

## *Welcome to STEM Launch!*

We are pleased to have your family at our school and we are looking forward to a remarkable and enriching school year for your students.

***The mission of STEM Launch is to inspire achievement through rigorous, innovative, and authentic experiences.***

STEM education is a big “buzz word” in our educational system today. At STEM Launch, we offer a full range of rigorous educational opportunities in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, literacy and social studies with full support of music, art and physical education. Problem Based Learning offers connected experiences between the home, school, and community. Student skills are developed for social, political and economic participation in a diverse, interdependent, and changing world.

Creativity is often cited as “the missing ingredient” in school systems today. In more traditional settings, students may spend much of their class time using convergent thinking skills – to come up with the ‘correct answer.’ There are times when this type of thinking is important; however, it often stops some very critical and necessary divergent thinking from occurring. In this age of widely available information, children need to learn how to become critical thinkers. And, they need to be able to choose between a variety of ‘right choices’ or ‘correct answers’. ‘Outside of the box’ thinking is necessary in today’s world, especially in scientific and artistic fields of study. In addition to creative problem solving in within their classroom experience, our students engage in interactions with experts in the field and collaborate with professionals from a variety of industries.

The Colorado Department of Education researched schools that outperformed their peers in closing the achievement gaps for all groups (Colorado Legacy Foundation, 2008). The promising practices and strategies of these schools included setting a culture of high expectations and accountability for students, using data to drive instruction, individual support for struggling students, active engagement of teachers in leadership, planning, and professional development opportunities, commitment to core academics (but not at the expense of the arts and humanities), small learning communities, and flexible resources to meet student needs (Colorado Legacy Foundation, p. 9, 2008). At STEM Launch, we are committed to these practices and our STEM model is our foundation for ensuring these practices are prevalent within each classroom and learning environment.

Our teachers and staff are fully dedicated to your child’s personal and academic growth, and we rely on your active participation and support to achieve our mission for your child. We believe that open communication between parents and teachers is essential for a student’s success in school. The purpose of our handbook, website, and timely correspondence is to share information with families that promotes an understanding of our policies, practices and procedures and fosters a spirit of cooperation between parents and our staff and faculty. If you have any questions or concerns in regards to one or more of our policies, procedures or practices, please do not hesitate to contact the administrative staff. Again, welcome to STEM Launch – we look forward to an outstanding year!

Warm Regards,

Kellie Lauth  
Principal