

Welcome back to school! I hope you had an amazing summer, and were able to spend some time relaxing and reconnecting as a family. I am very excited for the upcoming school year. I can't wait to see our returning students and hear about their summer experiences, and to get to know our students new to STEM. I am also thrilled to be serving our community in my new role as principal. I am looking forward to continuing the work we have done, providing students with opportunities and experiences that will prepare them to be successful in high school and beyond. I am passionate about our STEM model and the skills that it develops in our students. Our staff along with our community of families and partners will continue to refine and improve the educational experience for all of our students.

Every year we work to improve our practices at STEM Launch. This year we will focus on increasing the number of Problem Based Learning units students are interacting with, as well as improving the learning opportunities within those units. These units are a foundational piece to our model and are a leverage point for greater success for our students. Additionally we are looking to find ways to strengthen our STEM community. This year we will begin to implement restorative justice practices in many of our classrooms. Restorative justice practices empower students to resolve conflicts on their own and in small groups. These practices are guided by an adult, and the problem solving skills are taught to students. Resolving conflict teaches students to control their emotions and behavior, pay attention to others' feelings and words, and to be aware and respect others' differences. These are also the precise "soft" skills that lead to success in the work place.

Along with my new position there have been some other changes in our staff. Carrie Romero-Brugger will be moving to our Assistant Principal position, having previously served as our Dean of Students for the past 4 years. Melissa Sayre is moving from her counseling position to take over our Dean position. I would also like to introduce Suzanne Vega as our new office manager. She comes to us with some great experiences working in Denver Public Schools.

Our mission, ***to inspire achievement through rigorous, innovative, and authentic experiences***, will drive us to achieve excellence for our students in the classroom and beyond. Our staff and I cannot wait to get started! If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me. Enjoy the last weeks of summer and go Innovators!

Sincerely,

Martin McCarthy
Principal
STEM Launch K-8