Frequently Asked Questions
For Students New to STEM

Q: What does the acronym STEM stand for?
A: Science, Technology, Engineering, Math

Q: How do I apply for The Riverside STEM Academy?
A: Our application process opens once a year for the upcoming school year. Applications for the 2017-2018 school year will be accepted online from November 1 through December 22.

Q: When can I apply for my student to attend STEM?
A: You may apply during open enrollment (which is set by the District) as early as your student’s 4th grade year.

Q: My child is a young 5th grader. I would like him/her to repeat 5th grade and apply for STEM the next school year – is this allowed?
A: No – students who have completed 5th grade are not eligible for the incoming 5th grade lottery.

Q: I applied to STEM last year and am currently on the waiting list. Do I need to reapply each year?
A: No, you do not need to reapply for the 5-8 waitlist – it remains active through the end of 8th grade, at that time, students must reapply for the high school program.

Q: What are the chances my student will be accepted at STEM for 2017-2018?
A: There are 105 slots open in 5th grade for 2017-2018. The chances are determined by the number of applications received. Currently there are no openings for grades 6-8, but, if you would like to get your child’s name on the waiting list, this is the only opportunity to apply and be added to this list.

Q: Do I need to provide the school with test scores?
A: If your student has been attending an RUSD school for at least 2 years, then you do not need to provide test scores. If you are new to this district or currently in another school district then you may need to provide test scores, report card or other documentation.

Q: What kind of test scores do you accept?
A: We accept SBAC scores or standardized assessments that current schools administer such as: Stanford 9, Iowa Test of Basic Skills, or similar scores. Students from private or charter schools may be required to take an entrance exam aligned to the Smarter Balance Assessment Consortium (SBAC).

Q: Does STEM follow the California State Standards and will the school implement the Common Core Standards?
A: Yes, the school incorporates the California Standards in all content areas including the newly adopted Language Arts and Math Common Core Standards. We offer an engaging, challenging, content-rich curriculum that builds a solid foundation and grows from year to year. The curriculum is designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and career.

Q: Do siblings of current students have preference in the Lottery?
A: No, RSA does not give sibling preference. Each student is treated individually with their own lottery number.

Q: How many students are in a classroom?
A: A maximum of 35 students are in each classroom.

Q: Is there a STEM High School?
A: Yes, the Riverside STEM Academy enrolls grades 5 through 12.
Q: Does my student have to be GATE Identified?
A: The majority of teachers are GATE certificated however, students do not need to be GATE identified to apply and be accepted in the school.

Q: How is the waitlist managed?
A: Parents are notified when a spot becomes available. Parents have 48 hours to accept or decline their student’s space in our program. Once a spot has been declined, the student’s name is removed from the waitlist. In order to be re-added the parent must place a new application for the next school year. New applicants are added to the existing waitlist. Students in the 7th and 8th grade must be enrolled in the correct math program (Accelerated Math 7 for 7th grade, and Math 1 Accelerated for 8th grade) in order to join the program mid-year.

Q: How can I help my incoming 5th grade student be successful in your program?
A: Students entering 5th grade are expected to attend a 1-week bridge program during the summer.

Q: What steps are in place to help a student adjust to the new school environment at the Riverside STEM Academy after the school year has started?
A: Teachers are notified when a new student is joining STEM. All teachers can assist the student in downloading their textbooks and showing them how to access HAIKU. In addition, teachers choose another student as an ambassador to assist the new student in navigating the campus.

Q: Do you require parents to purchase a laptop/netbook for their student?
A: Yes, the parents must provide the student with an electronic device. Parents, who are unable to provide their student with an electronic device, can complete an application for an RSA loaner device. We highly recommend students purchase insurance if they check out a loaner device. Students who bring their own devices must register their device with our Technology Specialist.

Q: What kind of assistance do you offer parents for tech support?
A: All parents are required to attend the technology training before the school year begins. During the year, if questions or problems arise you may schedule an appointment with our Technology Specialist.

Q: Are there opportunities for parents to volunteer on campus?
A: Yes! We have a very active PTSA who need volunteers for a variety of activities. You may also contact your student’s teachers via email to inquire about opportunities to volunteer. Please note any volunteer working 4 or more hours per week must obtain fingerprint clearance and have a current negative TB test on file.

Q: Is RSA campus a CLOSED Campus?
A: Yes, parents and visitors who wish to come onto campus at any time during school hours must first sign in at the front office, obtain a visitor pass and have an approved reason for visiting. If you wish to visit a classroom you must arrange this in advance with the teacher.

Q: Is there a cafeteria at the Riverside STEM Academy?
A: Yes, breakfast and lunch is offered to students along with food at a Nutrition Break. Students in the RUSD Free & Reduced Lunch program can continue on this program at RSA. Parents can also apply if they believe they may qualify for the program.

Q: My student forgot their lunch at home and does not have any money to buy lunch. What should they do?
A: Your student may still go through the cafeteria line and purchase food. He/she will be sent home with a cafeteria slip with amount owed reflected.

Q: My student forgot an item; may I take it to their classroom?
A: Because we are a closed campus and do not want to disturb instruction time, we ask that all items for students are brought to the front office. Please note we do not have items delivered to the classrooms. Students are expected to check the front office at nutrition break or lunch for any anticipated deliveries.