

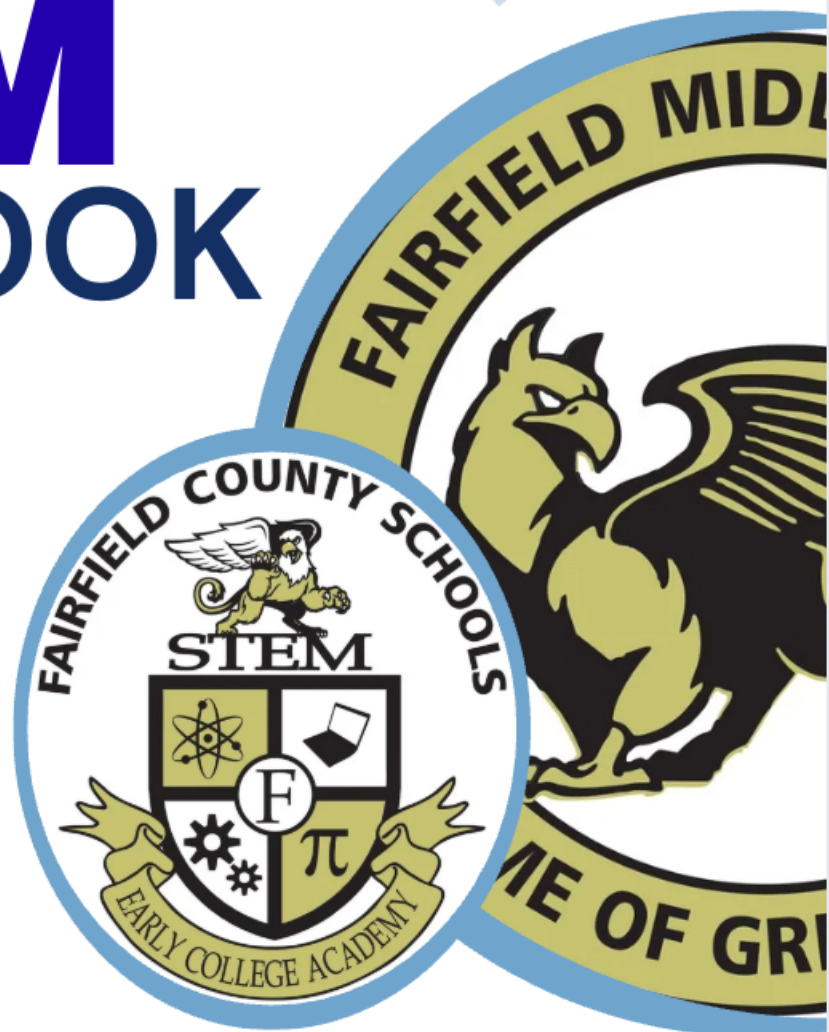
FAIRFIELD MIDDLE SCHOOL

Excellence Inspired Everyday

2025-2026 STEM HANDBOOK


Dr. Rolando Curabo
STEM Lead

Dr. Brandon Dixon
Principal



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<https://fms.fairfield1.org> 

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Winnsboro, SC 29180



Message from the Principal

Dear Students and Parents/Guardians,

Welcome to the 2025-2026 school year at Fairfield Middle School! We are thrilled to begin another exciting year with each of you as we embrace our new school theme: **“Charting the Course to Excellence: Believe, Lead, and Succeed!”**

This year, we are committed to helping you grow into confident learners and strong leaders. Every lesson, every activity, and every challenge is an opportunity for you to learn, lead, and reach your full potential. Whether you’re returning or joining us for the first time, we want you to know that this is a place where **you belong and your success matters.**

At Fairfield Middle, we are setting **very high expectations** for teaching and learning. Our goal is to not only prepare you for high school but also to lay a strong foundation for your future college and career success. We believe in you – and we expect you to believe in yourself, lead by example, and strive for excellence in everything you do.

We can’t wait to see all that you will accomplish this year. Let’s work together, stay focused, and keep charting the course toward excellence.

Let’s go, Fairfield Griffins – this is your year to **Believe, Lead, and Succeed!**

With P.R.I.D.E.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brandon Dixon". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Dr. Brandon Dixon
Principal



Message from the STEM Lead

Dear STEM Students and Parents/Guardians,

The STEM Team is thrilled to warmly welcome each of you as we embark on an exciting journey at STEM Early College Academy. Whether you are new to our school or returning for another year, we are confident that, together, we will accomplish great things.

Our dedicated instructional staff is committed to fostering a collaborative and innovative learning environment—one that encourages students to think critically, creatively, and independently as they engage with the curriculum.

We believe that a strong partnership between home and school is essential to our scholars' success. We encourage you to approach this year with an open mind and a willingness to embrace new challenges. Our classrooms are dynamic spaces where your ideas and contributions are valued. Your unique experiences and perspectives will enrich our learning community, and we look forward to witnessing your continued growth and success.

To our parents and guardians: your support and involvement are vital to our students' academic and personal development. We encourage you to stay connected—whether by attending school events, monitoring academic progress, or engaging in conversations about your child's learning journey. Together, we can create a nurturing, enriching environment where every student is empowered to reach their full potential.

As we begin this new school year, I encourage all students to stay curious, take thoughtful risks, and strive for excellence. Let's work together to make this year both memorable and inspiring.

Throughout the year, we will keep you informed with regular updates on curriculum, projects, and upcoming events. Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions, suggestions, or concerns.

Once again, welcome to another enriching year at STEM Early College Academy. Let's make it a transformative experience for all!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rolando Curabo". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Dr. Rolando Curabo
STEM Lead

Fairfield County School District 2025-2026 Modified Balanced Academic Calendar Board Approved 2-11-2025

July 2025						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

- July**
- 25 Teachers Begin/PD at Schools
 - 28 Convocation/PD at Schools
 - 29 Teacher Planning/Workday
 - 30 District PD
 - 31 Teacher Planning/Workday

January 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

- January**
- 1-2 Winter Break
 - 5 Teacher Planning/Workday
 - 6 Students Return
 - 9 2nd Grading Period Report Cards Issued
 - 19 M.L. King, Jr., Day Holiday

August 2025						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

- August**
- 1 First Day for Students

February 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

- February**
- 2 OEC Day/PD at Schools
 - 9 3rd Grading Period Interims
 - 16 President's Day Holiday
 - 16 Inclement Weather Day if Necessary
 - 17-20 Intersession

September 2025						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

- September**
- 1 Labor Day Holiday
 - 2 1st Grading Period Interims

March 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

- March**
- 18 3rd Grading Period Ends
 - 26 Teacher Planning/Workday
 - 26 3rd Grading Period Report Cards Issued/ Parent Conferences 11:00AM - 6:00PM (All Schools)
 - No School for Students

October 2025						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

- October**
- 3 1st Grading Period Ends
 - 9 1st Grading Period Report Cards Issued/ Parent Conferences 3:30-6:00pm (Elem) 4:00-6:30pm (Secondary Schools)
 - 13 District PD
 - 14-17 Intersession

April 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

- April**
- 6-10 Spring Break
 - 28 4th Grading Period Interims

November 2025						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

- November**
- 12 2nd Grading Period Interims
 - 24-28 Fall Break
 - 24 Inclement Weather Day if Necessary

May 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

- May**
- 25 Memorial Day Holiday
 - 25 Inclement Weather Day if Necessary
 - 28 Early Dismissal for Students
 - 29 Early Dismissal and Last Day for Students

December 2025						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

- December**
- 19 2nd Grading Period Ends
 - Early Dismissal for Students
 - 22-31 Winter Break

June 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

- June**
- 1 Teacher Planning/Workday
 - 5 4th Grading Period Report Cards Mailed

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INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

The Fairfield Middle School STEM Early College Academy Handbook serves as a valuable resource for students, parents, faculty, and staff, providing essential information about the operations of the STEM Early College Academy at FMS.

Students must apply for and be accepted into the STEM Early College Academy Program. To remain in good standing, students are required to maintain a specific grade point average and adhere to the STEM Code of Conduct and Handbook. Those who do not meet the established academic expectations will be placed on Academic Probation. If they fail to return to compliance with these expectations, they will be removed from the STEM Early College Academy Program.

A. About the Program

The STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) Early College Academy program at FMS is an honors program designed to accelerate and enrich learning experiences for academically gifted students with an interest in STEM-related careers. Students apply for the program during their 6th-grade year. Acceptance is based on recommendations from their elementary school teachers, current academic performance, and a placement test. The STEM Early College Academy program enables students to pursue college credit courses in high school and earn an associate degree from Midlands Technical College before graduating.

B. Mission Statement

To empower students to excel academically, develop critical thinking skills, and foster a passion for discovery and problem-solving. In a supportive learning environment, we aim to equip students with the knowledge, skills, and experiences necessary to succeed in higher education and future careers in STEM fields. Ultimately, we seek to prepare them to become leaders, innovators, and change-makers in a rapidly evolving global society.

C. Vision

Our vision is for students to engage in a challenging curriculum and learning environment in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math that maximizes their potential and prepares them to tackle the challenges of the world around them. We aim to create a pathway to success, empowering students to achieve academic excellence and make a lasting impact in their communities and beyond.

D. Program Educational Objectives

1. Cultivate students' exposure to STEM themes and potential career paths.
2. Provide access to a rigorous, inquiry-based STEM curriculum that encourages students to collaboratively solve real-world problems.
3. Earn high school credits before entering high school.
4. Develop critical thinking, analytical, problem-solving, and communication skills essential for success in postsecondary education and the workplace.

E. Core Ideas

- Inquiry Based
- Real World Experiences
- Rigorous Coursework
- College and Career Readiness

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS AND STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

A. Seventh Grade

Course Description	Student Learning Outcomes
<p>Geometry Honors (High School Credit Course) This course covers the development of concepts of geometric congruence and similarity; geometric properties with equations; right triangles, and trigonometry; geometric measurement and dimensions; circles, and interpreting statistical data, as time permits.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use appropriate symbolic notation and vocabulary to communicate, interpret, and explain mathematical concepts. ▪ Reason about relationships between shapes to determine area, surface area, and volume. ▪ Solve real-world problems involving scale drawings. ▪ Understand congruence and similarity using physical models, transparencies, or Geometry software (e.g., given two congruent figures, show how to obtain one from the other by a sequence of rotations, translations, and/or reflections). ▪ Understand and apply the Pythagorean Theorem ($a^2 + b^2 = c^2$) to solve problems. ▪ Analyzing statistical relationships by using a line of best fit or “trend” line (a straight line that models an association between two quantities).
<p>Adv. Language Arts The seventh grade English/Language Arts course provides a balance of reading, writing, speaking, listening and language skills essential for success in the 21st Century. The seventh grade teaches essential comprehension skills and strategies while students read closely and cite evidence from leveled fiction and nonfiction to support an analysis of what the literary work conveys. The seventh-grade writing curriculum follows the Writer’s Workshop model where students progress through the writing process as they plan, draft, revise, edit, and publish their writing. These writing types include arguments, informative/explanatory texts, and narratives. Students will also be required to conduct a quarterly Griffins Read Independent Reading Project (<i>STAR Assessment and Accelerated Reader Goals</i>). They will develop the skills to draw upon, write about evidence from literary and informational texts and they will learn how to give formal presentations and develop a range of broadly useful oral communication and interpersonal skills. Learners will also progress monitor their Reading and Writing achievement and growth throughout the school year. Throughout the year, students will read novels, short stories, poetry, fiction, nonfiction, as well as narrative, argumentative, informative and other expository documents. The curriculum strictly follows the South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Standards for English Language Arts through reading, writing, communicating, and thinking critically. Curriculum and instruction will utilize AVID</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Advanced English Language Arts 7 provides students with a challenging curriculum that is aligned to South Carolina College and Career Ready Standards for English Language Arts. ▪ At the advanced level, students will use a wide variety of texts to increase their use of critical thinking skills. ▪ The curriculum moves at an accelerated pace with a more concentrated focus on independent reading, writing, analysis, and problem solving. ▪ The primary goals of the course are to foster independent learning and encourage in-depth exploration of the content.

<p>(Advancement via Individual Determination) and WICOR (Writing, Inquiry, Collaboration, Organization, and Reading) strategies.</p>	
<p>Adv. Science 7 South Carolina seventh-grade students engage in thinking and solving problems the way scientists and engineers do to help them better see how science is relevant to their lives. To capitalize on the natural curiosity all students have about the world around them; learning experiences are built around the three dimensions of science: Science and Engineering Practices (SEPs), Crosscutting Concepts (CCCs), and Disciplinary Core Ideas (DCIs). This three-dimensional approach to teaching and learning helps educators provide meaningful learning experiences with varied entry points for students from diverse backgrounds.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students will develop models to describe the atomic composition of simple and complex extended molecules. ▪ Students will use the information to make sense of and evaluate how synthetic materials are made from natural resources and how these materials have influenced society. ▪ Students will be able to use evidence to support a claim that energy is transferred between objects and that the relationship of mass and speed on kinetic energy and position on the potential energy of objects interact in a system. ▪ Students will analyze and interpret data as evidence that organisms and populations depend on their environmental resources, explain patterns of interactions with other organisms, and describe the cycling of matter and energy flow in an ecosystem. ▪ Students will be able to construct an argument and evaluate solutions of how biodiversity, ecosystem services, and environmental changes can impact the integrity of an ecosystem. ▪ Students will ask questions, apply scientific principles, and explain how human use of Earth's resources due to geoscience processes has impacted global temperatures and systems.
<p>Adv. World Geography This course is designed to expose students to the history of the world through a geographical lens. Students will focus on the continents of the world and their impact in history and modern day. All assignments are aligned with South Carolina's state standards as identified by the South Carolina State Department of Education.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students will understand the world in spatial terms using the geographic themes of location, place and region and will analyze data using geographic tools for regions of study throughout the year.
<p>Latin (NC) In this course, The Latin Language and culture of the Roman Empire will be studied. Latin engages students in both reading and writing which encompasses a variety of styles, as well as oral presentations, speaking, and listening activities. Students will also practice grammar and syntax on a daily basis. The study of English derivatives is of particular importance as 60% of complex English vocabulary is derived from Latin.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demonstrate basic proficiency in pronunciation and accentuation of Latin, through repetitive drills, recitation of paradigms, and reading of sentences and small paragraphs in Latin. ▪ The student will translate simple and compound sentences and short paragraphs that contain basic vocabulary. ▪ Through translation of simple English sentences into Latin, the student will develop basic analytical and synthetic skills in grammatical analysis, sentence structure. ▪ Engage in some simple conversational formulae, including greetings and farewells, mottoes, etc.. It

	<p>is not expected that the student will have proficiency beyond simple standard formulae presented in the classroom.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Acquire basic grammatical knowledge of declarative constructions. Make basic comparisons between the grammar and usage of the Latin Language and the grammar and usage of the English language. This includes the acquisition of an analytical vocabulary for the discussion of morphology and syntax. ▪ Engage in basic analysis of both Latin and English words, with a focus on diction, cognate words and etymology, as well as some basic familiarity with some linguistic concepts, such as prefixes, suffixes, infixes, etc. ▪ Begin to develop an appreciation of features of Roman culture through the reading and analysis of representative sentences and paragraphs containing material of cultural significance, as well as vocabulary study of culturally revealing words and phrases. ▪ The student will increase memory skills through the acquisition of paradigms and vocabulary (some 250+ basic words).
<p>PLTW: Design and Modeling The PLTW Design and Modeling course introduces students to design engineering concepts. Throughout the program, students will discover the design process and develop an understanding of the influence of creativity and innovation in their lives. They will then be challenged and empowered to use and apply what they've learned throughout the unit to design an engineering project (© 2017 Project Lead The Way). This course is designed to be linked with the series of units for <i>Project Lead the Way (PLTW)</i>. Students will be required to use and apply what they've learned throughout the course to design a therapeutic toy for a child who has cerebral palsy, and also complete other design projects. The knowledge and skills provided through this course serve as a prerequisite for the PLTW Introduction to Engineering Design course taught at the high school level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explore a variety of Engineering careers. ▪ Apply the design process to create a solution. ▪ Communicate effectively for specific purposes and settings. ▪ Demonstrate ethical decision-making. ▪ Apply a mathematical model to represent an authentic situation. ▪ Construct a solid model. ▪ Create and conduct testing on physical models or prototypes. ▪ Measure and present values appropriate to standards of accuracy and precision. ▪ Sketch and/or interpret perspective, isometric, and Multiview drawings with adequate attention to standards and critical annotations.

B. Eighth Grade Course Descriptions

Course Description	Student Learning Outcomes
<p>Geometry Honors (High School Credit Course) This course covers the development of concepts of geometric congruence and similarity; geometric properties with equations; right triangles, and trigonometry; geometric measurement and dimensions; circles, and interpreting statistical data, as time permits.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use appropriate symbolic notation and vocabulary to communicate, interpret, and explain mathematical concepts. ▪ Reason about relationships between shapes to determine area, surface area, and volume. ▪ Solve real-world problems involving scale drawings. ▪ Understand congruence and similarity using physical models, transparencies, or Geometry software (e.g., given two congruent figures, show how to obtain one from the other by a sequence of rotations, translations, and/or reflections). ▪ Understand and apply the Pythagorean Theorem ($a^2 + b^2 = c^2$) to solve problems. ▪ Analyzing statistical relationships by using a line of best fit or “trend” line (a straight line that models an association between two quantities).
<p>English 1 Honors (High School Credit Course) English 1 Honors is an honors-level course for academically gifted students who have the ability to pursue an accelerated English program. These students may be preparing for Advanced Placement English (college-level courses) in high school; therefore, the coursework will reflect more rigor than English I. This is a study of literary analysis and synthesizing informational texts. Students gain an understanding of how to synthesize, analyze and respond effectively to literary, informational, and non-print texts in preparation for the next level of advanced ELA courses. Throughout the year, students will read novels, short stories, poetry, fiction, nonfiction, as well as informative and other expository documents. Students will write daily in a variety of styles to include narrative, informative, and argumentative. The curriculum strictly follows the South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Standards for English Language. Curriculum and instruction will utilize AVID (Advancement via Individual Determination) and WICOR (Writing, Inquiry, Collaboration, Organization, and Reading) strategies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students will write essays in which they explore the relationship between specific literary and related informational texts. ▪ Students will write in a variety of formats including essays and short research projects in which they use evidence as support. ▪ Students will participate in small and large group planned class discussions. ▪ Students will demonstrate their command of the conventions of Standard English Grammar through writing and speaking.
<p>Chemistry 1 Honors (High School Credit Course) The Chemistry 1 Honors is a <i>high school credit honors-level course</i>. It is directed toward explaining the composition of matter. This course will examine selected topics that are fundamental to an understanding of chemistry. Students will investigate the electronic structure of atoms, chemical bonding, chemical formulas, mass/volume relationships in chemical reactions, gas laws, energy changes in chemical reactions, molecular geometry, acid/base/salt reactions, colligative properties, an introduction to organic chemistry and other selected subjects. Emphasis is placed on</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students will be skilled in problem solving, critical thinking and analytical reasoning as applied to scientific problems. ▪ Students will have a firm foundation in the fundamentals and application of current chemical and scientific theories. ▪ Students will be able to explain the structure and properties of matter. ▪ Students will be able to explain and predict interactions between objects and within systems of objects.

<p>chemical principles and their application, problem solving, and the development of scientific skills. The course will engage students in thinking and solving problems the way scientists and engineers do to help them better see how science is relevant to their lives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students will be able to demonstrate how are waves/particles used to transfer energy and send and store information. ▪ Students will be able to explain chemical reactions and patterns of chemical properties. ▪ Students will be able to demonstrate effective communication skills in multiple formats including written work and/or oral presentations.
<p>Adv. South Carolina History This course is designed to expose students to the history of the world through a geographical lens. Students will focus on the continents of the world and their impact in history and modern day. All assignments are aligned with South Carolina’s state standards as identified by the South Carolina State Department of Education.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The knowledge to describe fundamental concepts principles and terminology. ▪ To apply the principles, and use them in their knowledge of understanding and explaining the history of South Carolina. ▪ The Skills to collaborate effectively as part of professional team groups to describe specific periods and contexts in South Carolina History. ▪ Students will also be able to apply these skills to show effective oral, written, and visual communication skills to show their understanding of the state's history. ▪ With the successful application of the knowledge and skills, the students can engage responsibility and sensitivity in cultural historical, and interdisciplinary global contexts.
<p>Latin (High School Credit Course) In this course you will study The Latin language and culture of the Roman Empire. Latin engages students in both reading and writing which encompass a variety of styles, as well as oral presentations, speaking, and listening activities. Students will also practice grammar and syntax on a daily basis. The study of English derivatives is of particular importance as 60% of complex English vocabulary is derived from Latin.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demonstrate basic proficiency in pronunciation and accentuation of Latin, through repetitive drills, recitation of paradigms, and reading of sentences and small paragraphs in Latin. The student will become aware of the great differences between the simple and straightforward pronunciation of Latin and the more complicated practices of the modern descendants of Latin. ▪ Through translation of Latin sentences and short paragraphs into English, the student will develop basic analytical skills in grammatical analysis, sentence structure (coordination, subordination), and the elements of style. The student will translate simple and compound sentences and short paragraphs. ▪ Through translation of simple English sentences into Latin, the student will develop basic analytical and synthetic skills in grammatical analysis, sentence structure (coordination, subordination), and the elements of style. ▪ Engage in some simple conversational formulae, including greetings and farewells, mottos, etc. It is expected that the student will have proficiency beyond simple standard formulae presented in the classroom.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Acquire basic grammatical knowledge of declarative and imperative constructions. Make basic comparisons between the grammar and usage of the Latin Language and the grammar and usage of the English language. This includes the acquisition of an analytical vocabulary for the discussion of morphology and syntax. ▪ Engage in basic analysis of both Latin and English words, with a focus on diction, cognate words and etymology, as well as some basic familiarity with some linguistic concepts, such as prefixes, suffixes, infixes, etc. ▪ Begin to develop an appreciation of features of Roman culture through the reading and analysis of representative sentences and paragraphs containing material of cultural significance, as well as vocabulary study of culturally revealing words and phrases. Both similarities to modern culture and essential differences will be examined. There will be short student reports and presentations. ▪ The student will increase memory skills through the acquisition of paradigms and vocabulary (some 500+ basic words).
<p>PLTW: Automation and Robotics</p> <p>The PLTW Automation and Robotics course introduces students to mechanical, electrical, computer, and robotics engineering concepts. Throughout the program, students will discover the design process and develop an understanding of the influence of creativity and innovation in their lives. They will then be challenged and empowered to use and apply what they've learned throughout the course to design an engineering project (© 2017 Project Lead The Way).</p> <p>This course is designed to be linked with the series of units for <i>Project Lead the Way (PLTW)</i>. Students learn about the history and impact of automation and robotics as they explore mechanical systems, energy transfer, machine automation, and computer control systems. Using the VEX Robotics® platform, students apply what they know to design and program traffic lights, robotic arms, and more. The knowledge and skills provided through this course serve as a prerequisite for the PLTW Principles of Engineering course taught at the high school level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explore a variety of Engineering careers. ▪ Communicate effectively for specific purposes and settings. ▪ Collaborate effectively on a diverse and multidisciplinary team. ▪ Demonstrate ethical decision-making. ▪ Apply the design process to create a solution. ▪ Analyze and create algorithms. ▪ Describe the hardware components of an electronic device and how they interact with software and the environment. ▪ Analyze the implications of computing in society. ▪ Analyze why systems are designed and constructed the way they are.

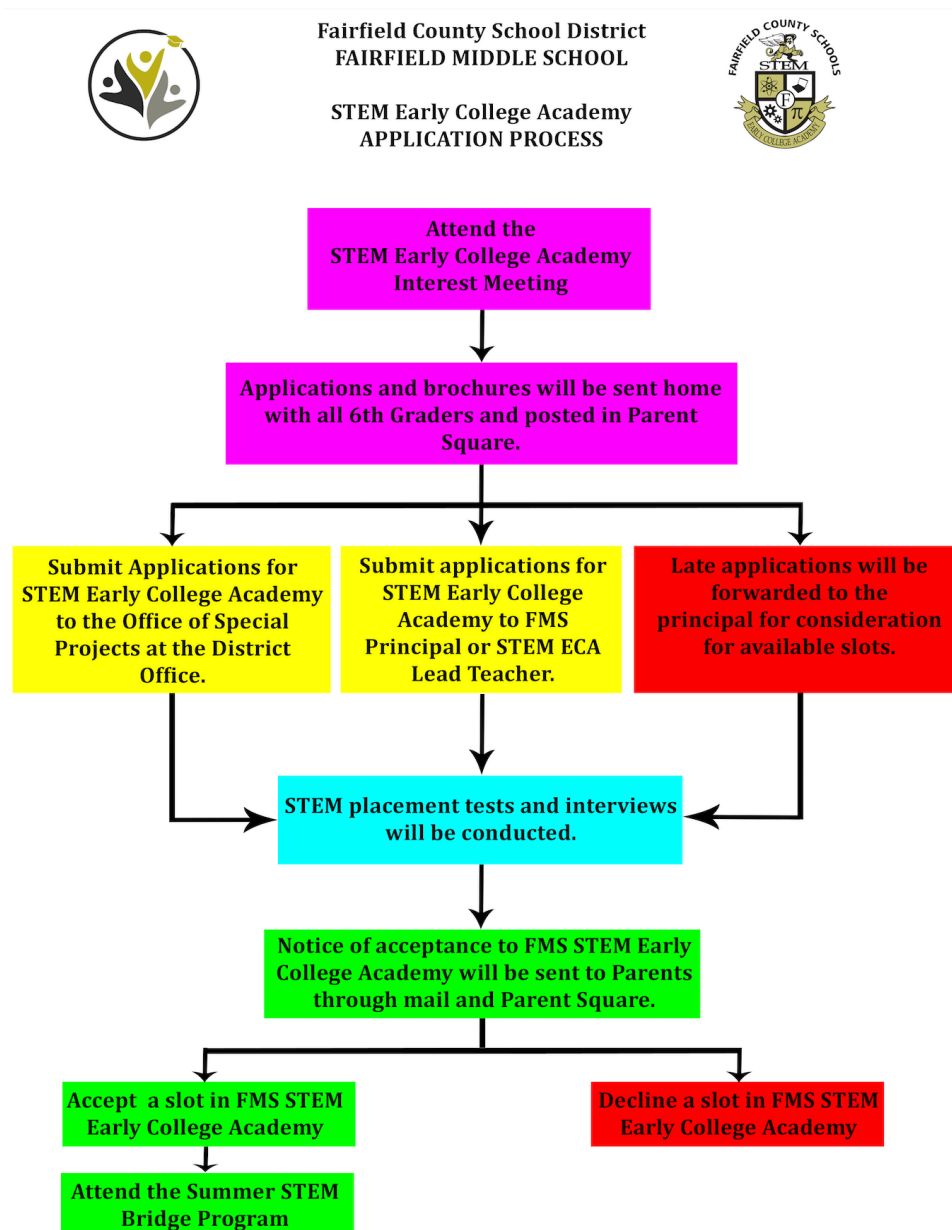
ACADEMIC AND PROGRAM POLICIES

A. General Guidelines

The following expectations of conduct apply to all students at FMS STEM ECA:

- Students are expected to attend school every day and arrive on time.
- Students are expected to appear well groomed and in proper school attire.
- Students are expected to be in class, on time, with all necessary materials, demonstrating their readiness to learn.
- Students are expected to positively contribute to the classroom.
- Students are expected to uphold the STEM ECA Code of Integrity at all times.
- As representatives of FMS STEM ECA, students are expected to conscientiously strive to promote a positive image, while maintaining the character and integrity of our school.
- Students are expected to follow staff prompts/instruction upon first request.

B. Application Process



C. Parent Involvement and Expectations

FMS STEM Early College Academy (ECA) believes that excellent schools are deeply and strongly tied to the communities they serve. We believe that parents and families should be an integral part of the school and work alongside students and teachers to build a culture grounded in our core values.

To ensure our students' success, all parents at ECA are responsible for engaging with their students and school staff with regards to their students' academic progress and achievement. As a result, parents should participate in the following ways:

1. Sign the student's report cards, assessments, and progress reports and return them on time, if required.
2. Review students' bi-weekly Good Standing reports that identify student's behavioral and academic performance.
3. Attend quarterly parent-teacher conferences and communicate regularly with student's teachers regarding their academic progress.
4. Ensure that their student is on time and prepared for school each day with his/her homework completed, all necessary school materials, and dressed appropriately.
5. Share feedback with the school on our parent-satisfaction surveys.
6. Participate in the Parent and Family Academies.

D. Expectations of Students (FCSD Student Code of Conduct)

We believe that in order for students to achieve at a high level, they must be able to learn in a safe and welcoming classroom environment. As a result, students are expected to abide by all rules and policies developed by FCSD, FMS, and ECA. A teacher or school administrator will immediately address any breach of school norms and expectations. Students will be encouraged to take responsibility for their behavior and actions and will be expected to work with other members of the school team in order to develop a solution. Every reasonable effort will be made to work with a student to solve a breach of the school's Code of Conduct before the implementation of more serious consequences such as suspension or expulsion.

Good student behavior is important to a child's education. Teachers are able to teach and students are able to learn when there is order in classrooms. Student are expected to follow the rules of their schools:

- Students will use appropriate language.
- Students will exhibit self-control and self-discipline,
- Students will cooperate and respect each other, faculty, staff and all others.
- Students will dress in an appropriate manner, adhering to current dress code policy.
- Students will not use and/or possess tobacco, alcohol, and non-prescribed drugs.
- Students will not destroy school property or the property of others.
- Students will not possess weapons or replicas.
- Students will not make threats of any kind.

E. Student Dress Code (FCSD Policy AR JICA-R Issued 9/05)

Student dress and grooming shall be neat, clean, and appropriate. The Board reserves the right to bar from school those students whose personal appearance is disruptive to the educational process and orderly operation of the school. As long as the clothes do not deviate from the accepted norm and as long as the clothes are not a deterrent to the educational process as judge by the administrative team of the school, the attire will be acceptable. The State Board of Health requires that every student wear shoes to school.

The following dress code will be in effect for the school year.

This is designed as a guide and is by no means all inclusive. An item of dress, article of clothing or accessory should not be deemed “approved” simply because it is not listed herein.

In compliance with the above, the following guidelines will be used:

- Shoes must be worn at all times. All student footwear should be attached to the foot at both the toe and the heel.
- “Flip flops,” other beach style footwear, “house” and bedroom slippers are not allowed.
- Shoes that have laces must be tied.
- Tennis shoes must be worn in physical education classes.
- All clothing must be worn appropriately (nothing inside-out or backward; no rolled up pant legs; no unfastened bib overall; belt must be worn at the waistline, etc.),
- Tight clothing, such as knit or spandex, bicycle/biker pants, aerobic shorts or overly tight pants, is not allowed.
- Shirts, tee shirts, blouses/dresses must not show cleavage, backs or midriffs.
- Clothing that is see-through is not allowed.
- Undergarments must not be visible.
- Clothing must not be sheer, mesh, shredded or have excessive holes.
- Tank tops, off the shoulder tops, muscle shirts, halters, sundresses and sleepwear are not allowed.
- Shirts and blouses with spaghetti straps, tube tops, sleeveless and backless shirts and blouses are not allowed.
- Shorts and skirts must be hemmed.
- Shorts, skorts and skirts may be no shorter than fingertip length when standing.
- Colored hair paint and body paint are not allowed if they are discovered to be disruptive to the learning environment.
- Blankets may not be worn as jackets.
- Earrings are permissible; all other body piercing jewelry or ornaments are prohibited.
- Accessories that may be used as weapons or present a danger to others, such as spiked collars, wrist bands and chains, are not allowed.
- Clothing should not conceal the identity of the wearer.
- Pants, shorts and skirts must be worn at the waist.
- Hats, sweatbands, hoods, bandanas or sunglasses may not be worn inside the school building.
- Clothing should not advertise alcoholic beverages, tobacco, narcotics, profane language, weapons and/or suggestive slogans or pictures of offensive materials.
- Clothing should not contain messages that are sexual in nature, vulgar, demeaning or offensive to others, or promote violence or antisocial behavior.

F. Weighing System of Grade Calculation

All assessments are designed to accommodate various learning styles and reinforce mastery of the essential skills required by the curriculum established by the South Carolina Department of Education. Students will be graded based on the following assessments provided throughout the course:

Assessment	Weight	Description
Classwork/Quizzes	50%	<p>These assessments can be presented in a variety of ways.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Independent classwork/drill/exercises every after lesson. ■ The students will be assigned tasks from online learning management systems like, but not limited to Khan Academy, Quizizz, Kahoot, and Study Island. ■ Q&A Discussion boards are also available on Google classroom.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Station activities are also designed for students to complete individually or in groups. ■ Quizzes on MasteryConnect are also available.
Homework	10%	<p>Homework may include special assignments, research projects, reading and/or writing tasks, or other assignments directly related to specific topics. It is considered an extension of, and reinforcement for, classroom activities and should be completed during the student's own time, outside the regular classroom environment.</p> <p>Students will be assigned homework on a regular and consistent basis, following these guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework and assignments should be submitted by the due date. • All assignments must be completed honestly and in accordance with the teacher's instructions.
Test/Project	40%	<p>Unit Test: The students are assigned a test after completing a chapter or unit to gauge their understanding and mastery of the lesson. The tests are available in MasteryConnect.</p> <p>Quarterly Projects: The students are assigned to complete a project every quarter.</p> <p>Benchmark: At the end of the quarter, the students will accomplish an assessment on MasteryConnect.</p> <p>Laboratory Experiment: The students are assigned to perform an experiment and complete a laboratory report.</p>

G. Grading Scale

The student’s final grades will be based from the weighted average collected from activities in the course evaluation:

Total Weighted Percentage	90% & above	80% - 89%	70% - 79%	60% - 69%	59% & below
Letter Grade	A	B	C	D	F

Honor Roll

The honor roll is computed each nine weeks’ period. Students may be recognized in one of two categories:

- **Principal’s Honor Roll:** Students receive all A’s (90 or higher), including Related Arts.
- **A-B Honor Roll:** Students receive grades of Bs or higher (80 or higher), including Related Arts.

Promotion Cords

Students may be recognized in one of two Promotion Cord categories:

- **Gold Cord (Academic):** Awarded to students who earn all A’s (90 or higher) in every grading period from Quarter 1 through Quarter 4, including Related Arts.
- **Black Cord (Leadership):** Awarded to students who serve as the Beta Club President or the Student Government President.

H. Retention and Failure Policy

At FMS STEM-ECA, we are fully committed to providing each student with the instruction needed to master all the content required for course credit. We are also dedicated to preparing every student for the next step in their education, ensuring they are ready to attend a high-performing college or successfully enter the workforce.

To remain enrolled in the program, students must earn a grade of 70% or above in each course.

If a student earns a grade of D or lower (69% or below) in any of the four core courses during an interim period, they will receive a probationary letter. This letter must be signed by the parents and returned to the STEM Lead Teacher. The student will have until the end of the grading period to improve their grade. If the student does not meet the required grade, they will be moved to general education classes for the remainder of the school year.

The academic probation letter will only be issued once per school year. After receiving the probationary letter, a STEM student must maintain a grade of C (70%) or above in each academic class and foreign language class for the remainder of the academic year.

I. Late and Missing Assignment

Late work is defined as any work (with the exception of homework) completed and turned in after the designated due date. The philosophy of awarding partial credit takes into account the following: the teacher had a valid reason for assigning the work, the assignment is aligned to the curriculum, and the assignment is designed to help inform the student and teacher of the student's level of mastery of the course standards.

Fairfield Middle School will adhere to the following procedures for late work:

Students will have three days from the designated due date to turn in work. A grade of "0" will be assigned until the work is received and graded by the teacher.

**1 school day late = a deduction of 5 percentage points off of the earned grade;
2 school days late = a deduction of 12 percentage points off of the earned grade;
3 school days late = a deduction of 20 percentage points off of the earned grade;
After 3 days = a grade of "0" will be assigned.**

NOTE: Because teachers are still grading current student work, teachers will have 5 days from the date the late assignment is submitted to enter the updated grade.

Since homework is given as practice and reviewed in class on the day that it is due, late homework assignments will not be accepted unless the student has a verified absence from school on the date that the homework is assigned. Homework assignments not submitted on the due date will receive a grade of "0".

No late work will be accepted the last 5 days before grades are due for Report Cards:

1st Quarter: Last day to submit Late Work (**September 26, 2025**)

2nd Quarter: Last day to submit Late Work (**December 12, 2025**)

3rd Quarter: Last day to submit Late Work (**March 11, 2026**)

4th Quarter: Last day to submit Late Work (**May 20, 2026**)

Previously announced tests, quizzes, projects, and/or homework that have been scheduled BEFORE a student is absent may be made up the day the student returns to school (as long as there is no new material that has been taught).

NOTE: Missing work is referred to as work students have missed due to an absence. Students failing to submit work as instructed will result in the students not receiving credit for an assignment, which could result in a failing grade.

J. Make-Up Work

All students, regardless of whether their absences are excused or unexcused, are responsible for making up missed work to ensure mastery of the content and skills taught in each class. The teacher will provide the due dates for makeup work. Students are also responsible for completing current assignments upon their return. Please note that the attendance record will not be adjusted once missed work is completed.

Consulting with the teacher regarding missed work is essential for ensuring the student understands the content and skills taught during their absence. Therefore, ECA does not provide assignments for pick-up on the day(s) a student is absent. Upon the student's return, the teacher will provide access to all notes and assignments, along with general instructional guidance.

If a student is absent for several days, a parent can assist the student by contacting the school counselor and arranging to pick up the assignments for days that will be missed. Parents are asked to give a 24-hour notice to the school when requesting make-up work for his/her child. The work can be picked up from the main office.

NOTE: Missing work is referred to as work students have missed due to an absence. Students failing to submit work as instructed will result in the students not receiving credit for an assignment, which could result in a failing grade.

Students will be able to retake tests. No classwork, projects, or quizzes will be able to be submitted more than once. Please note that teachers may identify projects as a test grade; however, the project may only be submitted once. The students will receive an average of the two test grades.

NOTE: Students may not retake more than two tests per nine weeks per course. The district benchmark grade is final and may not be retaken. ***Redoing/retaking a test does not mean the student will take the exact same test again; it means the student will be given different questions that assess the same concepts.***

K. Interims/Report Cards/Progress Reports

Interim reports will be sent to parents by students midway through each nine-weeks grading period to notify parents of his/her child's progress in each class. Parents and guardians should refer to the board adopted calendar for the 2025-2026 academic year to identify interim report dates.

Report cards are issued at the end of each nine weeks grading period. Parents and guardians should refer to the board adopted calendar for the 2025-2026 academic year to identify report dates.

L. Promotion Requirements

- Completion and mastery of grade level standards and a yearly passing average of 70% including teacher weekly assessments, unit tests, and student work.

- For middle school level courses, to be considered for promotion, a student must meet attendance requirements, as specified in Policy JH, Administrative Rule JH-R, and JE. A student may have no more than 10 unlawful absences per year. No more than seven parent/legal guardian notes per year will be accepted as lawful. Excessive absences may result in student being retained in their current grade level for the next academic year.
- For high school credit courses, when a student's absences exceed those allowed by state regulation, he/she will not receive credit in that course. The student may appeal to the principal to excuse the absences under the conditions specified in Policy JH and administrative rule JH-R. Final determination regarding awarding of credit based on excessive absences will be made by the principal.

M. Academic Integrity

As a STEM Early College Academy student, there is an expected high standard of conduct.

- Will demonstrate P.R.I.D.E. in all aspects of his/her life:
 - Personal responsibility
 - Respect of self, property and others
 - Individual readiness
 - Demonstrated learning
 - Effective behaviors
- Will respect teachers and their efforts to teach.
- Will respect peers and their efforts to learn.
- Will respect the school administrators and their efforts to guide me.
- Will consistently put forth the best efforts on all assignments.
- Will maintain a code of academic integrity. Examples of violating academic integrity could include but are not limited to:
 - looking at someone else's work or allowing someone to look at my work during an assessment.
 - copying someone else's work or allowing my work to be copied.
 - using an electronic device to give, receive, or copy information about an assessment.
 - lying about attendance or my ability to complete assignments/assessments.
 - misrepresenting the authorship of student work or claiming credit for work done by someone else.
 - plagiarizing, incorrectly citing sources, or not citing sources at all.

An academic infraction can lead to an 'F' on the assignment in question, probation, exclusion from field studies and/or dismissal from the STEM Early College Academy Program. Failure to comply with policies set forth in the Fairfield County School District Code of Conduct can result in probation, exclusion from field studies and/or dismissal from the STEM Early College Academy Program.

N. Class Participation and Attendance

Regular and punctual attendance is expected of every STEM student. Each student must demonstrate reliability and a conscientious attitude by maintaining faithful attendance. All students are responsible for their attendance and should understand its importance to their education, including unexcused absences. Attendance will be recorded in PowerSchool each class.

If you are absent due to an emergency or serious illness, you must submit an excuse letter addressed to Ms. Regina Swann, our PowerSchool clerk, within 5 days of your absence. You can email her at

rswann@fairfield1.org or call (803)-635-4270 ext. 20519. If your absence is approved, you will be allowed to make up any missed assignments. Otherwise, no late work will be accepted.

For middle school level courses, to be considered for promotion, a student must meet attendance requirements, as specified in Policy, JH and administrative rule JH-R. A student may have no more than 10 unlawful absences per year. **No more than seven parent/legal guardian notes per year will be accepted as lawful.** Excessive absences may result in a student being retained in their current grade level for the next academic year.

In order to receive credit for a high school course, a student must attend at least 85 days (for a 90-day semester course) or 170 days (for a 180-day year course) in order to receive credit (Policy JH, Issued 12/24).

O. Tardiness

Students are required to be at school and arrive to class on time. If a student is late to school or to class, they will be given a tardy pass and will be marked Unexcused Tardy. The student's parent/guardian will be notified of the unexcused tardiness through PowerSchool.

Should there be an emergency that prevents a student from being on time, a parent/guardian may call the office or send a signed note which will excuse the tardy. Any student who is not present in class by 8:20 a.m. is considered tardy. Students arriving late to school will report to the front office and must be signed in by a parent/legal guardian.

P. Tardy Policy

Students who are tardy to class report to the Front Office to secure a pass. Each tardy is recorded and the following consequences will be in place.

- **1st Tardy & 2nd Tardy:** Recorded and Warning
- **3rd Tardy:** Recorded and Warning
- **4th Tardy:** Lunch Detention
- **5th Tardy – 7th Tardy:** After School Detention (3:20 PM – 4:00 PM)
- **8th Tardy:** ISS during Related Arts class periods.

For additional information regarding absences from school, students and parents should refer to Fairfield County School District Board Policy JH-Student Absences and Excuses.

Q. Late Arrival/Early Dismissal

While attendance is taken in each class period, students must attend 3.5 hours of a school day to be considered present for the school day at-large. Students arriving after the designated start of either the school day or a class period are counted as tardy. Students who arrive after 8:20 am must obtain an admit slip to class from the office and present the slip to the teacher of the missed class upon classroom entry.

Please note that student absences are counted in each class. Therefore, if a student checks out early from school and misses his/her final class 10 or more days in the school year, he/she will be referred to the school administration for retention in this course. In addition, should a student arrive late to

school and miss first period 10 or more days in the school year, he/she will be referred for retention in this course.

Information on who can pick-up the student from school must remain on file at the school. Without prior notification from the student's parent/guardian, a student will not be released to another adult. The parent/guardian or pre-approved adult will be asked to present a picture ID to front office personnel before the student can be released from school.

Students are expected to attend all classes each day of the school year except for medical and family emergencies. In case of an emergency or an unusual need to leave campus before the end of the school day, the following procedures are to be followed.

ONLY PERSONS AUTHORIZED BY THE PARENT/GUARDIAN ON THE PERSONAL AND EMERGENCY INFORMATION FORM MAY SIGN A STUDENT OUT OF SCHOOL.

- The person signing the student out of school must come into the attendance office and sign the sign-out sheet. A picture ID will be required.
- Parents are asked not to pick students up during classes. Arrangements should be made to pick up students between classes (bell schedule is in front of the handbook).
- There is a form required to be filled out for early dismissals.
- **No early dismissal after 3:00 PM.**

The official school day at Fairfield Middle School ends at 3:20 p.m. If a student walks or is a car rider, he/she must leave the school campus immediately at dismissal. Students involved in after school activities should report directly to their respective coach or sponsor, when dismissed by announcement. Once their participation in these activities is finished, please make certain someone is able to pick them up promptly. All car riders must be picked up by **3:45 PM.**

R. Changes in a Student's Mode of Transportation

In the event a student's method of transportation to or from school changes on any particular day for any length of time, the legal parent or guardian must submit a signed note to the main office by 8:00am on the first day of the change. We will not release a student to anyone who is not the legal parent or guardian unless we have a signed note from the legal parent or guardian.

This policy is designed to ensure each student's safety and security. We ask that each student's family has a transportation plan and contingency plan should unforeseen circumstances arise. Part of that plan must be to notify the school in writing by 8:00am the first day of the change.

S. Meetings and Assemblies

Assembly programs are an important and integral part of school life and are held in the school's gymnasium. Attendance/participation at selected assembly programs have additional criteria and expectations that are shared with the students. When we have an assembly, everyone is asked to move quickly and quietly to the proper seating assignment. Proper behavior is expected.

Decorum for attendance at meetings and assemblies includes the following.

- Students may not wear hats/baseball caps/hoodies, durags, or alike.
- Students must remain awake and alert for the entire program.

- Students must exhibit courteous and appropriate behavior that includes, but is not limited to, no talking, eating, drinking, whispering, passing notes, or feet up on chairs or railings, etc.
- Students may not wear or use headphones and should not bring electronic devices to an assembly meeting.
- Students are expected to attend all mandatory assemblies and to be on time.
- Any faculty and/or staff members may cite a student for inappropriate behavior during an assembly.

Any violations of the above-mentioned decorum will be considered an infraction and will be sanctioned accordingly.

T. Cell Phone Policy

Students will be allowed to have phones on campus, *however*, they will be secured and **will not be available for use during the school day**. Students will be assigned a YONDR pouch, a storage case with a locking Mechanism, to store their phones in for the duration of the school day. Phones should be silenced prior to going into the pouch. Additionally, students may not wear headphones or smart watches during the instructional day. The homeroom teacher will unlock each pouch at the end of the school day. Failure to adhere to this policy will result in the following consequences:

- **1st Offense:** Parent called for device pick-up or 1-day OSS
- **2nd Offense:** 3-day Out of School Suspension (OSS).
- **3rd Offense:** 5-Day OSS and Recommendation for Change of Placement to Gordon Odyssey Academy

U. Hall Passes

Students are expected to remain in class throughout each instructional period, unless an emergency arises. No student is to be in the hall during the first and last 10minutes of the class or at any time without a hall pass.

V. Restroom Procedures

Students may use the restroom before and after school, lunch, and during class (extreme emergencies) with the permission of the teacher. If your child requires additional visits to the restroom, we ask that you place a note from the medical doctor on file with the nurse. Notes need to be updated each year. Students must sign out with their teacher when going to the restroom. **Students will not be permitted to use the restroom during class transitions. They should report to class and sign out with their teacher.**

W. Food/Drink

- No food or drink is to be taken from the cafeteria. Any food or drink taken by a teacher/administrator will not be returned. Students are not allowed to leave the cafeteria during the lunch period without a written pass from his/her teacher.
- No food is to be brought to students during the day. Students are not permitted to have food delivered from outside restaurants.
- Prepared food purchased from outside restaurants cannot be brought into any school's cafeteria during regular meal time. (Wellness Policy Code EFJ Issued 2/07). Students are not permitted

to have food delivered from outside restaurants. Food delivered will remain in the front office. We kindly request that parents refrain from bringing outside food.

- All carbonated beverages, soft drinks containing caloric sweeteners, sports drinks, iced teas, fruit-based drinks that contain less than 100% fruit juice will not be allowed in the school.
- There will be no eating in any classroom unless told differently.

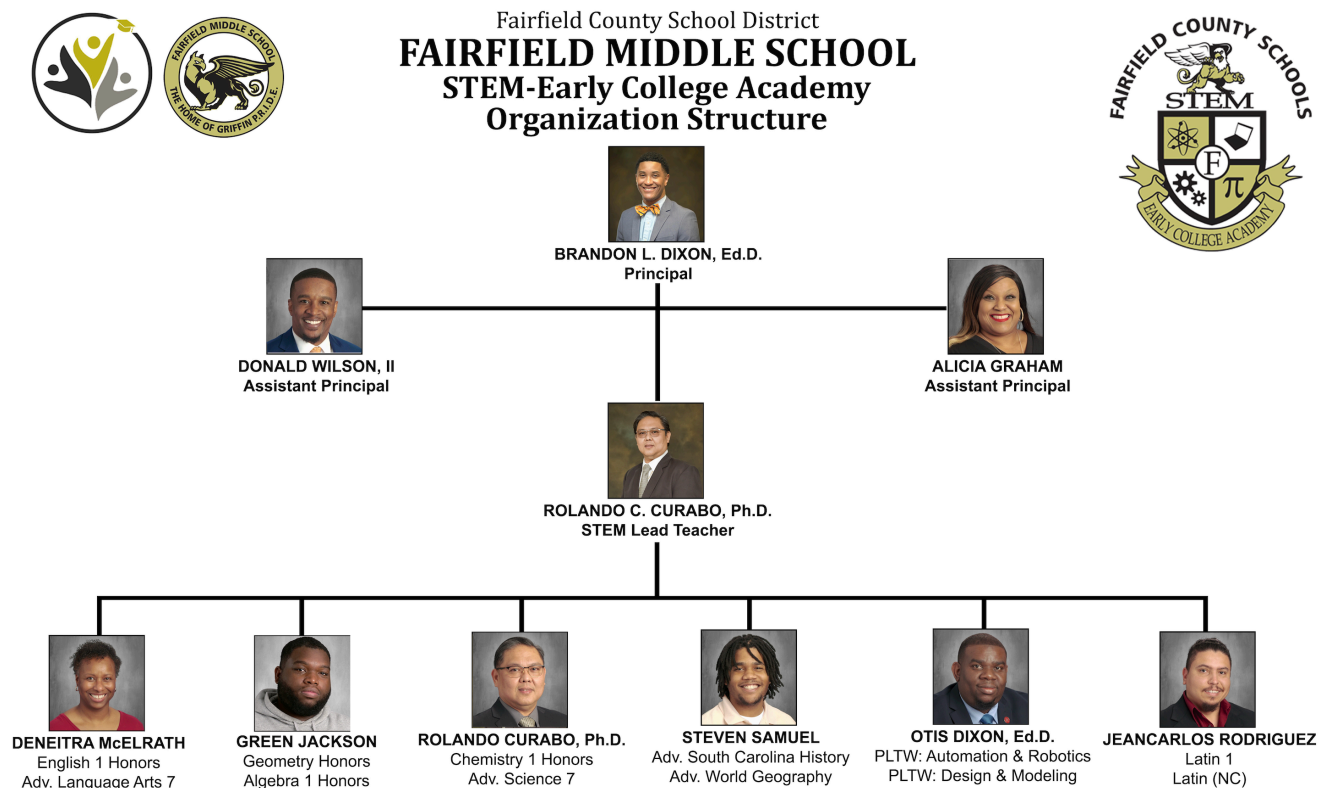
X. Gifts

Flowers, balloons, and other such birthday and special event gifts will not be accepted by our school office for delivery to any student. Please arrange to have these gifts sent to the student’s home. Balloons will also not be permitted for events in the gymnasium.

Y. Grooming in Class

Grooming in class will not be allowed. This includes polishing nails, combing or brushing hair, braiding hair, putting on make-up, and etc.

Z. STEM Early College Academy Organization Structure



COMMUNICATION

A. Communication Statement

The FMS STEM Early College Academy Team is committed to helping all students succeed while fostering a positive learning environment. We are approachable, yet we hold high expectations for every student. Our school day starts at 7:45 a.m. and ends at least by 3:45 p.m.

Please feel free to contact us via email at any time or by phone by leaving a message at the front office when necessary. Effective communication is essential. We respond to emails and messages within 24 hours on weekdays (Monday through Friday). Responses may not be provided on holidays and weekends and will be addressed on the next business day.

Teachers will communicate with parents throughout the school year as needed. Parents will be notified of achievements, improvements, or areas of concern. We also encourage parents to reach out to teachers directly. Communication can occur through phone calls, district notifications, the parent portal, emails, letters, or conferences. Interim reports and report cards are vital tools for providing timely and meaningful information. ParentSquare will serve as our primary method of parent communication. Parents who need assistance with accessing their ParentSquare account should contact the Parent Liaison.

Parents may make appointments for conferences with teachers and counselors by calling the school counseling office or by emailing the appropriate grade level administrator. If parents have a concern, the **first contact should be with the teacher**. If this concern is ongoing, please contact the appropriate grade level administrator.

B. Contact Information

School Address : 728 US Highway 321 Bypass S
Winnsboro, SC 29180
Phone Number : (803) 635-4270

Dr. Rolando Curabo rcurabo@fairfield1.org STEM Lead	
Mrs. Deneitra McElrath dmcelrath@fairfield1.org English 1 Honors Adv. Language Arts 7	Mr. Green Jackson gjackson@fairfield1.org Geometry Honors
Mr. Steven Samuel ssamule@fairfield1.org Adv. South Carolina History Adv. World Geography	Dr. Rolando Curabo rcurabo@fairfield1.org Chemistry 1 Honors Adv. Science 7
Dr. Otis Dixon odixon@fairfield1.org PLTW: Automation & Robotics PLTW: Design & Modeling	Mr. Jeancarlos Rodriguez jrodriguezolivo@fairfield1.org Latin Latin (NC)
Mr. Donald Wilson II 7 th Grade Assistant Principal dwilson@fairfield1.org	Ms. Alicia Graham 8 th Grade Assistant Principal agraham@fairfield1.org