

## September 24, 2021 – STEM School Info 09/24

Parents/Guardians,

Today is House Competition Day! And what a perfect weather day for the outdoor activities with it. It's a great day to be a STEM Python! Here are some items of note for you this Friday.

### **COVID Update**

Not sure if you noticed, but there were no COVID emails this week! We are super excited to report we have no individuals with STEM on the COVID list and no individuals quarantining as close contacts at this time. Thank you to everyone for their efforts!

As a reminder, the simple rule of thumb: do not send your student to school if they are sick, have a fever greater than 100 degrees, have any COVID-19 symptoms, or have been in close contact with a positive COVID person. In addition, if a student OR anyone in your home is considering COVID testing, awaiting COVID testing results, or has tested positive for COVID, do not send your student to school. Contact our school nurse, Lara Scruggs, and she will assist you with making decisions appropriate for your student. You can reach Ms. Scruggs at 423-531-6270 or [scruggs\\_larisa@hcde.org](mailto:scruggs_larisa@hcde.org).

We continue to request everyone to wear masks indoors and will do so until directed otherwise by our district office.

### **Open House – Virtual Teacher Meet and Greet: Zoom Videos**

Thank you to everyone who attended our Virtual Open House – Teacher Meet and Greet last night. Though not in person, we hope you were still able to get a sense of the excitement and types of activities students are doing with each teacher. For those that missed it or have students in multiple grade levels, no worries! We recorded each Zoom

session. These will be posted by next week on our school website for viewing in the “About Us” tab – titled “Open House – Virtual Teacher Meet and Greet”.

### **STEM 101 – Learn about Canvas, Powerschool and Grading – Oct 4**

Student grades for first quarter are beginning to be populated in Powerschool. Grades are associated with the learning targets for each course. Learning targets are the key concepts that students must master in a course (for more information on grading and learning targets, [click here](#)).

On Monday, October 4 at 6:30pm, the STEM Administration will be hosting STEM 101, which will be a night for parents to begin their journey in learning about the grading process as well. During STEM 101, parents will learn about Canvas, Powerschool, Grading, and ER (Extended Remediation Week). This will be hosted via Zoom and also posted online on our school website.

We ask that 9th grade parents be patient with us as the freshmen students grow in their understanding of the process. After Fall Break, if you would like to connect with a teacher to discuss a specific item, we will be happy to connect with you at that time. Thank you for your patience as we train this great group of STEM learners!

### **ER Week (Extended Remediation) – Oct 4 thru Oct 8**

At the end of each quarter this year, students will have an opportunity to improve all learning target grades during ER Week. ER Week is a time that students can re-submit graded projects for higher levels of proficiency. Students can also re-take assessments to earn a higher level of proficiency. Higher levels of proficiency include grades of proficient (85) or advanced (100). For students who are struggling with reaching proficient (85), students will have an opportunity to work with teachers in focus groups to earn basic (70).

During ER Week, three items take place: student independent work time, workshops run by teachers where students choose to attend to get assistance or re-assess, and focus groups where students are assigned and required to work with a teacher. New work and assignments are not posted during this week. This week is set up as an opportunity for students to improve any learning target grade for the first quarter.

For students in grades 9-10 (underclassmen) who have no missing and/or below basic learning targets, these students may continue to work in ER to improve their grades to advanced (100). Students will also have an enrichment opportunity for the week – Fabrication Days. These students will be working in the brand-new Global Center for Digital Innovation (GCDI) on STEM micro-credentialing projects.

For students in grades 11-12 (upperclassmen), ER Week also has an additional difference. When an upperclassman no longer has any ER work left to remediate, the upperclassman is not required to attend school for the remainder of ER (he/she still must attend college classes). An email will be sent to each grade 11 and 12 student and parent by Thursday, Sept 30 for students in grades 11 and 12 that are assigned mandatory ER. Please note that even if the student is not assigned mandatory ER, the student is still welcome to come in and participate to improve their learning target grade to advanced (100).

### **Senate and Blue Jean Friday**

At the STEM School we have a Student Support Senate, which is an elected group of students who meet monthly with Dr. Donen. As part of our mission, we expect students to collaborate, critically think and innovate. The senators ultimately are responsible for designing, editing and deciding on school rules, interventions, student handbook and other items that impact school culture. When we say that students make the rules for the school, we are not kidding. The senators do just that.

The senate consistently edits and makes changes throughout the year. The school is ever changing and evolving. In the senate's last meeting, the senators decided to implement

Friday Blue Jean Day going forward. The senators tested out the idea last year and through their process (which requires two senators and a teacher sponsor) amended the dress code for the Blue Jean Fridays. So, if you see students in blue jeans on Friday, you'll know how that happened. The senators also post any changes made throughout the year in Canvas – STEM General for students to view.

The [Senate Student Handbook](#) with information on intervention procedures, student handbook, dress code and other items can be viewed online on the STEM School website at any time. The link is found in the “Student” tab on the website.

### **STEM Wear - Reminder**

The House Committee is in the ordering process for STEM Wear. Options include: House pullover hoodies, House zip up sweatshirts, Navy long sleeved STEM tees, and Royal blue long sleeved STEM tees. Each of these items are available for ordering until this Sunday, September 26th by clicking this link: [STEM Apparel ordering](#). Please note that our printer has made us aware that due to the impact of Covid on the distributor's sources for inventory, some availability might be limited. In the event that situation occurs for our order, we will adjust accordingly or refund if necessary.

### **Email Updates – Posted on Website**

These email updates are posted on the STEM School Chattanooga website by clicking the “Updates” tab. Not only will the current update be viewable, but you can look back through updates previously sent. We also share these updates in STEM General for the students in Canvas.

Thank you for your support!

Dr. Tony Donen  
Principal

## September 17, 2021 – STEM School Info 09/17

Parents/Guardians,

It was fantastic to get a full week of school this week! Here are some items of note for you as we head into the weekend.

### **COVID Update**

Though we had several COVID cases the end of last week and early this week, we are happy to note that we did not have any in school contact with these individuals. We appreciate everyone making choices to stay home when there is uncertainty regarding COVID situations outside of school.

The simple rule of thumb: do not send your student to school if they are sick, have a fever greater than 100 degrees, have any COVID-19 symptoms, or have been in close contact with a positive COVID person. In addition, if a student OR anyone in your home is considering COVID testing, awaiting COVID testing results, or has tested positive for COVID, do not send your student to school. Contact our school nurse, Lara Scruggs, and she will assist you with making decisions appropriate for your student. You can reach Ms. Scruggs at 423-531-6270 or [scruggs\\_larisa@hcde.org](mailto:scruggs_larisa@hcde.org).

We continue to request everyone to wear masks indoors.

### **Open House – Virtual Teacher Meet and Greet – Sept 23**

The Open House – Teacher Meet and Greet via Zoom is almost here! This upcoming Thursday, September 23 at 6:30pm come and join us virtually to meet our teachers and hear from them about their classes. The Teacher Meet and Greet will last approximately one hour. Each of the

Zoom Meet and Greet will also be recorded, so if you want to view multiple grade levels, you will be able to attend one live and watch the others at your convenience. Below are the links to each Zoom.

[Grade 9 Zoom Link](#)

[Grade 10 Zoom Link](#)

[Grade 11 and 12 Zoom Link](#)

“See” you on Thursday night!

### **STEM 101 – Learn about Canvas, Powerschool and Grading – Oct 2**

In the next few weeks, students will begin to receive learning target grades for each course. Learning targets are the key concepts that students must master in a course. Grading at STEM School Chattanooga follows a standards-based grading approach—so we tie all our grades directly to a specific standard required for learning by the state of Tennessee. Here at STEM, we call these standards “learning targets”, and they are written in student-friendly language and signify what a student should learn. In each course, the overall student grade is made up of these individual learning target grades studied throughout the year.

In 9th grade, teachers will be teaching the students what these grades mean, how the student can improve on their understanding of a learning target, and thus, how the grade can improve. During the end of September and beginning of October, we will be helping the freshmen become experts in understanding our grading process and how each student will be in charge of controlling the outcome.

On Monday, October 4<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm, the STEM Administration will be hosting STEM 101, which will be a night for parents to begin their journey in learning this process as well. During STEM 101, parents will learn about Canvas, Powerschool, Grading, and ER (Extended Remediation Week). This will be hosted via Zoom and also posted online on our school website.

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### **STEM Wear**

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### **Golden Apple Award**

Food City and News 12 Now are recognizing teachers in our region for the excellent work that takes place in their classrooms. The Golden Apple Award is another way to recognize, uplift, and report the good news story of teachers who excel at empowering students. If you or your student have a STEM teacher you would like to nominate, you can submit a nomination online at [www.wdef.com/goldenapple](http://www.wdef.com/goldenapple). PS The nomination form asks for the Food City closest to the school, which would be the Food City located at 3600 Hixson Pike, Chattanooga, TN 37415.

### **Bus Transportation**

The HCS Bus Transportation Department has made additional edits to bus routes at this time. The latest edits have been to Bus 322 in the morning where two stops were removed in the morning (Hixson Elementary and Red Bank High). We have been told they will also be tracking this bus with GPS. The most up-to-date route sheet provided to us from the Hamilton County transportation department will always be posted on our website: [Bus Route Sheet](#).

We certainly appreciate everyone's patience while bus transportation has edited the schedule. Please know that bus transportation is also having difficulty with filling positions for drivers this fall. There will likely be times when buses may double up or run late in the afternoon. Hopefully this will be minimal, but we did want to share that with you as the year progresses.

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Thank you for your support!

Dr. Tony Donen

Principal

## **September 10, 2021 – STEM School Info 09/10**

Parents/Guardians,

It was great to see the students again on Thursday and Friday! Here are a few pieces of information we wanted to share with you.

### **COVID Update**

When we returned to school on Thursday, we heard from several families that they may have been exposed to COVID over the Labor Day weekend. We appreciate those families keeping their students at home and working toward testing the student prior to returning to



school. Thank you to everyone who continues to make appropriate decisions for school safety.

The simple rule of thumb: do not send your student to school if they are sick, have a fever greater than 100 degrees, have any COVID-19 symptoms, or have been in close contact with a positive COVID person. In addition, if a student OR anyone in your home is considering COVID testing, awaiting COVID testing results, or has tested positive for COVID, do not send your student to school. Contact our school nurse, Lara Scruggs, and she will assist you with making decisions appropriate for your student. You can reach Ms. Scruggs at 423-531-6270 or [scruggs\\_larisa@hcde.org](mailto:scruggs_larisa@hcde.org).

We have also heard from more families about having their student vaccinated. For those looking for some comparisons about vaccination vs non-vaccination statistics, here is some information we found from two states - [South Carolina](#) and [Washington](#). [Tennessee](#) has a dashboard for COVID Statistics that you can also review (but it does not post vaccination vs non-vaccination information).

### **Open House – Virtual Teacher Meet and Greet – Sept 23**

Remember to save the date! We will be hosting our Open House – Teacher Meet and Greet via Zoom on Thursday, September 23 at 6:30pm. The Teacher Meet and Greet will last approximately one hour. Each teacher team (9th grade team, 10th grade team, and the combined 11/12th grade team) will host their own Zoom during that time. The format will have each teacher presenting and allow for parents/guardians to post questions to the teacher team through the chat. We are excited for you to hear from your student's teachers and learn what is happening in your student's classes. Each of the Zoom Meet and Greets will also be recorded, so if you want to view multiple grade levels, you will be able to attend one live and watch the others at your convenience. Links for the Zooms will be forthcoming the week of the STEM Teacher Meet and Greet. For those new to STEM, the STEM Meet and Greet is our version of an Open House... though this will be in a virtual format!

## **School Academic Performance – TVAAS and Reward School**

Each year students are tested across Tennessee for academic areas. Tennessee has two criteria for scoring each school. The first criteria is TVAAS, which is used to determine a school's value added to a student's predicted performance (1 is lowest, 5 is highest). The second is overall performance in which schools can be designated as Priority (very low performance) up to Reward (very high performance). The Tennessee Department of Education just released scores for schools this past week. We are happy to announce that STEM School Chattanooga earned both a TVAAS of 5 and the recognition of a Reward School. Though this may be the goal of most schools, this is ultimately not the bigger goal of our school. Our ultimate goal is in the [mission of our school](#) where we strive to help each student become adept in critically thinking, innovating and collaborating, and becoming empowered in their learning. We believe by doing so, our students have the opportunity to thrive post high school and be leaders in our world.

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Dr. Tony Donen

Principal