



26631 Reaume St., Woodhaven, MI
www.downriversbest.com

Frequently Asked Questions about Downriver STEM @ Weiss

Join us for informational parent nights held at Weiss, each starting at 6:00

Tuesday, April 26
Wednesday, April 27
Thursday, April 28

What does STEM stand for?

Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

Why are you changing the name of Weiss?

Frank E. Weiss Elementary will remain the formal name of the school. The name "Downriver STEM @ Weiss" was created to recognize and honor the longstanding name of Frank E. Weiss Elementary while recognizing the shift in curricular programming.

What are some of the differences in curriculum at the STEM school?

All subjects; reading, writing, math, social studies, and science are taught using the core Gibraltar School District curriculum which is based on the Michigan Academic Standards. Through STEM based learning experiences, this core curriculum will be enhanced through added STEM components. Added components include:

- Engineering is Elementary (EIE): From the Museum of Science in Boston, EIE provides science units that are developed with an Engineering framework. Each grade level will teach one of these units in the first year.
- Project Based Learning (PBL): PBL is a teaching method in which students gain knowledge and skills by working collaboratively for an extended period of time to investigate and respond to an engaging and complex question, problem, or challenge. Other curricular concepts can be integrated through a PBL experience.
- 1:1 Technology: This is addressed in the next question.

What does "one-to-one" technology mean for my student?

One to one (1:1) technology simply means that each child will have access to an iPad or Chromebook while at school. Teachers will be able to deliver lessons and engage students in different ways through the use of 1:1 technology. A few benefits that students will encounter include customization and differentiation of instruction based on learning needs, increased collaboration between students, the ability to easily exchange information, as well as increased basic technology skills.

Will there still be Art, Music, and Gym at Weiss and what will they look like?

Yes; Art, Music, and Physical Education will still be in place following the same frequency that students currently experience.

Why are you doing STEM and not STEAM?

The added "A" represents the arts. In a STEAM school, there is deliberate planning given to arts integration. While we are currently developing this program as STEM, there will be components of STEAM in our curriculum. We will be working with our Art, Music, and Physical Education teachers to develop a comprehensive plan to include the arts in more areas in the future.

With Cindy Hoffman retiring as Principal of Weiss, who will be the new Principal?

Interviews for the Downriver STEM @ Weiss Principal position were held at the end of February. The interview committee consisted of Weiss teachers, staff and parents, other building and district administration and a board member. Mr. Dave Anderson has been selected to be the new principal. Mr. Anderson has been a teacher at Chapman Elementary for 12 years where he has taught 4th and 5th grade. Mr. Anderson has a strong Science background and has a wealth of experience as a teacher and a leader. We are excited for Mr. Anderson to be at the helm at Weiss.

Will the new Principal transition with Ms. Hoffman and will they be a part of the STEM planning?

Yes, the new principal (Dave Anderson) will have the opportunity to spend time with Mrs. Hoffman and learn about Weiss. Mr. Anderson will be an integral part of developing the STEM school and will be a part of all parent meetings and informational sessions.

I heard teachers are interviewing for positions at Weiss, why?

There will be a teacher selection process in place for the STEM school. In order to run an effective and strong STEM school experience, it is critical that all teachers understand the different style of teaching and the extensive planning and work that will be involved. Teachers opting in to teaching at the STEM school will be attending a lot of training throughout the summer as well as developing PBL units and working daily with technology with students. Currently in some classrooms throughout the district, we have some teachers who already incorporate STEM/PBL practices in their daily instruction and also have 1:1 technology in their classrooms. Creating a teacher selection process allows us to place teachers at Weiss that can support the successful launch of this program. Additionally, this gives opportunity for teachers from Weiss who may not have the passion or interest in 1:1 teaching or PBL to request placement at another building in the district. Weiss staff is also being given the opportunity to visit a STEM school and learn more about what this position will entail so they can make an informed decision. Our goal is to provide a comprehensive STEM and 1:1 program to our students with teachers that have a passion and deep understanding of both STEM and daily technology integration. Student success is our number one priority and we know that every parent that brings their child to Weiss expects an exceptional STEM, PBL and 1:1 experience and we are confident that we will provide and deliver to that high expectation.

How will this be funded?

Funding for 1:1 technology and professional development will be paid through grant funds.

Will the STEM school be like a STEM fair all year?

No, students will work on projects within their classrooms. There may be a few times a year where students will have a showcase night to show off their projects, but parents are not helping create a project like they would for the annual STEM science fair.

How are we advertising our program?

Information about Downriver STEM @ Weiss was included on a postcard mailer that has recently been sent out, we have created a website (www.downriversbest.com) which will provide information, and we have other advertising opportunities in the works. Additionally, we are hosting a District STEM Showcase on Monday, May 9 at 6:00PM at Carlson High School. This event will showcase all of our work around STEM in the Gibraltar School District, including Downriver STEM @ Weiss.

Additionally, we will be hosting three informational parent nights, held at Weiss. These will take place at 6:00 on April 26, 27, 28.

What are the attendance options for the Downriver STEM @ Weiss?

- **Intra-District School of Choice**

If you are interested in coming to Downriver STEM @ Weiss and your child attends Parsons, Chapman or Hunter, you may complete the Intra-District School of Choice paperwork and turn it into the board office.

- **Out of District School of Choice**

If you are interested in coming to Downriver STEM @ Weiss and you are from another school district. Please visit <http://www.gibdist.net/gibdist/our-district/school-of-choice> Fill out the registration information and bring it to the board office.

For both Intra-District and out of District School of Choice, applications will be placed on a waiting list. Once we have determined the amount of slots available, phone calls will be made notifying families. The first round of notification is tentatively scheduled for the beginning of June.

What grade levels are going to be at the STEM School?

Kindergarten through fifth grade

Will there be opportunities for parents to help with the planning of STEM?

Of course! The Weiss PTO and community will be an important part of the programming at Weiss. We realize that there are community members who work in a STEM field and have expertise to offer. We will also be looking for parents to help with fundraising for items for our STEM and PBL projects, building community/business partnerships and parents to help with our projects.