

STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH FIFTH 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

Fifth Grade Team

Ms. Addison, Mrs. Ackley, Ms. Gusich and Mr. Chang

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 7:45 are marked tardy.**

7:30 - 7:40	Soft Start
7:40 - 8:10	Classroom Meeting/Community Time
8:10 - 9:10	Math
9:10-11:00	Language Arts Reader's Workshop/Word Study/Morning Recess
11:05-11:55	Specials
11:55-12:35	Writers Workshop
12:35: 1:20	Lunch and Recess

1:20- 2:30	Social Studies or Science
2:35	Dismissal

PREPARING FOR SCHOOL

School Supplies/Technology

Fifth graders will be using a classroom chromebook for the year. Parents and students are required to sign a contract at the beginning of the school year around using computers in an appropriate manner and not touching other students' computers. The student is responsible for taking care for all parts of their computer. Headphones (preferably not bluetooth) are regularly used and should be kept at school for required for iReady instruction and other audio instruction.

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. Non-water beverages are not permitted for elementary students in the classroom.

Clothing

Other than the standard dress code for STEM, there are some broader suggestions for school clothing for your Fifth Grade student. 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.

Snacks

Snack breaks are included throughout the day. Please plan on only sending ~2 **healthy snacks** with your student each day as they have a late lunch this year. Please do not send snacks with peanuts in case of allergies. Candy and gum are not permitted in fifth grade classrooms or during recess. These items need to be kept at home.

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 and must be memorized to keep the lunch line moving at a steady pace. School lunch includes a fruit, vegetable, main dish, and milk. **School lunches will be free for all students.** If students wish to **buy seconds or 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

Lunch recess occurs on a daily basis. Our additional grade level recess is earned and not guaranteed based on academics or behavior. Students have this free time to talk with their friends and play on the elementary playground or our play field. 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. Students receive direct instruction on state standards to guide them through the problem solving process. These units are slightly modified every year. Students may investigate:

- The sustainability of current farming techniques; Soil continues to erode with every planting season, and farming as we know it will not last forever. Help create a plan to solve the Kinder's garden issue on campus
- The methods of observation being used to explore the universe; Students work with aerospace mentors to examine existing methods for exploring space and design new technologies to collect data about the universe
- The conflicting viewpoints about the weight of positive and negative effects that wild horses have on the ecosystems they interact with
- Injustices that regular people face today, similar to the colonists during the American Revolution and how regular people can help influence laws and the government.

Use of Technology

Technology will be utilized in the classroom on a daily basis. Various technologies will be used by your student over 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.

Fifth 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. If possible, we ask that students do not download games, Google Chrome extensions, or special mouse cursors to the same computer they plan to use at school.

Field Trips

Field trips are thoughtfully planned to give unique, hands-on educational experiences. In fifth grade, students will go to:

Typical Field trips and *estimated* cost:

- **Outdoor Education - \$350:** Our outdoor education is an overnight trip and a highlight for the students in 5th grade. This trip combines learning, nature, outdoor activities and fun to expose students to subject matters they may not have seen before. This trip is from either Mon-Wed, or Wed-Friday in the fall depending on availability. The overnight trip gives students the opportunity to practice their independence in a safe environment. Students are divided into groups to take daily classes such as team building, low ropes course, balloon rescue, ecology, art in nature, outdoor skills, archery, orientating, and animal tracking.
- **Revolutionary War Reenactment - \$100:** 5th grade has also an opportunity to understand history and characters portrayed surrounding the Revolutionary War, organized every year in Chatfield State Park.
- **Main Event - \$50:** A 5th grade celebration where students participate in STEM labs
- **Denver Botanic Gardens - \$35:** Students visit the gardens and study different methods of horticulture.
- **Young Ameritowne- \$TBD:** Students learn personal finances, apply/interview for jobs, and participate in helping run a town.

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 a planner or on their Google Calendar.

With this being an important transition year for students preparing for middle school, we encourage students to build independence, responsibility, and time management skills. If your student is coming home with more than an hour of homework each night, it is likely that they are not utilizing their classwork time wisely. We encourage parents to help their students build a routine of checking for missing assignments and looking in their planner or calendar, to help ease them towards independence throughout the year.

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, iPads, Computer Messaging

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. Students and or parents should not be communicating by email during school hours. If there is an emergency, illness, or other need to call home, the office will communicate directly with parent/guardian(s).. Additionally, refrain from communicating with your student through watches. These cause distractions and interfere with your student's learning and the classroom environment. Elementary students will not be allowed to use their phones at any time during the school day, including during clubs and after school activities/driveline, and should leave these devices at home or in backpacks. 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.

5th Grade Spartans,

Yes We Are!

We look forward to a great year in 5th grade!