025 and that it is my responsibility to read and familiarize myself with the policies and guidelines set forth in the Handbook. If I have a question about these policies and guidelines, I understand that I can request an explanation from the Director, Principal, Executive Director, or their designated representative.

I understand that the School has the sole discretion to interpret the Handbook policies and guidelines. I recognize it may be necessary to change the policies, practices and benefits described in the Handbook from time to time and accordingly, that the School has the right to delete, suspend, discontinue or revise any or all of its provisions of the Handbook at any time.

I am aware that my employment with the School is "AT WILL." Just as I have the right to end my employment with the School at any time for any reason, with or without notice, the School also has the right to terminate my employment at any time, for any reason, with or without notice, notwithstanding any provision contained in the Handbook. I acknowledge that nothing in the Handbook extends or guarantees employment for a specific period of time or creates any contractual rights.

Staff Member Name (Print): \_\_\_\_\_

Staff Member Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

2025-2026 Student/Parent Handbook- Revised October 3, 2025

STEM School Highlands Ranch | 8773 Ridgeline Blvd., Highlands Ranch, CO 80129 | Office 303-683-STEM (7836)

# STEM SCHOOL

## HIGHLANDS RANCH

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