

FAQ

09.10.19

Program

Question 1: What are the STEM school and program tenets – its principles?

Answer 1: The Riverside STEM High School Tenets are high quality education, equity and access, experience of interdisciplinary learning, and partnerships. The STEM Tenets are:

- Ensure all students graduate with strong STEM knowledge and develop into socially responsible citizens.
- Establish a STEM professional learning exchange to increase the quality of STEM teaching and learning.
- Ensure equitable access and success for all students at the Riverside STEM High School.
- Offer a variety of interdisciplinary STEM areas of study with capstone projects and industry certification.
- Create a STEM Partnership Forum to facilitate robust partnerships with higher education, business and industry.

Question 2: At the proposed STEM High School, would students learn the regular curriculum taught at other high schools?

Answer 2: Yes, students who attend the STEM High School will learn all of the A-G requirements in addition to experiencing focused STEM areas of study:

- Bioinformatics/Genomics/Gene Editing/Bio Mimicry
- Computer Science/Robotics/Artificial Intelligence/High Level Programming
- Environmental Science/Urban Farming, Air Quality/Solar Energy/Precision Agriculture
- Engineering/Advance Manufacturing/Bio Engineering/Metrology/Mechanical and Electrical

Question 3: What is the enrollment capacity for the high school?

Answer 3: The STEM High School will have a capacity of 800 students.

Question 4: How will students be chosen to attend the proposed STEM High School?

Answer 4: The STEM High School plans to follow the same equitable selection process that the Riverside STEM Academy (RSA) established. It includes:

- Opportunity for every student at every RUSD school and every classroom.
- Defined selection terms through a weighted point system. The criteria will be weighted to provide for students whose parents do not have advanced education, are from lower socio-economic scales, as well as language census data to advance more pathways to STEM education, fields, and advance education for traditionally underserved student populations.
- Transportation pick-up and drop-off originating at each of the five comprehensive high schools.

Question 5: What is RUSD's diversity plan for the proposed STEM High School? How does the partnership take diversity into account?

Answer 5: RUSD has revised the selection process to support diversity at its existing Riverside STEM Academy (RSA), which the new STEM High School at UCR anticipates following. The process uses census block information based on language, educational attainment, and income to better reflect RUSD's demographics. In addition, enrollment slots are balanced equally across our comprehensive high schools. RSA now matches the District demographics in the areas of Education Attainment, English Language Usage and Estimated Median Income by household. Part of the appeal of UCR's partnership with the STEM High School is the opportunity to enhance access to STEM fields for underrepresented groups. The STEM High School will reflect the diversity of the District.

Question 6: Will the school be an open or closed campus?

Answer 6: The proposed STEM High School is anticipated to follow the same existing policy in place at all other RUSD schools – during school hours, students are not allowed to leave the campus. The school will also have the capability of lock-down during emergencies. Current assumptions for the school include limited fencing within the property lines with landscape elements that will act as barriers and buffer areas to limit the public from walking on to the campus.

Question 7: What will the proposed STEM High School student population look like?

Answer 7: As noted above, RUSD revised the Riverside STEM Academy (RSA) student selection process to better support the economic and ethnic diversity at the proposed Riverside STEM High School, which now matches the District demographics and is very similar to UCR in the areas of Education Attainment, English Language Usage and Estimated Median Income by household. At a time when many of us are deeply concerned about diversity in higher education and in academics, especially in STEM fields, UCR has the unique opportunity to tangibly contribute to improving this situation. UCR, as one of the most diverse public university campuses in the country, sits within Riverside and the Riverside Unified School District. More than 70 percent of RUSD's students identify as underrepresented minorities (63 percent Hispanic and 7 percent African American). But the percentage of students going to four-year colleges from RUSD is only 29 percent and to two-year colleges is 37 percent (per National Clearinghouse Data). Given the robust academic infrastructure of the City of Riverside (including a UC campus, RCC, and several private institutions), the STEM High School provides an opportunity to improve on these numbers.

Question 8: Does this make an impact regarding the transition from high school to college?

Answer 8: The high school to college transition is a critical point in a student's life. Many students, particularly students from families whose parents did not go to college, do not "imagine" themselves on a college campus. The very presence of a STEM school on a UC campus would give these high school students the opportunity to see themselves on a college campus before entering a college course, which will help to reduce this significant barrier in the progression from high school to college.