

# STEAM PROGRAM HAND BOOK



25-26



## OUR MISSION

The purpose of the STEAM Academy is to increase student achievement by engaging students in innovative science, technology, engineering, arts, and math instruction.

## OUR VISION

The STEAM Academy will provide a continuous pathway of educational opportunities that will prepare STEAM-literate graduates to accept the challenges of advanced education beyond high school and meet the needs of the future workforce.

## STEAM PROGRAM DESIGN

The DISD STEAM Academy is designed as a rigorous academic cohort model for students in grades 5 – 8. All students explore STEAM concepts through hands-on learning experiences, research, and exploration in every content area. Within the STEAM program, the academic courses offered vary based on students' academic achievements.

See the Course Pathway Chart for more information. (p. 7)

In addition to academic study, students explore STEAM concepts through enrichment activities. Students also experience project-based learning within the Texas Performance Standards Project. Students participate in field experiences, guest lectures, and more throughout the school year.

## WHO TO CONTACT



**Nathan Robinson**

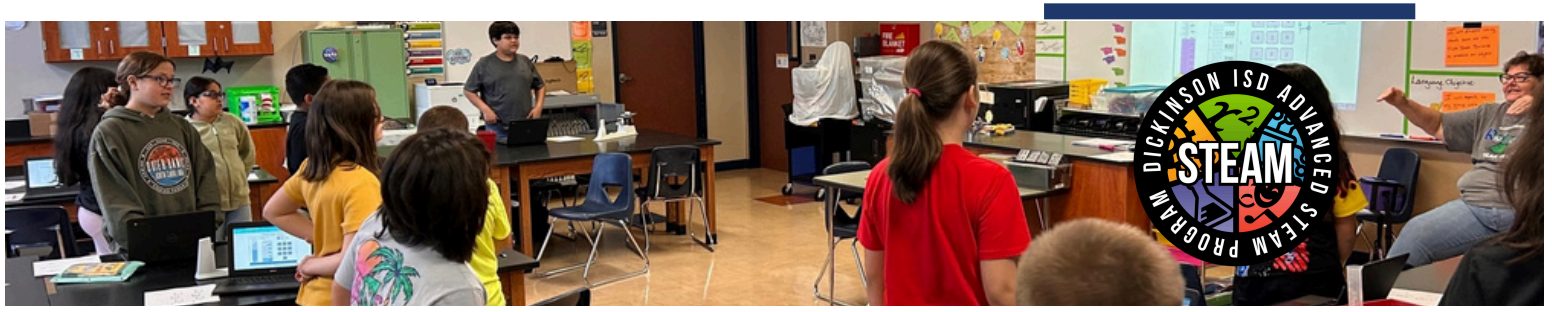
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For more information visit the link [DICKINSONISD.ORG/STEAM](https://dickinsonisd.org/STEAM)



## STUDENT PARTICIPATION

Academic success and integrity are the priority for all students in Dickinson ISD. Students accepted into the STEAM Academy are met with rigorous courses that challenge thinking and learning. To ensure students succeed in this environment, the STEAM Specialist, STEAM teachers, and administration carefully monitor students to provide early support and interventions to ensure student success in the STEAM Academy. Each campus will make intervention decisions and provide targeted intervention when any student is in danger of not meeting the minimum criteria.

## TEA STEM FRAMEWORK

The STEAM Academy follows the Texas Education Agency's STEM Framework to ensure high-quality, research-based instruction across all campuses. This framework emphasizes integrated, cross-disciplinary learning experiences that connect science, technology, engineering, and math with real-world applications. By aligning our program with these standards, we ensure that students engage in meaningful learning that is rigorous, relevant, and prepares them for future college and career pathways in STEM fields.

## RIGOROUS COURSEWORK

Students in the STEAM Academy engage in more rigorous coursework designed to challenge their critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills. These classes move at a faster pace, explore content more deeply, and require greater independence. Lessons are designed around the engineering design process and incorporate the 4Cs of learning—collaboration, communication, creativity, and critical thinking—to help students develop essential skills for success in school and beyond. This approach not only prepares students for advanced academic opportunities, which include high school credit, but also equips them to tackle real-world challenges.



## APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

The STEAM Academy is designed to provide a rigorous and enriched learning environment for students who demonstrate academic readiness and a passion for exploration. The application process helps ensure that students placed in the program are prepared for the academic challenges and collaborative, project-based learning experiences that define STEAM education.

### GRADE 5

- Students are selected from the Applicant Pool for the initial Grade 5 cohort during the spring semester preceding their 5th-grade year.
- The highest-ranked students in 4th grade who have met eligibility criteria will be accepted into the STEAM Academy beginning their 5th-grade year.
- New to DISD students may apply during the application window or during registration and will be required to provide grades and assessment data to the STEAM Specialist.

### GRADES 6-8

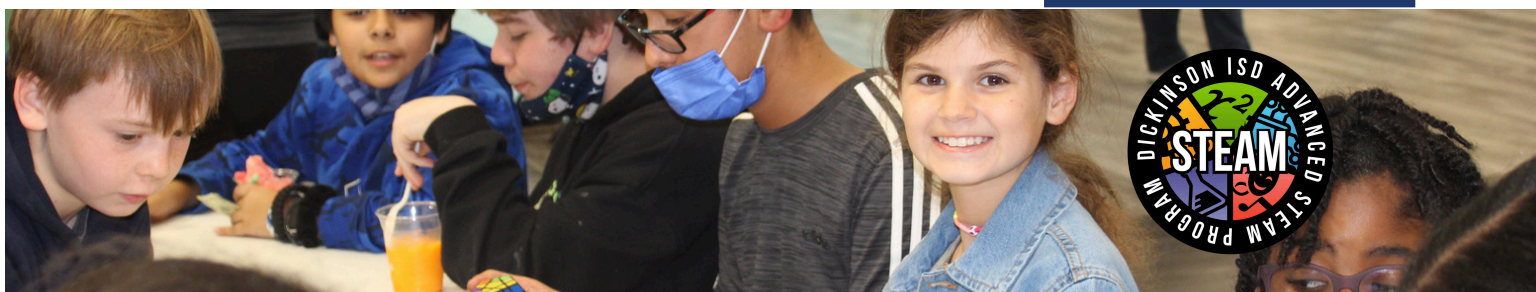
- **All students MUST REAPPLY each school year to be eligible to remain in the program.**
- Applications open in January of each year.
- Students who requalify or qualify will be notified. New students will be moved into the program as space is available the following school year.
- Currently enrolled DISD Students will not be moved into the STEAM Academy beyond the First 9 weeks of school.
- New to DISD students may apply during the application window or during registration and will be required to provide grades and assessment data.

### WHAT DO WE LOOK AT?

- All students are scored based on the STEAM Program Application Rubric.
- Grades in Math, Science, Reading/Language Arts, and Social Studies
- Meets or Masters Grade Level on STAAR, MAP, and other test data available
- Teacher recommendations.
- ALL students are required to reapply each year.
- Students are required to submit a video as part of their application.

For more information visit the link [\*\*DICKINSONISD.ORG/STEAM\*\*](https://dickinsonisd.org/steam)





## APPLICATION TIMELINE

This timeline is meant to help guide the application process while ensuring all students are evaluated in time to support scheduling for the upcoming year.

**January (Start of Spring Semester):** Applications open to all students. Current STEAM students must reapply each year.

**January 31:** Application window closes.

**February:** Student data is reviewed and teacher recommendations are collected.

**March (Friday before Spring Break):** Families are notified of preliminary student placement decisions via email.

**Summer:** Students' end-of-year assessments are reviewed for continued placement in the program. Families notified of official placement.

## MY CHILD WAS ACCEPTED, NOW WHAT?

Parental support is the key to the success of STEAM students; therefore, please read and discuss the following points:

- STEAM courses require more individual study time per week than regular classes. Students must read and prepare outside of class to participate effectively in classroom discussions and activities.
- Intervention/Tutoring will be available for all students and required for all intervention and support plans.
- All STEAM Academy students are expected to complete a rigorous independent project (TPSP) that requires extensive work outside of class, including research, writing, and project completion.
- Students must maintain excellence in academic and behavioral performance to retain their position in the STEAM Academy.
- STEAM Students must be present. Attendance matters and ensures students stay on track with the accelerated pace and hands-on learning experiences; frequent absences can cause students to fall behind in both academic content and collaborative projects. Attendance is part of the student's nine-week evaluation.
- All STEAM students will need to reapply each year.



## STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

Our goal is for students to be successful at the highest possible level. All coursework within the STEAM Academy stimulates and challenges students to perform at an advanced academic level. Courses are not only rigorous, but an accelerated curriculum is available, allowing students to pursue more advanced coursework in later years. Because of this, students are expected to follow the STEAM Guidelines and the DISD Code of Conduct, as well as set an example for others to follow on and off campus.

### ATTENDANCE

Attendance matters! Attendance is especially critical in advanced programs because every lesson builds on previous learning, and missed instructional time can quickly lead to gaps in understanding. Classes move at an accelerated pace and often involve collaborative projects, hands-on learning, and complex problem-solving that require consistent participation. Regular attendance not only supports academic success but also reinforces responsibility, time management, and teamwork—key traits of successful students. Students are expected to have a 95% attendance rate for the year. This totals 10 missed school days.

### BEHAVIOR

Positive behavior is essential in advanced programs because it creates a classroom environment where all students can focus, collaborate, and succeed. Assignments often involve group work, independent problem-solving, and enrichment activities that require maturity, responsibility, and respect for others. Disruptive behavior not only hinders personal learning but also impacts the experience of peers. Students are expected to model leadership, demonstrate self-discipline, and take ownership of their actions—skills that are just as important as academic performance. Maintaining strong behavior helps ensure that the learning environment is a safe, supportive, and productive space for all learners.



## FIELD EXPERIENCES

### Why do we go on Field Experiences?

Field experiences are a vital extension of classroom learning, giving students the opportunity to apply their knowledge in real-world settings. These experiences enrich instruction, deepen understanding, and play an essential role in each student's academic growth.

### Field Experience Participation

Please note: Participation in field experiences may be limited due to academic performance, behavior, or failure to meet campus expectations. Final decisions are at the discretion of campus administration.

### Chaperones

Parents or guardians attending as chaperones must check in at the campus front office and wear a visitor ID sticker at all times during the trip. After receiving their baggage, parents may follow the buses or meet the buses at the field trip location.

### DIST Trip Policies

A parent must provide permission for a student to participate in a field trip. The district may ask the parent to provide information about a student's medical provider and insurance coverage and may also ask the parent to sign a waiver allowing for emergency medical treatment in the case of a student accident or illness during the field trip.

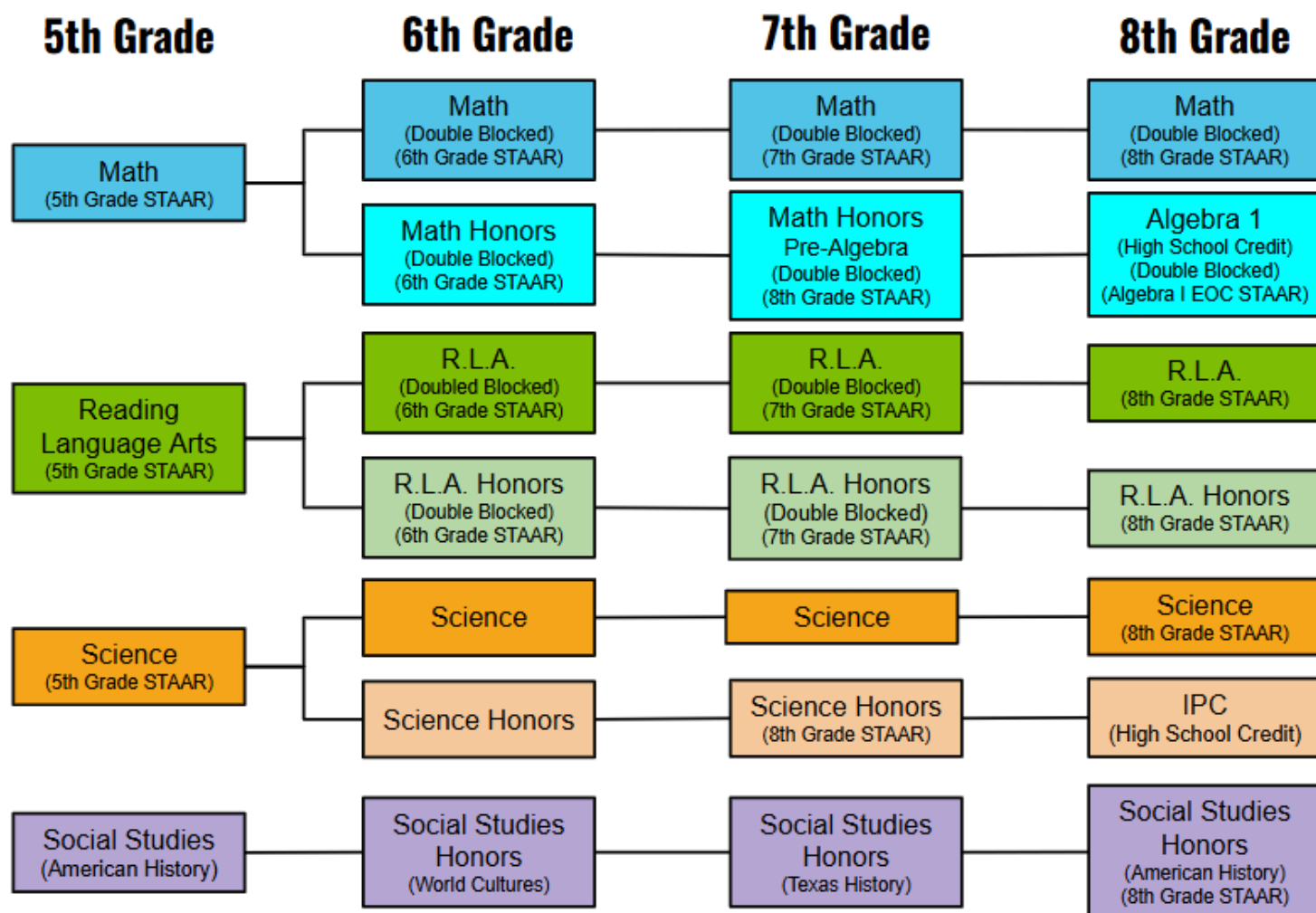
The district may require a fee for student participation in a field trip that is not part of a basic educational program or course to cover expenses such as transportation, admission, and meals. However, a student will not be denied participation due to financial need.

The district is not responsible for refunding fees paid directly to a third-party vendor.





## PROGRAM PATHWAYS (25-26)



## ACADEMIC MILESTONES AND EXCEPTIONS

- Students will participate in all state and campus assessments.
- 7th-grade Math Honors Students will take 8th-grade Math STAAR
- 7th-grade Science Honors students will take the 8th-grade Science STAAR
- 8th-grade Algebra students will take the Algebra EOC
- 8th-grade IPC students will take the IPC EOC exam





## ACADEMIC PROBATION AND EXIT

Academic performance, attendance, and behavior are monitored to determine whether a student is to remain in the STEAM Academy.

Before exiting the STEAM Academy, students will be placed on probation for a pre-determined amount of time to improve their performance. However, the Success Team may recommend program exit for students whose behavior or academic performance is deemed severe enough to warrant immediate exit. Exit points are at the end of the fall and spring semesters.

Students who have exited the program may reapply the following school year if they choose to reapply.

### STEP 1: INTERVENTION PLAN

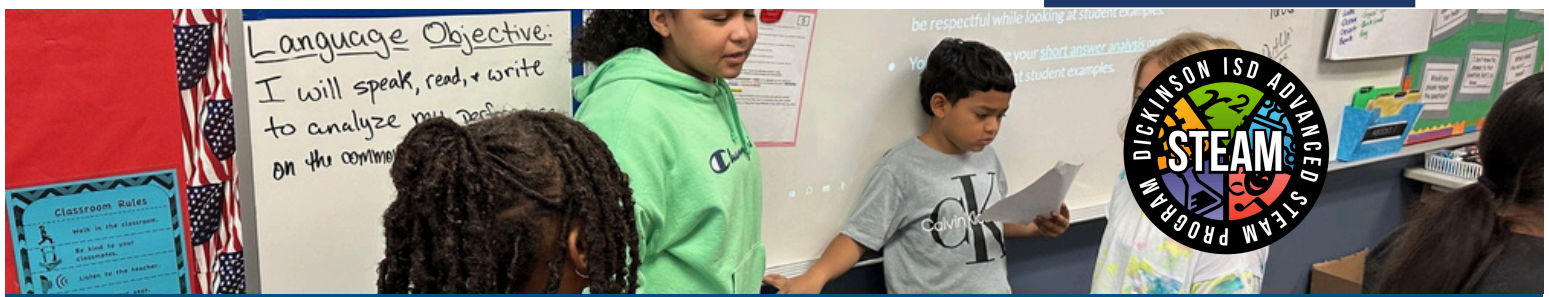
Students will be monitored each nine-week grading period to ensure their academic success. When a student is not succeeding, the STEAM grade-level teachers must identify problem areas, conduct a teacher conference with parents or guardians, and discuss and create a targeted intervention plan with the student.

### STEP 2: SUCCESS TEAM

If an intervention plan is not successful, students will be referred to the Success Team, which will consist of STEAM and campus representatives. The team recommends a probationary period of up to one semester, which includes the required improvement and a plan for further support and intervention. During the probationary period, the student will continue to participate in the program. At the end of the probationary period, the STEAM Committee will review the student's performance. It will either remove the student from probation, continue probation, or exit the student from the program.

### STEP 3: EXIT AND APPEAL

Students who are placed on probation and are unsuccessful in regaining a successful status, or any student recommended by the Success Committee, may be exited from the program. Parents may request that the student be excused from the program. The Success Committee will review student information and, in collaboration with parents, the Director of Academic Excellence and Advanced Academics will approve final removal. If a parent or guardian disagrees with the committee's decision to remove their student from the STEAM Academy, they may appeal the committee's decision to the Director of Academic Excellence and Advanced Learning.



## CHECK IN / EXIT POINTS

- **Nine-Weeks #1:** Grade Check / Attendance Check / Behavior Check
- **Nine-Weeks #2:** Grade Check / Attendance Check / Behavior Check
- **End of Semester #1:** Exit Point
- **Nine-Weeks #3:** Grade Check / Attendance Check / Behavior Check
- **Nine-Weeks #4:** Grade Check / Attendance Check / Behavior Check
- **End of Semester #2:** Exit Point

## APPEALS PROCESS

If a parent or guardian disagrees with the Success Team's decision to recommend probation or exit, the Director of Academic Excellence & Advanced Academics must be notified in writing **within fifteen days** after sending the notification letter. After which, the appeals process will begin:

1. A parent/guardian conference will be held with the Level One Appeal Committee, which consists of campus and district representatives. At this conference, any relevant data will be reviewed.
2. A letter with the decision will be sent to the parent/guardian within ten days after the Level One Appeal Committee conference.
3. Any subsequent appeals should be made in accordance with FNG (LOCAL) beginning at Level Two.

## AFTER A STUDENT IS EXITED

A student who has been exited from the program will have a schedule change to either a non-STEAM honors class or an on-level class where the student's educational needs will be best met.



# STEAM Academy Student Participation Contract

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student ID #:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Current Grade:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Current Campus:** \_\_\_\_\_

Our goal is for students to be successful at the highest possible level. All coursework within the STEAM Academy stimulates and challenges students to perform at an advanced academic level. Courses are not only rigorous but accelerated curriculum is available, allowing students to pursue more advanced coursework in later years. We are pleased you are accepting the challenge of this program.

## Parental Support:

Parental support is the key to the success of STEAM students; therefore, please read and discuss the following points:

- STEAM courses require more individual study time per week than a regular class. Students will need to read and prepare outside of class to participate effectively in classroom discussions and activities.
- Tutoring will be available for all students and required for all intervention and support plans.
- All STEAM Academy students are expected to complete a rigorous independent project (TPSP) that may require work outside of class, including research, writing, and project completion.

## Student Expectations:

1. All STEAM Students will abide by the DISD Student Code of Conduct and the Campus Handbook.
2. STEAM Students are expected to complete all in-class and out-of-class assignments with care and in a timely manner.
3. Late work in a STEAM course will be graded in accordance with the Instructional Grading & Reporting Procedures for DISD. Extenuating circumstances may allow for extensions when communicated to your teachers.
4. Students who do not meet learning standards in any STEAM course will receive targeted intervention.
5. In addition to the above guidelines, each STEAM course may have additional requirements. All course requirements will be communicated in writing at the beginning of the course.

## Academic Probation:

- Students who are not meeting the program's requirements will be placed on academic probation for a specified period, during which they will have specific requirements to ensure they are meeting the expectations of the program.
- You may refer to the STEAM Program Handbook for more information on the probation process.

## Application:

- ALL students must complete an application in January of each year to remain in the program.

**Parent/Guardian Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_



# Family Notification of Student Concerns

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Meeting Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student ID #:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Campus/Grade:** \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I wanted to reach out regarding some recent concerns about your child's performance in the Advanced STEAM program. As you know, this program is designed to challenge students through collaborative learning, advanced content, and hands-on experiences that require consistent attendance, appropriate behavior, and active engagement.

## **Areas for Growth:**

At this time, no formal action is being taken; however, I wanted to partner with you early to ensure we can provide the proper support and set your child up for success. Please don't hesitate to reach out so we can work together on the next steps.

## **Next Steps:**

Thank you,

Your Child Teacher





# STEAM Academic Probation

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Meeting Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student ID #:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Campus/Grade:** \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Parent or Guardian,

To be admitted into the STEAM Academy, your child agreed to adhere to our standards of academic excellence, the Dickinson STEAM Honor Code, as well as the DISD Code of Conduct. Reports are run every nine weeks to ensure those standards are met.

**Your child is being put on probation for the following reason:** (Check all that apply)

- ☐ The student's overall performance does not meet the academic expectations of the program (i.e. grade below 70 or failing score on STAAR assessment);
- ☐ The student's overall behavioral performance does not meet the expectations of the program (i.e. OSS or DAEP placements, More than 3 days of ISS in a nine-week period; excessive absences);
- ☐ The student, parent, or campus principal (or designee) does not view the placement as appropriate to meet the student's needs.

**Additional Information about Reason for probation:**

**Goals for Improvement:**

Academic Target Areas -

Behavioral/Attendance Expectations -

Other Goals -

**Probation Period:** \_\_\_\_\_

Start Date: \_\_\_\_\_

End Date (Reevaluation): \_\_\_\_\_



# STEAM Academic Probation (cont')

## Support and Interventions: (Check all that Apply)

- ☐ Weekly progress monitoring with the teacher
- ☐ Specific Intervention Classroom Assignments
- ☐ Mandatory Tutoring Sessions
- ☐ Behavior Contract
- ☐ Other:

## Next Steps & Comitments:

- ☐ I understand my child has been placed on probation for the reasons listed above.
- ☐ I will support the improvement plan by checking in with my student and ensuring follow-through at home.
- ☐ I understand that continued concerns may result in exit from the STEAM program.
- ☐ I have received a copy of this probation plan and understand the expectations and next steps.

Please don't hesitate to call your STEAM Specialist if you have any questions or concerns. Please sign the attached probation paperwork and return it to your child's STEAM Team Leader. We aim to communicate openly and freely with parents and guardians as a team to all support our students.

Sincerely,

Nathan Robinson  
STEAM Program Specialsit  
Dickinson ISD

Britta Carter  
Director of Academic Excellence  
& Advanced Academics  
Dickinson ISD

## Signatures:

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

STEAM Teacher/Lead: \_\_\_\_\_

Campus Administrator: \_\_\_\_\_

STEAM Specialist: \_\_\_\_\_

Dir. of Advanced Academics: \_\_\_\_\_



# Request to Exit Student from STEAM

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student ID #:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Current Grade:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Current Campus:** \_\_\_\_\_

This form constitutes a request for the exit of a student from the STEAM Program. A student can be removed from the program at any time if it is determined to be in the student's best interest. Written parent notification including the date and time of the meeting to review the request will be sent. If a student or parent requests removal from the program, they shall meet with the parent and student before honoring the request.

Reason for student exit:

- ☐ The student's overall performance does not meet the academic expectations of the program (i.e. grade below 70 or failing score on STAAR assessment);
- ☐ The student's overall behavioral performance does not meet the expectations of the program (i.e. OSS or DAEP placements, More than 3 days of ISS in a nine-week period; excessive absences)
- ☐ The student, parent, or campus principal (or designee) does not view the placement as appropriate to meet the needs of the student.
- ☐ Other (Describe): \_\_\_\_\_

When a parent, guardian, student, or administrator requests that a student exit from the STEAM Academy, a conference with the parent will be held. The most appropriate educational placement for the student will be determined at this conference.

**Reason for Removal:**

**Campus Administrator:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_



# STEAM Academy Application Rubric



**THIS DOCUMENT IS CONFIDENTIAL.**

Copies of individual students matrix may be obtained by emailing  
Nathan Robinson at [nrobinson1@dickinsonisd.org](mailto:nrobinson1@dickinsonisd.org)

## Dickinson Independent School District STEAM Academy Application Matrix—2025-2026

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Campus:	Future Campus:	Accepted to STEAM:	TOTAL SCORE: out of 300	
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### Student Indicators

Students do not earn or lose points based on indicators. Indicators are to ensure the success of each student.

STEAM	O.D.T.	GT	EB	Dual Language	SPED	504	Dyslexia
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### Academic Coursework (100 points)

Students earn points based on the first-semester average in current core subjects (≥85)  
(Highest academic courses offered in Math, Reading, Science, and Social Studies)

Subject	Semester Average	Points	Semester Average	Points Awarded	Subject	Semester Average	Points	Semester Average	Points Awarded
Math	95-100	25		0	Science	95-100	25		0
	90-94	20				90-94	20		
	80-89	15				80-89	15		
	70-79	10				70-79	10		
Reading (4th) Language Arts (5-7)	95-100	25		0	Social Studies	95-100	25		0
	90-94	20				90-94	20		
	80-89	15				80-89	15		
	70-79	10				70-79	10		

### State Assessments – STAAR (100 points)

Students earn points for each of the most recent state assessments.

Subject	Score	Points	Student Score	Points Awarded	Subject	Score	Points	Student Score	Points Awarded
Math	95%+	50	N/A	0	Reading	95%+	50	N/A	0
	Masters	40				Masters	40		
	Meets	30				Meets	30		
	Approaches	20				Approaches	20		

### MAP Scores – (100 points)

Students earn points for most recent achievement scores (national normed percentile)

Subject	Score	Points	Student Score	Points Awarded	Subject	Score	Points	Student Score	Points Awarded
Math	95%+	50	N/A	0	Reading	95%+	50	N/A	0
	Masters	40				Masters	40		
	Meets	30				Meets	30		
	Approaches	20				Approaches	20		

NOTES:





# STEAM Academy Honor Code

## Respect: Be Kind and supportive of yourself and others.

Because we believe in **respect**, students will:

- Listen, behave, and speak respectfully to fellow students and all staff members.
- Collaborate effectively and equitably with all classmates, solving problems peacefully to maintain a heightened learning environment.
- Always strive to be polite, kind, and supportive, respecting the learning needs of other students in your environment.
- Show pride and respect for their campus, district, and community.
- Value and learn from diverse opinions and lifestyles among their classmates and staff

## Perseverance: Push through until the end despite difficulties.

Because we believe in **perseverance**, students will:

- Exemplify commitment, pride, and a positive attitude in completing tasks, demonstrating their best effort.
- When faced with obstacles, consistently problem-solve and try new solutions or a unique approach.
- Effectively manage time and materials to ensure academic and personal goals will be met.
- Take the initiative to seek out help and support when needed to ensure academic success.
- Keep your mind open to every subject/assignment and commit to learning each day.

## Integrity: Doing the right thing, even when no one is looking.

Because we believe in **integrity**, students will:

- Admit to, and take responsibility when they have done something wrong.
- Submit authentic work and credit sources used in formal writing.
- Use technology appropriately and as instructed for classroom learning.
- Diligently uphold all rules and requirements for the classroom, school, and district.
- Use all school materials and facilities for academic learning, adhering to all guidelines provided.

## Leadership: Be a model example for others.

Because we believe in **leadership**, students will...

- Lead by positive example through their work and actions, exceeding campus and district expectations.
- Strive to work at high levels, performing beyond minimum requirements.
- Empower fellow classmates to express their thoughts and take academic risks.
- Advocate for what they know is right by standing up for themselves and others.
- Consider how your words or actions will affect others before communicating or taking action.
- Behave in an encouraging and collaborative manner when working with others.

## Responsibility: Own your choices, taking responsibility for your words and actions.

Because we believe in **responsibility**, students will:

- Independently monitor and manage classwork, homework and late/make-up work.
- Actively participate in their own learning.
- Strive to be on time, rested, prepared, and attentive for class.
- Be mindful of how their actions affect others.
- Do their best to fix mistakes, asking for help when required.



## STUDENT PARTICIPATION

Academic success and integrity are the priority for all students in Dickinson ISD. Students accepted into the STEAM Academy are met with rigorous courses that challenge thinking and learning. To ensure students succeed in this environment, the STEAM Specialist, STEAM teachers, and administration carefully monitor students to provide early support and interventions to ensure student success in the STEAM Academy. Each campus will make intervention decisions and provide targeted intervention when any student is in danger of not meeting the minimum criteria.

## EXIT FROM THE STEAM PROGRAM

Educational needs, academic integrity, and success are the basis for a student's need to exit from the STEAM Academy. A request for a student to be exited may be initiated by a school administrator, parents, or the student themselves. The STEAM specialist and campus administration will collaborate with guardians to make the final recommendation for exit.

Students whom have exited the program for reasons other than academic may reapply the following school year if they choose to reenter the program.

## WHO TO CONTACT



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