

LEONEL CASTILLO
Early Childhood STEM Academy



***PRIDE** in what we do.
COURAGE in how we do it.
DETERMINATION to get it done.*

FAMILY HANDBOOK
2024 - 2025

Superintendent

Dr. Adriana Tamez

Chief Academic Officer

Mr. Justin Fuentes

Director/Principal

Ms. Axinia Zepeda M.Ed.



LEONEL CASTILLO EARLY CHILDHOOD STEM ACADEMY

2101 South Street
Houston, TX 77009

We instill **PRIDE** in what we do
COURAGE in how we do it,
and **DETERMINATION** to get it done!

Established: 2021

Mascot: Cubs (Bear)

School Colors: Burnt Orange and Navy Blue

Website: www.ryss.org/castillo

Facebook: RYSS Leonel Castillo Early Childhood STEM Academy

School Hours: 7:30 – 3:10 pm

School Phone: 713-640-3740

Director/Principal: Ms. Axinia Zepeda M. Ed.

Message From the Principal



Dear Leonel Castillo Early Childhood Parents,

We are thrilled that you have chosen our campus for your child's early childhood education. As your campus leader, I bring years of educational experience, having started my teaching career in a PK classroom. I am committed to creating meaningful opportunities for both students and families. As the Director/Principal, I will continue the excellent work already in place at Leonel Castillo, ensuring that your children have a safe, secure, and happy environment to attend every day.

Our teachers are well-prepared for the new year, and you can be confident that your child will receive high-quality instruction in a supportive and loving setting.

I look forward to working with you and fulfilling the Raul Yzaguirre Schools for Success mission of preparing students to be lifelong learners and critical thinkers.

Wishing you well,
Ms. Axinia Zepeda M. Ed.
Leonel Castillo Early Childhood
Director/Principal

I. ABOUT

RAUL YZAGUIRRE SCHOOLS FOR SUCCESS CHARTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

Founded in 1996, the Raul Yzaguirre Schools for Success (RYSS) was among the first 20 open-enrollment charter school districts in Texas. RYSS was born from a vision of the Tejano Center for Community Concerns' leadership team to provide the highest quality education for children of the center's surrounding neighborhoods. From its beginning, RYSS has continued to remain committed to every student, regardless of his or her life circumstances, to provide a true college-preparatory experience. RYSS is comprised of six campuses.

As of 2021, a name change of the four original campuses took place to distinguish each campus. In Houston, Texas, there are three original campuses: PSTEM Academy (for grades Pre-K to 5th), the Early College STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics) (grades 6th – 8th), and the Early College T-STEM (Texas Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) (for grades 9th – 12th). The fourth campus, the BRYSS Academy (for grades 6th – 8th), is in Brownsville, Texas. New Houston campuses included North East STEM Academy (grades 6th – 8th) and Leonel Castillo Early Childhood STEM Academy (PreK - Kinder).

As an open-enrollment charter school, RYSS admits students regardless of academic limitation; however, students who enroll at RYSS, along with their parents, are fully aware that students will enter a world of high expectations – academically and socially. RYSS is committed to shaping the minds and hearts of students to help them become valuable and productive members of our community, state, nation, and global community. RYSS students learn not only for school but also for life.

VISION

The Raul Yzaguirre Schools for Success will be the gold standard for excellence in community-based education by graduating college-bound, civic-oriented leaders.

RYSS MISSION

The Raul Yzaguirre Schools for Success exists to educate and empower the next generation of leaders by creating a college-bound, culturally relevant environment with a focus on academics, health and social services, and youth and human services to create stronger families and healthier communities.

LEONEL CASTILLO EARLY CHILDHOOD STEM ACADEMY

Leonel Castillo Early Childhood STEM Academy is a newly established public charter school, located in the Leonel Castillo Community Center, in the Near Northside. Castillo STEM first opened its doors for the 2021 – 2022 school year, serving grades PK3 and PK4. Kindergarten will be offered for the 2022-2023 school year. Castillo STEM offers a state certified curriculum in literacy and math, with a STEM focus. Castillo STEM also offers a solid social and emotional learning program, where young children are taught to self-regulate their emotions. Castillo STEM offers speech therapy and behavior regulation plans for students that need it.

At Castillo STEM, we believe that when you enroll your child(ren) you are entering into a partnership with the school. This partnership implies certain responsibilities on the part of the school and the parents.

Mission Statement

Leonel Castillo STEM Academy will provide a high quality academic, social, and emotional environment, to help our children develop the necessary skills to become critical thinkers and lifelong learners.

Vision

Leonel Castillo Early Childhood STEM Academy is committed to offering our students' academic excellence in a nurturing environment where school, families, and community come together to share the responsibility for the success of the whole child. Our vision is built upon Leonel Castillo's legacy of pride, courage, and determination.

Motto

At Castillo STEM we instill pride in what we do, courage in how we do it, and DETERMINATION to get it done!

Academic Goals

Our goal is to provide our students with a strong education, by focusing on the state's PK Guidelines. This will be done by promoting pride in everything they do, motivating them to have courage when they are nervous about something new, and teaching determination to overcome frustrations in a safe learning environment.

Social And Emotional Goals

Our goal is to help parents and students guide their students through the problem-solving process in everything they do, using a love and logic approach.

Accreditation

Leonel Castillo Early Childhood STEM Academy adheres to the guidelines established by the Texas Education Agency. Castillo STEM Academy retains the right to amend the faculty and Handbook

at any time by exercising professional judgment and discretion to address situations fairly and consistently.

II. ACADEMICS

RYSS is committed to providing a high-quality educational experience for all students. Our teachers implement curriculum that follows and is aligned to PK Guidelines for PK3/4 and the Texas Essential Knowledge Skills (TEKS) for kindergarten.

Pre-Kindergarten Course of Study:

- Teaching Strategies
- Social Emotional Learning: Lovescaping

Kindergarten Course of Study:

- Reading Language Arts: My View and Magnetic Reading Phonics Program
- Social Studies: Pearson, My World
- Math: Eureka
- Science: STEMSCOPES and Fusion
- Social Emotional Learning: Lovescaping

SPECIAL POPULATIONS

Leonel Castillo Early Childhood STEM Academy has a responsibility to identify, locate and evaluate any students who may need special education. This system is called **Child Find**. When a teacher knows or thinks a child could have a disability, speech delay, behavior concern, learning disability and other conditions the school must evaluate the student. **Child Find** applies to children from birth to age 21.

Teachers may initiate a referral for a student. Our district Special Populations department will support us with **Child Find**. Parents may also initiate a referral for their student. It is the responsibility of all-our staff to support students who may need help.

Report Cards and Parent/Student Conferences

Pre-Kindergarten report cards are issued three times a year. Pre-kindergarten student assessments are ongoing and implement the Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment. GOLD assessments indicate the student's *progress* with reaching and achieving developmental milestones.

Kindergarten report cards are issued every 6 weeks. Student's academic growth is recorded throughout the school year. Kindergarten student assessment is ongoing and implements state certified and district wide assessments.

III. SCHOOL OPERATING PROCEDURES

ATTENDANCE / TARDINESS

Attendance/Tardy

Daily attendance in ALL classes is necessary for academic success. Students have three days upon return to school from absence to submit an excuse note to the Front Office. The school day begins at 7:30 am. It is important for students to be on time so that they do not miss any instruction. Excessive absences and/or tardiness will lead to a parent conference and can lead to a student being placed on an attendance contract and probationary status.

If a student is picked up early and is signed out in the front office, the parent/guardian must still provide a written excuse note the following day, stating the reason the student had to leave early from school.

CALENDAR

District and campus calendars will be distributed at Meet the Teacher and the first week of school. They will also be made available and updated on our campus website www.ryss.org/castillo. A copy can be requested from the front desk receptionist, as well.

CONTACTING FACULTY AND STAFF

To contact the school please call the school phone number: 713-640-3740. Parents may also email the staff directly. Class Dojo can be used for informal communication. Please allow 48 hours for a response.

EMERGENCY PLAN

Each month a safety drill is conducted. The drill may be announced or unannounced. In addition, a monthly campus safety audit will be conducted. In the case of an actual emergency, parents will be contacted through the Class Dojo or Remind application.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

Morning Drop 7:20 AM – 7:45 am.

Students will enter the building through the main entrance and proceed to their classrooms. Breakfast will begin being served at 7:30AM.

Afternoon pick-up 3:10- 3:30 PM

We will begin the dismissal process at 3:10pm. A staff member will enter the dismissal tag number into the dismissal dashboard to begin to have students walk to the front doors. At 3:30 pm, there will be a table in front of the double doors with a sign-out sheet. Parents/Guardians will sign-out their child in the order they arrive for late pickup. All parents are to wait for their turn as all students are being dismissed.

Please inform the school of any special circumstances that interfere with the campus arrival and dismissal times.

FIELD CULTURAL EXPERIENCES

Student field cultural experiences are great for all early childhood students. For the objectives of student field experiences to be achieved fully, school officials must always have the full and complete cooperation of participating students and parents. Due to the tremendous responsibility placed on school sponsors during any trip of this sort, there may be special rules that the students and parents are expected to follow.

Students are allowed to participate in travel away from school only when their conduct records are acceptable. The principal (in collaboration with trip sponsors) has the right to make a final determination on whether a student may participate in a school activity involving travel, and if a parent is required to chaperone their child. Due to safety reasons, parents are not allowed to bring siblings to campus fieldtrips.

If the parent wants to take the child home with them after a field trip, they must follow the regular campus sign out procedures. Parents are not allowed to take the child from the field trip location unless the principal has approved it.

DAILY STUDENT SCHEDULE

Time	Schedule
7:20 - 7:45	Student Drop Off- Students Walk in through the front door. (Parents only allowed to walk their child in the first 3 days of school)
7:45	Late Arrival- Students will be marked officially Tardy: parents are to sign their child in for late arrival.
7:30 – 3:10	Instructional Block (Contact your child’s teacher for information regarding lunch, recess, rest, and snack time).
3:10 – 3:30	Student Pick Up- Parents walk up to the Front Door with their dismissal tag to pick up their child. The school entered the number into the dismissal dashboard and students come to the front to be released.

DRESS CODE

Dress Code Policy

Adherence to the dress code goes beyond the actual items of apparel to the proper wearing and respect for the school uniform. Students need to comply with the uniform policy and be neat in appearance. Students should wear their uniform with pride, as it reflects themselves and the school. The proper school uniform is to be always worn in the specified manner to and from school.

Uniform Rules

1. Shirts and blouses must be tucked in and remain tucked during all school hours.
2. Students must wear shoes with Velcro (no laces)
3. Pants/skirts must be worn at the natural waistline.
4. All girls must wear modesty shorts under skirts.

Girls Uniforms

- Jumper: navy blue/khaki and white peter pan collar blouse
- Pull-On Polo Dress: navy and modesty shorts
- Shorts/Pants: navy/khaki pull-on
- Skort: navy/khaki pull-on
- Skirt: navy/khaki pull-on
- Modesty shorts under all skirts/dresses
- Shirt: white/navy blue/orange short or long-sleeve polo shirt
- Students must wear shoes with Velcro (no laces)



Boys Daily Uniforms

- Boys PK: Daily-Dress
- Shorts or Pants: navy or khaki pull on.
- Shirt: white/navy blue/orange short or long-sleeve polo shirt
- Students must wear shoes with Velcro (no laces)



All School Outerwear Options

Students may wear a personal coat during the cold weather.

Girls Tights, Leggings, Modesty Shorts and Undershirts

Solid navy blue, black, and white tights, leggings, and modesty shorts are permitted.

Socks

Solid navy blue, black, or white socks must be always worn.

Daily Dress Shoes

Student must wear shoes with Velcro. Sandals, open-back shoes, flip-flops, or house slippers are not allowed. Student socks must be visible above the shoe.

Hair

Hair is to be clean and neatly combed. Hair should not cover student eyes. No inappropriate or extreme haircuts or styles with designs are allowed. Hair should be the student's natural color.

Hair Accessories (bows, headbands, etc.)

Hair accessories should be one of the following solid colors: navy blue/ black/ brown/ orange or white. Unicorn, animal ears, pom poms, or any type of hair accessory that becomes a distraction, will be collected by the Teacher.

Boys Jewelry

An optional wristwatch, a ring, and one modest necklace are permitted. The school will not be responsible for the loss, breakage, or theft of jewelry and/or personal items.

Girls Jewelry

Optional pairs of small earrings that fit entirely on the earlobe, one ring, a watch and one modest necklace is permitted. Hoop and dangle earrings present safety issues and are not permitted. The school will not be responsible for the loss, breakage, or theft of jewelry and/or personal items.

Cosmetics and Nails

Cosmetics are not allowed. Nails should be in their natural state, or girls may wear clear nail polish.

Body Art

No tattoos body art is allowed.

Spirit Day Dress

Every Friday is spirit day. On this day, students can wear a spirit or college shirt. Tops should be worn with school approved uniform bottoms, shoes, and daily hair accessories. Spirit shirts will be on sale the first few weeks of school.

Free Dress

During the school year, special days may be designated as non-uniform dress days. This will be communicated to parents.

Free Dress Guidelines:

- Halters, tank tops, strapless tops, spaghetti straps, and bare midriffs are not permitted.
- Pants with holes are not allowed.
- Inappropriate printing, logos, or decorations are not permitted on clothing.
- Clothing and accessories must not display vulgarity, firearms, weapons, sexual innuendos, or cultural or racial insensitivity, including statements that demean or promote religious or political beliefs, or promote the use of tobacco, drugs, or alcohol.
- Pajamas and slippers are not appropriate school attire and must not be worn.
- Sandals, flip-flops, high heels, or house slippers are not permitted at any time.

IV. HEALTH AND WELLNESS

The function of the school nurse is to provide acute, chronic, episodic, and emergency health care; assessment of student's health status; identification of health problems that may affect educational achievement; development of health care plans; and administration of medications. The nurse cannot diagnose but can make recommendations based on the individual student. Parents must inform the nurse of any student with a chronic or serious illness. A medical statement describing the condition should be provided by the parent for the student's confidential health record.

Parents should keep their child at home if exhibiting any of the following symptoms:

- A fever of 100 degrees or more. Students must be fever-free without the use of fever-reducing medication for at least 24 hours.
- Vomiting or diarrhea. The child must be symptom-free for at least 24 hours before returning to school.
- Skin rash that has not been diagnosed by a doctor as being noncontagious. The nurse must have a medical release for the student to return to school.
- Untreated inflamed/pink eyes. A doctor's note is required for the student to return to school. If inflammation is due to "allergies," the doctor must document it.

If students exhibit any of the above symptoms at school, they must be picked up by their parents. A contagious medical condition is one that will spread from one person to the next. The flu, strep throat, chickenpox, and infectious pink eye are some examples. When a student has been seen by the doctor, he or she must bring a doctor's note to return to school.

MEDICATIONS AT SCHOOL

The policy of the Board of Education does not authorize RYSS school personnel to dispense or administer medication of any kind. That includes aspirin, a similar preparation, or any other drugs.

School personnel can give medication during school hours under the following restrictions:

- Students who are noncontagious, on long-term medication, on preventative medication, or for a prolonged period on medication that cannot under any arrangement be administered other than during school hours may take medication during school hours.
- The health care provider's statement must be accompanied by the written permission of at least one parent. This form will be kept on file in the main office.
- No medication will be dispensed without this form on file. With the required documentation on file, students may self-administer asthma medications. The medication is to be furnished by a parent and brought to the clinic in the original container labeled with the child's name, name of the medication, and directions for the time, route, and dosage.
- The physician's name must be on prescription medication. All medications must be delivered to the school by an adult and must be picked up from the school by an adult.

CHRONIC ILLNESS

Parents will inform the principal if their child has a serious and possibly life threatening, chronic illness or condition before entering school. Parents will meet with the principal, teacher, and the campus nurse to develop an "Individualized Health Care Plan" that will include instructions for observation of the illness, care and treatment, medications orders, and special instructions such as parent notification or calling *911*.

Plans are available for:

- Food and Life-Threatening Allergies
- Asthma
- Diabetes
- Seizures
- General or Non-Specific Condition or Disease.
- Care Plans must be signed by the physician, nurse, teacher and principal.

LICE

If careful observation indicates that a student has head lice, the teacher will contact the student's parent to determine whether the child will need to be picked up from school and discuss a plan for treatment. If a parent discovers head lice in a child's hair, parents are asked to inform the teacher as soon as possible. Follow-up screening will be done on campus. Parents should instruct their children not to share combs, brushes, hats, or scarves with anyone.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Every student enrolled in the state of Texas shall be immunized against vaccine preventable diseases caused by infectious agents in accordance with the immunization schedule adopted by the Texas Department of State Health Services.

A current copy of the student's immunization record signed by the physician is a prerequisite to annual admission to the school. In the event of a deficiency in the vaccination record, the school nurse will notify parents/guardians of what must be corrected.

CONTAGIOUS DISEASES AND CONDITIONS

To protect other students from contagious illnesses, students infected with certain conditions or diseases are NOT allowed to come to school while they are contagious. If a parent suspects that his or her child has a contagious disease, the parent should keep the child at home; and it is requested until symptoms of the disease or condition are completely gone, or the child has been seen by his or her health care provider. All students exhibiting contagious conditions must NOT return to school unless written notice from a health care provider is received.

MEDICAL CONDITIONS

All medical conditions, either previous or currently being treated by a medical doctor or health care provider, MUST be reported to the teacher. A list of all medications the student is taking must be provided to the principal in case of an emergency and will be maintained confidential.

MEDICAL EMERGENCY

In the case of an injured or acutely ill student, staff member, parent, or visitor the following procedures will be followed:

1. Teachers or other staff members will immediately contact the front office. Teachers should pre-designate a student to go to the nearest class for help if necessary.
2. The school secretary will:
 - Proceed to the location with a first aid kit
 - Call EMS assistance if it's required

- Administer first aid if necessary
 - Upon stabilization of a person, notify the parent or next of kin.
3. Any staff member may call 911 for EMS assistance if they feel it necessary.

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

The Social and Emotional Learning team at our campus involves every staff member. We coordinate the implementation and growth of culturally responsive and emotionally safe learning environments. We have resources to help students develop skills to manage their emotions, form positive relationships, feel empathy for others, and make responsible decisions. SEL programming is based on the understanding that the best learning emerges in the context of supportive relationships that make learning challenging, engaging, and meaningful.

NUTRITION

The new Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards will help schools make healthy choice and the easy choice by offering students more foods and beverages we should be encouraging – whole grains, fruits and vegetables, leaner protein, lower-fat dairy – while limiting foods with too much sugar, fat, and salt.

Nutrition Standards for Foods

Any food sold in schools must be either fruit, a vegetable, a dairy product, a protein food, a “whole-grain rich” grain product, or a combination food that contains at least ¼ cup of fruit or vegetable or contain 10% of the Daily Value (DV) of a nutrient cited as a public health concern in the 2014 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA). (Calcium, potassium, vitamin D, or dietary fiber). Additionally, foods sold must meet a range of nutrient requirements: Calorie limits include Snack items: ≤ 200 calories Entrée items: ≤ 350 calories. Sodium limits include Snack items: ≤ 200 mg per portion as packaged Entrée items: ≤ 480 mg per portion as packaged. Fat limits include Total fat: ≤35% of calories, Saturated fat: < 10% of calories. Tran’s fat: zero grams. Sugar limits include either: ≤35% of calories from total sugars in foods or ≤ 35% of weight from total sugars in foods.

Nutrition Standards for Beverages

Schools may sell plain water, unflavored low-fat milk, unflavored or flavored fat-free milk and milk alternatives, 100% fruit or vegetable juice. Elementary schools may sell up to 8-ounce portions, while middle schools and high schools may sell up to 12-ounce portions of these beverages. The school offers additional beverage options outside of the meal service period for high school students. These are no more than 20-ounce servings of calorie-free, flavored and/or unflavored carbonated water and other “calorie-free” beverages that comply with the FDA standard of less than 5 calories per serving. For additional information you can review the nutrition standards by visiting Squaremeals.org/Smart Snacks.

Classroom Parties

Parents must notify the teacher and get principal approval prior to the date of the party. All items must be dropped off in the front office. This celebration is not permitted in the cafeteria area. (No home cooked food)

Outside Food

RYSS is no longer allowing homemade or home-baked food items to be served to students at any school event. All foods and snacks provided to students as a shared snack during school hours must be store bought and display an ingredient label for food allergen verification. The school may not provide access to food that does not meet the nutritional standards at any time anywhere on school premises. If parents bring their own child lunch, students may NOT SHARE this type of food with other students. This policy does not apply to field trips.

V. STUDENT LIFE

INTERGENERATIONAL PROGRAM

Our intergenerational program is a Raul Yzaguirre Schools for Success initiative in collaboration with Harris County Precinct 2. Seniors will be able to join our early childhood students in fun activities. Eligible senior citizens will undergo a background check. Grandparents are invited to participate.

VI. CAMPUS AND STUDENT SAFETY

CLOSED / OPEN CAMPUS

Castillo STEM is a closed campus and students are not allowed to leave the campus during the school day unless a parent has permission to take them out. Parents that wish to pick up their children must formally sign them out for the day from the main office.

VII. STUDENT CULTURE

DISCIPLINE PROGRAM

Leonel Castillo STEM Academy strives to include the campus motto “Pride, Courage, and Determination” in its approach to discipline. By teaching with pride, giving students the courage to learn from their mistakes, and allowing them to learn the positive outcome of determination, the student will receive the foundation needed to make good choices in life.

Each student is a unique individual with unique personal, social, and educational needs. As a result, every disciplinary situation will be unique. Interventions for misbehavior provide the best learning value when matched to the unique student and the unique situation. When unacceptable behavior creates an unsafe environment in which it is difficult to teach or for students to learn, the student is subject to interventions to help find the root cause of the behavior. The teacher is responsible for following the RTI (Response to Intervention) process and creating a student action plan.

Expectations / Rules

Expectations Goals

1. Maintain an orderly school operation.
2. Maintain optimal learning opportunities for students. School facilities and classrooms must be free of behaviors that interfere with teaching and learning.
3. Help students develop skills and behaviors necessary for healthy and social interaction, both present and future.
4. Help students learn how their decisions affect the quality of their lives and others.
5. Help students develop responsibility and character.

Leonel Castillo STEM Academy Love and Logic Rules

1. Treat others with the same respect you are treated with the adults in this school.
2. Feel free to do anything that doesn't cause a problem for anyone else.
3. If you cause a problem for anyone else, you will be asked to solve that problem.
4. If you can't solve the problem, or choose not to, staff members will be asked to use their discretion and give an appropriate consequence.
5. If you feel something is unfair, whisper to the staff member, "I'm not sure that's fair" to discuss the outcome of the situation.

CONSEQUENCES

Duty Staff Members agree to

- Follow the principal's vision for the campus;
- Greet and welcome every student to campus with love and joy.
- Supervise students 100% of the time (including taking them to the restroom supervised).
- Follow and love and logic approach (we do not yell).

Teacher Behavior Flow-Chart

Teachers are expected to follow this flow-chart. Teacher aides are to report any concerns to the teacher they are assigned to. Support Staff (non-teachers) do not follow the flow-chart unless they have received a directive from the campus principal.

Phases	Time Frame	Consequences Examples	Actions	Supporting Team
Phase I - Communicate with the Parent	4 weeks of observations and supporting documentation before the issue is taken to the parent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Verbal Warning - Proximity - Moving students to another area - Walking around the school - breathers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parent Conference - Parent Calls - Parent Notes - Teacher Anecdotal Records 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TA will support the student
Phase II – Communicate with the Principal	2 weeks of supporting documentation before the issue is taken to the principal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Everything above, plus the following: - Set up a parent conference with the principal, teacher and parent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Principal/ Parent/ Teacher Conference. - Anecdotal Teacher Interventions - Student Behavior Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Principal Support - District Support

STUDENT VOICE

The Leonel Castillo STEM Academy staff dedicates itself to following a set of Love and Logic core beliefs and expectations that provide a guide for dealing with student discipline. These core beliefs guide our attempts to individualized disciplinary procedures and to help students see reasonable connections between their behavior and the resulting consequences.

Since these core beliefs provide the guiding light for our professional decisions, the staff encourages parents to bring concerns and questions to us if we operate in ways that appear to be inconsistent with these core beliefs.

The following list of core beliefs outlines the professional actions and attitudes of all staff members in this school.

1. Students will be guided and expected to solve their problems, or the ones they create, without creating problems for anyone else.

2. Student misbehavior will be viewed as an opportunity for individual problem solving and preparation for the real world as opposed to a personal attack on the staff member.

VIII. PARENT OPPORTUNITIES

PTO

Castillo STEM does not currently have an established PTO. If you are interested in participating in a Parent Teacher Organization please reach out to the campus principal. We believe in a partnership approach and welcome the opportunity.

SDMC

There are two parent positions in the Shared Decision-Making Committee at Castillo STEM. Participation is voluntary. The SDMC meets quarterly to discuss issues concerning the school and make recommendations to the School Principal. If you are interested in participating or being a substitute, you may notify the principal. Monthly Coffee with the Principal sessions also informal communication between families and the principal to discuss school events and suggestions.

VIPS

Volunteers in Public Schools is a program that allows parents and community volunteers the opportunity to participate in events and activities in the school. To attain VIPS status you will need to fill out a VIPS application with the school executive assistant and a more thorough background check will be performed. Once you are cleared as a VIPS you can volunteer at events and activities on behalf of the school.

FACE Meetings

Family and Community Engagement meetings are held quarterly to share information about the Tejano Center for Community Concerns program and how parents can get assistance when needed.

IX. SCHOOL – HOME COMMUNICATION

Parent Communication

Efforts should be made to keep parents informed regarding their child’s behavioral and academic progress. Parents will be contacted if a child is struggling, is having issues affecting his/her progress (behavior, focus, attendance, etc.). Castillo STEM encourages parents to contact the school concerning the education of their children. A healthy partnership between parents, students, and staff members is likely to benefit all involved.

Should parents wish to arrange a conference, they may call the school office at 713-640-3740 to make an appointment or request a return call. Due to the various duties and commitments of school personnel during the school day, teachers and other school officials may not be able to meet with parents who arrive at the school without an appointment. Parents can leave their names and phone numbers with the main office receptionist and request a return call.

To ensure the safety of students – especially in an emergency – and to allow for timely parent and student contact, it is critical that the school have accurate addresses and phone numbers for all its students and their families. If a student’s family moves during the school year, the student must report that address change (and new telephone number) immediately to the executive assistant. Also, if parents or guardians receive new work telephone numbers, that information should be updated in the executive assistant’s office.

School Website: www.ryss.org/castillo

Social Media: Follow RYSS Leonel Castillo Early Childhood STEM Academy on Facebook or Instagram, and for the latest information and school updates.

Family Handbook Acknowledgement Receipt

Parents and/or Guardians, after reading the handbook, please initial below and return to your child’s teacher.

Initial each line below:

_____ I have received a copy of the Family Handbook.

_____ I will read and refer to the Family Handbook.

_____ I will follow the policies and procedures in the Family Handbook.

_____ I will seek clarification from the principal for any policies and procedures if unclear.

Parent/Guardian Printed Name

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

LEONEL CASTILLO EARLY CHILDHOOD STEM ACADEMY

The policies contained herein are for informational purposes only. The school maintains the right to amend or withdraw any policy or matter set forth herein at any time.

All families should be familiar with the Family Handbook. Every student’s parent/guardian is responsible for the policies, procedures, and regulations contained in these documents.

Revised: July 2024 Uploaded Digitally to Dojo 8/14/2024

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