



## *The STEM Academy at Showalter*

*“Unlocking Young Minds for the Future”*

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**Dr. Jason Hamer**  
Principal

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Assistant Principal

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Dear STEM Parents/Guardians,

I am extremely excited to welcome the entire STEM student and parent population to the 2020-2021 school year! This is a year of exciting change at CUSD! Over the summer months we welcomed our new Superintendent of schools - Dr. Carol D. Birks, our caring STEM faculty and staff have worked diligently to prepare for the many opportunities this unique school year will provide, and as you've learned throughout our numerous town halls and virtual community forums this summer- we will be starting off the school year remotely.

At STEM, our 2020-2021 school theme this year is to **#STAYENGAGED!** The message is simple – we will not allow any outside force or unforeseen circumstance to keep us from “staying engaged” and focused on the academic achievement of our most precious gift – our youth. Regardless of whether we are in a brick and mortar setting, or if we begin the school year by learning remotely, STEM has created an infrastructure of learning focused on providing a high-quality education for the best and brightest students within the Chester/Upland community. At STEM, we are extremely proud of the work we are doing to develop our students' 21<sup>st</sup> century skills so that they can become problem solvers, critical thinkers, and lifelong learners in today's ever changing world.

On an academic level, you will see the **#STAYENGAGED** construct applied in many areas. Since March of last year, our teachers have participated in a great deal of professional development focused on engaging virtual learning techniques, second chance learning, and depth vs. breadth when providing students with formative and summative assessments. During the unique times we all find ourselves in, our goal is for our students to **#STAYENGAGED** by focusing on learning for learning's sake, rather than just for points and grades. While a focus on genuine and authentic learning may be a shift in thinking for some, in a virtual setting, it is one that can be very powerful with the help of all CUSD & STEM stakeholders.

As we encourage our STEM students to work hard and adjust to their new remote schedules, parent engagement this year will be crucial. Parents, your assistance and participation is needed now more than ever before! If you notice that your child is struggling academically and/or socially while learning remotely we need you to reach out to us immediately. We can then provide you with the proper assistance. At STEM, we are committed to providing your child with supports via our - Student Assistance Program (SAP); Math & Writing Interventions, Academic Probation Wrap-Around Services; Virtual Extended Learning Times, Special Education Department; and with Individual synchronous and asynchronous meetings with teachers. We are very fortunate, at STEM, to have these resources available, and I encourage you and your student to take full-advantage of the supports available both during the school day and after school.

Going virtual to begin the school year means that we must hold ourselves and all of our children accountable. Remember, an initial unsuccessful effort can be turned around after correct understanding is achieved. So, if your device is giving you trouble, or when something doesn't go exactly according to plan, remember not to give up, and to instead...**#STAYENGAGED!**

Warmly,  
Dr. Jason Vann Hamer  
Principal, STEM Academy