

Parents and Guardians,

We are super excited to get rolling here in our 2nd half of the year! It was great to see all the students back from winter break and we look forward to an amazing winter and spring. Here are a few items we would like to share as we begin January.

SURGE

The culminating 12th grade student STEM IV entrepreneurial competition is finally here. On Wednesday this week, the 12th grade teams will present their STEM business pitches and compete against teams from six other local high schools. I and judges from LAUNCH will choose teams to compete in a finals competition on Thursday. The finals is open to the public and will be judged by business leaders from throughout Chattanooga. The SURGE Showcase is open to the public and will take place in the Bond Auditorium on the Chattanooga State campus at 2pm on Thursday, January 12th. We cannot wait to see and hear from our students on their amazing ideas, see their working prototypes, and hopefully crown a STEM School team as champion!

PBL Units

We are excited to kick start our PBL units for this spring with our 9th, 10th and 11th grade students.

-9th graders are getting into full swing on their robotics unit. They are building out team contracts, setting up their timelines with the use of the unit pacing guide, and beginning to think about their robot build.

-10th graders kicked off their Unum coding unit with an opportunity to “code” directions for staff makeup makeovers. I want to thank the 10th grade student experts for “selecting” me as a model. Let’s just say it took me a good bit of time to remove my makeup. As for the coding unit this year, teams will be learning the programming language of Swift this year as they build out an iOS app using Xcode. Both the students and faculty are excited as this is the first year we have introduced Swift and Xcode in this PBL unit.

-11th graders are starting into their PBL choice opportunities this next week. Opportunities this quarter include Chattanooga Design Studio open spaces project, Chattanooga Zoo snake exhibit enhancement, Kenco loading dock status tracker, Moon Pie 100th anniversary social media campaign, STEM School storage solution, TN Aquarium environmental terrain relief model, and Unum performance support tool.

Senior Graduation Ceremony Packets

Seniors were given a packet from Balfour on January 4th to have their order forms for invitation and additional items ready to turn in on Wednesday, January 11th. Please ask them to see their packets. The \$80 graduation fee is also due to STEM by January 31st which covers your student's cap, gown, tassel, diploma and diploma cover. Senior photos also need to be complete by January 31st with Prestige and you can schedule appointments online at prestige.gettimely.com or call them at 423-892-1332.

School Closings

Please note that the STEM School is part of Hamilton County Schools and is closed for inclement weather when Hamilton County Schools is closed. However, upperclassmen that have Chattanooga State or UTC college courses are expected to attend their college courses if those campuses remain open. All upperclassmen should be on the TigerAlert system for Chattanooga State which will allow them to receive texts from Chattanooga State regarding any changes in their regular schedule of classes.

If there is a two hour HCDE school delay in opening time, please note that the STEM School classes will begin at 11:30am. Morning buses will also run two hours later.

As for 10th grade students who may have STEM lessons they lead this spring at elementary schools or 11th grade students who have PBL items with partners in the community, if Hamilton County Schools close, those activities are also cancelled. If there is a delay, those activities will still be on but the students will need to check to see if there is a change in start time due to a delay (they can check Google Classroom for a post).

Student Accomplishments

Congratulations to Renee Schebler and Ellie Betts for receiving more recognition for their outstanding achievements.

-Renee has been selected by the Tennessee Department of Education as a nominee for the National US Presidential Scholars Program. A National US Presidential Scholar is the HIGHEST academic honor a student can receive in the United States. As for being selected in Tennessee, they are approximately 80,000 12th grade students in Tennessee. Renee was selected as one of ten students from the pool of 80,000. Congratulations to Renee for this amazing recognition.

-Ellie has the rare distinction of being recognized not one, but two years in a row by NCWIT – the National Center for Women & Information Technology. Ellie is again a National Honorable Mention Winner for her work in information technology. This is an awesome accomplishment as she works to impact the Chattanooga region in providing coding experiences for young kids. Congratulations to Ellie as her work was recognized two years in a row.

Upcoming Dates

-Monday, January 16th: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (no school)

-Tuesday, January 17th: First day of 11th and 12th grade College/STEM schedule for spring semester.

Thank you for your support!

Dr. Tony Donen
Principal