

STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH FOURTH GRADE QUICK START PARENT GUIDE

Mission

Never Stop Innovating

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.

Formula for Character

Honesty, Integrity, Respect, Responsibility, Empathy

Fourth Grade Team

Mr. Jacobson, Ms. McKinney, Ms. Phelps, and Mrs. Brost

Schedule

Students are divided into four homerooms. Classes start at 7:40am with morning announcements followed by the Classroom Meeting/Community Time. Students arriving after 7:40 are marked tardy.

7:30 - 7:40	Soft Start
7:40 - 8:00	Classroom Meeting/Community Time
8:00 - 9:30	Math
9:30 - 10:35	Language Arts
10:55 -11:40	Specials
11:40 - 12:40	Social Studies
12:40 - 1:30	Lunch and Recess
1:30 - 2:30	Science/Engineering

PREPARING FOR SCHOOL

School Supplies/Technology

All students will be assigned a chromebook that will stay at school for them to use. Students are also allowed to bring in a 5G compatible device from home, but this is not required. Students will use Canvas and Google Suite to complete classwork. Students will be expected to use their Chromebooks only for educational purposes as well as take care of them and be respectful when posting comments on their classroom site.

Clothing

Please follow the STEM student dress code within the parent/student handbook. The playground is equipped with monkey bars, rock wall, climbing ladders and slides all on a mulch area surrounded by black top and artificial turf. Although there is no requirement for closed toed shoes in the dress code, it may not be safe for students to wear flip flop sandals or open toed shoes while enjoying the playground and its equipment.

In the morning, students will stand outside after being dropped off in the driveline until their teacher meets the class outside. Warm clothing is essential to keeping your child comfortable and healthy during chilly mornings. Hats, jackets, gloves, and additional layers are encouraged. Please write your student's name on all jackets, gloves, hats, and other clothing items that your student may take off during the school day.

Water Bottles

Students must carry water in leak proof bottles in order to stay hydrated. All water bottles need to be clearly labeled in order to stay out of the ever-growing Lost and Found.

Snacks

Snack breaks are included throughout the day. Please plan on only sending 1-2 healthy snacks with your student each day. Please do not send snacks with peanuts in case of allergies.

Lunch

Each student is assigned a DCSD identification number that stays with them throughout their DCSD career. This number is used at lunch time to access their lunch account funds and must be memorized to keep the lunch line moving at a steady pace. School lunch includes a fruit, vegetable, main dish, and milk. If students wish to buy snacks in addition to the provided lunch, they must have additional funds in their account.

Students are welcome to bring their own lunch in a reusable lunch bag. Our lunch room includes a microwave if students need to heat up their lunch, but students will not have access to a refrigerator. Students are responsible for carrying their lunch bag to recess and back to the classroom. Please include your student's name on their lunch bag.

Recess

Students have this free time to talk with their friends and play on the elementary playground. All students are expected to have weather appropriate clothing, as we only stay inside for recess if the weather is unusually harsh.

ACADEMICS

Specials Rotations

Students at STEM are given the opportunity to engage in learning Music, Art, Physical Education, and Computer Information and Technology. These special classes will be on a rotating schedule.

Problem Based Learning Units

At STEM, our students work in groups to investigate real world problems. They receive direct instruction on state standards to guide them throughout the problem solving process. These units are slightly modified every year. Students may investigate:

- The limited supply of fossil fuels and non-renewable resources
- How protection from forces can impact the safety of passengers
- The challenges related to a lack of accessible electricity around the world

Use of Technology

Technology will be utilized in the classroom on a daily basis. Various technologies will be used by your student during many subjects including math, literacy, science and engineering, with the assistance of the classroom teacher and instructional assistant. It will also be used to facilitate independent and small group activities or lessons throughout the day. Students will use Canvas to access resources and assignments.

Fourth graders are expected to use technology responsibly and refrain from playing games or visiting non-academic websites throughout the day. Students who do not meet this expectation will lose the privilege of using technology during the day. As a result, students may be required to complete additional work on paper and/or at home. We ask that students do not download games or Google Chrome extensions to the computer they use at school.

Field Trips

Field trips are thoughtfully planned to give unique, hands-on educational experiences for further exploration and to supplement what is already being taught in the classroom. Most 4th grade field trips are designed to illustrate and expand upon content students have learned or will learn in social studies. 4th grade social studies focuses primarily on Colorado's history. For example, students learn about the Ancestral Puebloans in class, and then go on a field trip to the Manitou Cliff Dwellings to experience what life was like for these people.

Typical Field trips and *estimated* cost:

- **Denver Zoo- \$50:** Our science focus for the first semester is Life Science. Students are partnering with the Denver Zoo to redesign 10 animal exhibits. Part of this program is for students to have two classroom experiences led by zoo keepers, a visit to the zoo to learn about the habitat, sketch the habitat that will be redesigned, and learn about the different variables that students need to include in the design. The last visit is for the students to present to the board members and zoo keepers at the zoo to convince them to use their design in the zoo's upcoming redesign of the habitat.
- **Moving day, History Colorado- free:** Students will explore the movement of people across Colorado from prehistory to 1870. By examining community groups, like the Ancestral Puebloans, Mountain Men, Miners, Utes, Plains

Indians and Hispanos, students will discover how each group has contributed and influenced life today in Colorado.

- **Manitou Springs Cliff Dwellings - \$17:** Students will experience an up close and personal look into the life of the Anasazi. Here they will learn about Anasazi culture, including how they farmed, hunted and endured.
- **Plains Conservation Center - \$20:** Get to know the prairie in a whole new way. On our ride across the plains, students watch for wildlife in the landscape, from prairie dogs to pronghorn antelope or birds of prey, beneath the great stretching sky. With stops at the Sod Homes and Cheyenne Camp, your group will experience what it was like to be a homesteader and a Cheyenne living on the prairie in the 1800s.
- **History Museum and Walking Tour - \$23:** This includes the tour of the museum as well as a walking tour exploring the history of capitol hill.
- **World of Waves - \$12:** The *World of Waves STEM Workshop* blends cutting-edge science, interactive technology and student-directed inquiry supporting the next generation of innovators, scientists and engineers. Driven by Colorado's Academic Standards, as well as Next Generation Science Standards, this program incorporates 4th-8th grade content and learning focused on the fundamental role of waves in science, technology, innovation and CU research
- **State Capitol and Justice Center - \$21:** Students will learn about the three branches of government and how our justice system works.
- **April/May Union Station/ Larimer Square walking tour - \$25** Explore Denver's oldest block and learn about the first city center and how local citizens saved the block of buildings from demolition to create Denver's first historic district.

Office Hours

Fourth grade teachers will post their office hours on canvas. Office hours are for students to make up any missing assignments and to retake assessments. Assessment retakes will only be allowed during office hours or during snack recess.

Homework

Students are expected to finish unfinished classwork at home, begin building study skills, and read independently each night. Students can access their work in their Google Drive and track missing assignments on Canvas. They are also encouraged to write their homework in their school planner (provided). We encourage parents to help their students

build a routine of checking for missing assignments.

OTHER

Instructional Assistants

STEM School Highlands Ranch is proud to provide a full time instructional aide that is dedicated to our grade level. The instructional assistant provides additional support for both students and their teachers each and every day. Instructional assistants work either in small groups or one-on-one to offer support as needed. Our assistants are extremely valued and we expect that they are respected as any other adult on campus.

Birthday Celebrations

We love to celebrate your student's birthday with the whole class. With advance notice to the classroom teacher, you may bring in a store-bought, edible treat or goodie bag to share with the class; however, this is not a requirement. Please check beforehand in case of allergies in the classroom.

Phones and iPods

Students may not use phones during the school day. We ask that any and all communication from the parent or student go through the teacher and the school phones. If there is an emergency, illness, or other need to call home, the office will communicate directly with parent/guardian(s). We prefer that any texting communication software, such as iMessage, be disabled on your student's computer to avoid the possibility of texting others from their computer throughout the day. Elementary students will not be allowed to use their phones/ipods at any time during the school day, including during clubs and after school activities/driveline, and should leave these devices at home. It is important that every STEM Spartan elementary student meets this expectation in order to avoid a domino effect of phone use.

Student Emails

Each student has an email address first.last@s.stemk12.org. This email address should be used for educational purposes only (communicating about group work, emailing a teacher, receiving student newsletters, etc.). Students should not be using this email address for personal communication or to communicate to parent/guardian(s) during the school day.

Students are expected to use appropriate language and email etiquette when sending emails within the STEM network. This email address will be used to log in to Google Drive, school subscriptions, and other educational websites. This email should not be used to sign up for other, non-academic subscriptions.

Library

The STEM library consists of white book shelves around the elementary hallways with books divided by age appropriate reading levels. This system ensures books are readily available for students to use and place in baskets when they are done. Individual classrooms also have a collection of books for students to use and return when done.

Volunteering

Volunteering in the classroom is a great way to help the teacher and be involved and informed of what your student is learning in the classroom. If interested, please reach out to your child's teacher for more information.

4th Grade Spartans,

Yes We Are!

We look forward to a great year in 4th grade!