

Georgia School of Excellence
National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence

Parent/Student Handbook

Principal - Courtney McKinney
Assistant Principal –Leslie Storm
Assistant Principal-Lauren Parsell
Assistant Administrator - Adam Duncan

3740 Melody Mizer Lane
Cumming, GA, 30041
Phone: 770-888-1223

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After School Program

There is an on-site after-school program for childcare at Daves Creek, which is called Dolphin Cove.
Our program offers more than just after-school care—it's a place where students thrive! Each day includes a snack, time to complete homework with support, active play through recreational sports, and a variety of hands-on activities. Your child will be engaged, learning, and having fun—all in a safe, welcoming environment they'll be excited to return to every day!

Program Policy
Registration Form
Parent Acknowledgement Form
Emergency Medical Form

Please pay online using the link below.

School Pay Link

Directors: Carole Kelly and Sue Perks
(770) 888-1222 ext. 170105
ckelly@forsyth.k12.ga.us
sperks@forsyth.k12.ga.us

Attendance

Absences:
The parent/guardian must submit a note or email to the attendance clerk, **Kim Corso**, within five (5) school days for an absence to be considered excused. Attendance email: **kcorso@forsyth.k12.ga.us**. The note must include the student's name, the date(s) of absence(s), and the reason for the absence. It is the responsibility of the parent(s)/guardian(s) to be in communication with the student's teacher(s) and/or office staff when a student is absent, especially when it is for more than one day. The principal may require students to present appropriate medical or other documentation upon return to school for the purpose of validating that absences are excused.

Birthday Celebrations

No outside food can be brought into the school. We do not allow students or parents to bring in outside treats, goodie bags, or party invitations (unless the invitations are for the entire class) to celebrate birthdays. Birthday Ice Cream can be purchased online through School Pay. **Please make payment at least two days prior to the desired distribution date**. Student lunch accounts **cannot** be used to purchase ice cream for the entire class. Another great way to celebrate your child at school is to purchase a book in our Media Center in their honor. Our Media Specialist would be glad to help you with this process.

Building Hours

To ensure safety, students should not arrive at school before 7:50 a.m. as no supervision is provided before this time; an exception would be if your child is enrolled in our morning Dolphin Cove. Should a student arrive before 7:50 a.m., a call will be placed to the parent to return to pick up their child. Students are to remain after school only for supervised extracurricular activities which have been approved by the administration. Students will be placed in the Dolphin Cove Afterschool Program if they are not picked up by 3:30 p.m. It will be the responsibility of the parent(s)/guardian(s) to pay for this after school care. Dolphin Cove morning care is available beginning at 7:00 each morning if your student is enrolled in the program.

Office Hours: 7:30 a.m. – 3:40 p.m.
School Hours: 8:20 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Car Riders

Morning Drop-off:
Staff will be on-duty to receive students at the sidewalk at 7:50 a.m. No one is assigned to monitor students before this time. Students should be ready to exit the car on the right side quickly. Book bags and other materials should be on hand for the child to pick up as they exit the car, not in the trunk. For safety reasons, the morning car rider drop-off line is one lane at the curb. Please do not go around cars in the car line. Students who are not in their classrooms by 8:20 will be considered tardy. If a student has not exited their car by 8:18, they will be asked to park and walk inside to check their child in late. For the safety of our students and staff and to maintain the flow of the carline, parents will not be allowed to park and walk their student across the crosswalk until the tardy bell has rung.

Afternoon Pick-up:
If you must pick up your child early for an appointment, checkouts must occur before 2:30 p.m. (or before 12:00 a.m. on early release days). Please plan after-school activities accordingly. Please do not attempt to pick up students in the bus lanes. Anyone checking a child out of school must show a valid photo identification and must be listed on the child's Parent Portal account. It takes 24-48 hours for changes in Parent Portal to go into effect. Please do not wait until the day a change is needed to update the list.

Parents will receive a car rider tag in the Open House packet, which they should hang from the rear-view mirror. If there are multiple students, the youngest student will have the car rider tag in his/her Open House packet. Please stay in your car and move forward as the lines move. Students will come out of the building and be walked to their car when their number is called. Once your child enters your vehicle, please remove your car rider number from the mirror. If you lose or misplace your assigned car tag, you will be required to come into the office to show your ID.

Changes in Student Information

Changes to your telephone numbers, other contacts, employer and work phone number must be made by the parent or guardian through Parent Portal (refer to the Parent Portal Section of this handbook). If we have an emergency, it is imperative that we can reach an adult caretaker immediately.

Class Placement

Each year, the administration works collaboratively with teachers and utilizes test/assessment data and other relevant information to develop a balanced class placement for all students. This is a multiple-criterion decision that is based on a variety of research-based best practices as well as differentiated instructional considerations.

Should a parent have a concern regarding student placement, the following procedure will begin after the first 15 days, allowing the student time to settle into the new environment. This class placement process generally lasts about six weeks to allow a successful plan to be developed and implemented as agreed upon by the school and parents.

- A minimum of two teacher-parent conferences directly focused on the area of concern with administrative support and presence. At that initial and follow-up conference, a written success plan to address concerns from that point forward will be drafted and agreed upon by all parties to protect the child from unnecessary transition.
- Follow up by administration via contact with both parents and teacher, to ensure the sustained efforts and success of the plan are moving forward.
- Final assessment of progress during this period regarding the area of concern by the principal.

Adjustments to any student's assigned classroom will be by extreme exception and only considered by the principal after it has been clearly determined that joint efforts were made by both parties to resolve any concern. Furthermore, there must be clear evidence that a move to another classroom will directly address the lingering concern after the above attempts have been made to resolve the issue.

Clinic and Student Health

Daves Creek's clinic is staffed during school hours by Mrs. Rebecca Dutta, a Registered Nurse. In case of illness or injury, a student will be cared for temporarily by the nurse or a designated member of the school staff. School personnel will render first aid treatment only. If emergency medical treatment is necessary, the parents/guardians will be contacted. If parents/guardians are not available, an ambulance may be called at the parents'/guardian's expense. Remember, an emergency working telephone number where parents can be reached must be on file at the school or in Parent Portal (the student's online information database).

Medications

All medication including non-prescription medicine, (i.e. cough drops, sunscreen, ibuprofen, etc.) must be delivered by the parent to the clinic and administered in the clinic by the school nurse or a designated member of the staff. All medication must be in its original packaging with the pharmacy label. No medication will be given without written instructions from the parent and/or doctor. Please refer to the Medication Procedures available on the Forsyth County Schools website if you have questions.

Illness

All students must go through the school nurse if they are not feeling well and think they should go home. When warranted, the nurse will contact the parents, and a decision will be reached based on the medical situation. Parents should notify the school nurse of any chronic health conditions. Students with chronic health issues need to have necessary medication available at school and need to take responsibility in managing the condition by working with the nurse. Medication forms are available at the Forsyth County website or at DCE's school nurse page, please notify the school nurse with any communicable disease/diagnosis (i.e. COVID, Fifth's disease, flu, strep, pink eye, mono, hand, foot and mouth, lice, impetigo, gastroenteritis, and/or pinworm.) We want to keep our students well and attending school. **To decrease our communicable diseases, students should be free from vomiting, diarrhea, and fever-reducing medication for 24 hours before returning to school.**

Code of Conduct

The *Code of Conduct* is available to view on the FCS website. A hard copy of the *Code of Conduct* is available upon request. The *Code of Conduct* covers rules for student behavior and dress as well as consequences for failure to comply. Parents should carefully review this document with their child. All parents must sign that they have received a copy of the *Code of Conduct* (Forsyth County Schools Code of Conduct).

Communication

Each classroom and special area teacher has a telephone in the room. Please do not expect the teacher to answer the telephone while students are in the room. Please leave a voicemail message and the teacher will return your call within one school day.

Counseling

Daves Creek has two full-time counselors, Mrs. Lindsey Albertson and Mrs.Jennifer Evangelista, available to provide individual or small group counseling to students and to conduct classroom guidance lessons on a regular schedule. The counselor works with school personnel to foster a positive learning environment. The counselor may also assist parents in obtaining special school and/or community services. In addition to other programs, the counselor conducts lessons on Social Emotional Learning through our Sources of Strength program, Think First & Stay Safe , Red Ribbon Week (drug awareness), and bullying prevention throughout the year.

Curriculum

Providing quality work for students every day in every classroom is the primary focus of all instructional programs in Forsyth County. Our system's Standards and Benchmarks provide a rigorous and challenging instructional program for all students at every level. To learn more about the variety of curriculum services available please visit the County website at www.forsyth.k12.ga.us. In addition, content curriculum and parent activities are also available on the teacher's Canvas page.

Discipline

Daves Creek Elementary believes that self-discipline is an important part of a child's development. Developing self-discipline occurs when students learn to follow common rules and make wise decisions. Proper behavior by each student allows all students the maximum opportunity to play, learn and grow in a school environment. Students who disregard school rules are made aware of the consequences to their actions. The Forsyth County *Code of Conduct* is available to everyone on the FCS website and contains details of school and system discipline procedures. Parents are expected to read this and inform their child(ren) of the pertinent information.

Dismissal

At dismissal, bus riders walk to their assigned buses, and car riders wait to be picked up at the designated car dismissal area. Dismissal begins at 3:00 p.m.; therefore, students who are checked out before dismissal will be recorded as having an early checkout.

Parents picking up children in carpool must remain in their cars and wait for their child to be escorted to their car by a staff member. Please have your car tag hanging on the rear-view mirror of your car. If you do not have your car tag displayed, you will need to enter the office to show your ID. Parents are not to walk to the car dismissal area and take their children back across the crowded parking lot. Once your child is loaded in the car, please pull the car tag down indicating you are ready to leave.

Parents who wish to walk their child home from school must present a car tag number and pick their child up from the front of the building. For safety, parents and students are not permitted to walk to or from school through the bus lanes.

Elementary school administrators and transportation staff have determined that for safety reasons, changes in bus transportation **WILL NOT** be permitted in Forsyth County Elementary Schools except in cases of true emergency. If such an emergency occurs, a bus pass will be presented to the driver after it is approved by the school administration.

Students who board a bus other than their assigned bus or request to get off the bus other than at their assigned stop will be returned to school where the parent will be called to pick them up.

*If your child must be checked out of school early for an appointment, please be sure that s/he is checked out prior to 2:30 p.m. (12:00 p.m. on early release days). Please plan after-school activities accordingly.

Dropping Off Forgotten Items for Students

Please make every effort to establish a routine for bringing necessary items to school each morning. We will not interrupt the learning environment to take personal items to classrooms. The only forgotten items accepted are eyeglasses, medicine, and lunches. If your child forgets one of these items, you may drop off that item (labeled with the student's name). The office will notify the child's teacher of any eyeglasses or medicine. In the case of a forgotten lunch, the parent should email the teacher directly. Lunches should be dropped off before 10 am.

Field Trips

Various field trips are scheduled throughout the year. Parents will be notified by the teacher of scheduled field trips. If a student is absent on the day of a field trip, reimbursement for the cost of the field trip (if any) will not be possible.

Homework

The faculty and staff of Daves Creek Elementary endorse and encourage the use of homework and reading practice to promote student learning. Students should read for 30 minutes each night.

Local School Council

The LSC was established by Georgia law to "bring communities and schools closer together in the spirit of cooperation to solve difficult education problems, improve academic achievement, provide support for teachers and administrators, and bring parents into the school-based decision-making process…to provide advice, recommendations, and assistance and represent the community of parents and businesses." Elections will be held in the spring to select members of this council. The Local School Council replaces LSAC. Parents will still have a forum for their questions and for learning about school programs through parent representatives on LSC. Meetings will be announced and are open to the public. A parent will lead and moderate the group. All LSC members are required to attend the scheduled meetings. If a member misses more than two consecutive meetings, a new member may be appointed.

Lost and Found

Found items of clothing and lunch boxes will be collected in a designated lost and found location near the cafeteria. Items such as jewelry, car keys, etc. are given to the front office.

Unclaimed items are donated to charity on a quarterly basis. Everything brought to school should be **labeled** so that lost articles can easily be returned to the owner.

Media Center

The mission of the Daves Creek Media Center is to serve our students, teachers and families by:

- Providing an environment that supports the curriculum and stimulates learning.
- Providing flexible scheduling that best meets student and staff needs.
- Providing up-to-date print and electronic resources that support the curriculum.
- Providing ongoing exposure to literature in a variety of formats that stimulate reading enrichment.
- Providing multiple opportunities for collaboration to strengthen information literacy skills and impact student achievement.
- Providing an atmosphere where students can create and publish their work using a variety of technologies.

Students may check out one to two print and digital resources for two weeks at a time. Students will be charged for damaged or lost materials. The student must pay for all charges before checking out any further items.

Outside Food & Lunch Visitors

Parents and visitors may eat lunch with students during their class's allotted lunch time at the family tables in the cafeteria. **Parents and visitors must be listed in Infinite Campus in order to each lunch with a student.** While visiting, we ask that families follow the DCE lunchroom procedures. In order for our students to learn new schedules and daily routines, we ask lunch visitors to please wait until after the Labor Day holiday to visit for lunch. Lunch visitors will also **not** be permitted on Early Release days, during Milestones testing, during the last week of school or during other announced times during the year.

Families are welcome to join their student for lunch. We understand that there may be special occasions when families choose to bring an outside meal. Visitors may bring in food for their child, provided they remain on campus and enjoy the **entire lunch period** together.

Parents/guardians may also drop off a lunch for their student before **10:00 a.m**. Parents should email the teacher to let them know a lunch has been provided. Please know our teachers are focused on instruction and may not always check email before lunch; help us encourage responsibility skills to your child. Please note that this should be an occasional occurrence rather than a daily practice. Outside meals should not be dropped off for students on a regular basis. For the safety and consistency of our school environment, **food deliveries from services such as DoorDash, Uber Eats, or similar vendors are not permitted**.

Parent Portal

Forsyth County Schools requires all parents to sign up for a Parent Portal Account. Here you will find access to information about your child's/children's school attendance, grades, class assignments and more. Changes to parent and student contact information such as, home phone, cell phone or work phone numbers must be updated by the parent in the Parent Portal. Additionally, this is where other contacts designated by the parent or guardian must also be entered and updated. **No student check outs will be allowed by any person not listed on your Parent Portal account.** It takes 24-48 hours for changes in Parent Portal to go into effect. Please do not wait until the day a change is needed to update the list.

If you forget your user ID or password, or have not yet created your account, please come to the front office with your government issued ID. The office staff will request that your account be reset from the county office.

PTO – Parent Teacher Organization

PTO is a group of parents, teachers, and other concerned adults who join together to support the school. The PTO plays an integral role in the success of the school. They sponsor programs for students such as Fall Movie Night, Family Dance Night, Bingo Night, and competitions. In addition, the PTO supports teachers and staff by making grants available and by providing volunteer assistance. Major projects which otherwise might not have been possible have been funded through the efforts of the PTO.

We hope that every parent will become an involved PTO member by volunteering at any of the many events throughout the year. PTO meetings are held both during the day and in the evening. Meetings and special activities are announced through the school newsletter, website, and the PTO facebook page.

Parent Teacher Conferences

The school system calendar schedules one day in the fall for parent conferences. This is an online learning day for students, so that parents may attend conferences with their child's teacher(s). Parents will be notified of available conference times by the teacher in advance. Additionally, parents may request a conference at any time during the school year by leaving a message on the teacher's voice mail or sending a request through email.

Parties

Elementary classes may schedule two parties a year. The teacher may choose which two occasions to have a class party. Please cooperate with the teacher by not expecting more than two parties. Some themes or units of study may have a culminating activity to celebrate achievements.

Pets

No pets of any kind are allowed at school without permission.

Pictures

Individual student pictures will be taken one time each year. A class group picture will be taken during the school year. All questions regarding pictures should be directed to the photography company.

Placement and Promotion

Grade placement is determined by the overall academic and social progress of the student, with emphasis placed on the mastery of reading and math skills. Placement decisions for third through fifth grade may also be determined by the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment. Students entering Forsyth County Schools from private or home study schools may be evaluated to determine appropriate placement. Initial placement is temporary until such assessment is completed. Placement of kindergarten students will be done according to state and county guidelines.

Conferences are held in late spring to discuss the placement of students who are not meeting minimum promotion requirements. Local and state requirements for promotion are followed in deciding appropriate grade placement.

Recess

Weather permitting, each class goes outside for 30 minutes of recess daily. If your child has a chronic condition that would prevent them from participating in their usual class routine, a physician's note will be needed. This form is available on the Daves Creek website on the School Nurse page.

Retake Procedures

It is our belief that grades should accurately reflect student progress toward mastery of the standards. Students who score below a 70 on a summative assessment will automatically be provided a reteach session of the essential knowledge and skills and be given one retake opportunity. If a student scores below an 85 on a summative assessment, the student or parent can request a retake within 5 days of the grade being posted in Infinite Campus/Parent Portal. Students who request to retake an assessment will be required to complete a reteach and show understanding of the essential knowledge and skills. The retest will occur within a timely manner as determined by the teacher. Only one retake opportunity will be provided. Retakes will be flagged in Infinite Campus and will be considered when placing students for classes in middle school. Students will receive the higher of the two grades.

Standardized Testing

Students participate in the following state assessments:

- GKIDS – All Kindergarten students (ongoing)
- ACCESS – All ESOL students including parent denials (January and February)
- EOG (End of Grade/Georgia Milestones) – Students in grades 3, 4, and 5 (April and May)
- GAA – Eligible specialized instruction students (April)

Parents are asked to make every effort possible to have their children present on these days.

Student Events

Activities to enhance extended learning opportunities are offered to Daves Creek Elementary students at all grade levels. Examples are Spelling Bee, Oratorical Competition, Mathletes, Math League, Art contests, Technology Fair, Robotics, after-school clubs, etc. In addition to these events, the physical education teacher will coordinate a field day for all students in the spring on the campus of Daves Creek. These activities are subject to available volunteers and funding that may vary from school year to school year.

Technology

Chromebooks are the property of Forsyth County Schools. Students must follow the Acceptable Use Policy as outlined in the FCS Code of Conduct when using technology at school. If a student causes damage to a Chromebook, a $100 fee will apply.

Distraction-Free Education Policy: All cell phones and personal electronic devices must be turned off and stored away during the bell to bell school day. For more information and a link to the policy, please see https://www.forsyth.k12.ga.us/district-services/communications/disconnect-to-reconnect.

Textbooks

Each student is responsible for the consumable workbooks issued to him or her. Replacement textbooks and workbooks will not be issued until reimbursement fees have been paid in the office. All textbooks must be returned, and fees for any lost or damaged books must be paid by the last day of school.

Transportation Changes (After School)

If you need to change your child's usual mode of after school transportation, please do so by 2:00 p.m. (11:30 a.m. on early release days) and use the online Transportation Change form found on the school website. Phone, fax or email transportation changes are not permitted. Teachers and staff are busy during the day and may not be able to check their email inbox or voicemail until the end of the school day and a note sent in this manner may be missed. This policy is to ensure the safe return of your child after school.

Visitation

We encourage parents and relatives to visit our school **by appointment**. For the protection of our children, all visitors must make prior arrangements with the teacher, and then on the day of the visit, guests **must check-in** with the office upon entering the school building to receive a visitor badge after showing a government issued photo identification. At that time, you will be asked to share the reason for your visit. Parents are required to make an appointment for teacher conferences. Do not bring preschool age children into the classrooms as this can be very disruptive to the instructional environment. If visiting for lunch, p**lease do not go to the classroom to speak to the teacher.** It interrupts the instruction and supervision of the entire class.

All classroom volunteers and visitors must view and sign-off annually on the district mandated reporting video prior to visiting Daves Creek.

Raptor Security System:
Raptor is a computerized visitor check-in system that is installed in all Forsyth County Schools. Raptor requires that all first-time guests present their driver's license (or another form of government-issued identification). For subsequent visits, guests will be allowed to use the Raptor Kiosk to check themselves in. A badge will then be printed, showing the visitor's photo, name, destination, and date. Each visitor will be asked to go through the Raptor System to enter the building. **No** exceptions to this will be made.

To visit Daves Creek or any other Forsyth County School you will need: a valid driver's license or other form of government-issued ID. For more information regarding the Safety Check System, please visit the Forsyth County Website, www.forsyth.k12.ga.us – >Select A Link Menu>District Department>School Safety>Safety Check link on the left.

Volunteers

Parents, relatives, and friends of Daves Creek Elementary students are encouraged to volunteer in the school and at school-sponsored events. A form will be available at Open House for parents to indicate their interest in volunteering. Parents may also contact PTO for volunteer information. Volunteers must sign in and out in the office using the same procedures as other visitors. Please do not bring preschool age children into the classrooms as this can be very disruptive to the instructional environment. If you have small children,

and would like to volunteer, please speak with your child's teacher about opportunities to prepare instructional materials at home. This is also a great service for our school. Due to safety issues, small children are not permitted in workrooms. **All classroom volunteers and visitors must view and sign-off annually on the district mandated reporting video prior to visiting Daves Creek.**

Withdrawal

Parents withdrawing students from Daves Creek Elementary should contact the school office and their child's teacher at least a week in advance, if possible. The teacher will secure a withdrawal form from the school office. The media specialist, Educational Technology Coach, and the cafeteria manager must sign off before it is sent to parents/guardians for completion. Financial obligations, such as lost or damaged books and lunch charges, must be satisfied before the student withdraws. Records will be sent to the new school upon receipt of a signed request. Under no circumstances are textbooks or other school owned materials to be taken from the building during any withdrawal time period from Daves Creek.

Extended Vacations / Withdrawals:
Students who miss school for more than 10 consecutive days (or absent for 10 consecutive days) must be withdrawn from Infinite Campus. This is per local and state policy (JBC 160-5-1-.28(2)(e)3) and the district is held accountable for violations.

If families are taking extended vacations during the school year then students need to be enrolled in a program which can accommodate their needs. Parents are encouraged to enroll their child in an online program of study (see below for options) or home school. Please note that there is no guarantee of the exact schedule upon return. When students arrive back in town, they must provide a current utility bill to the data clerk to be re-enrolled.

Possible online alternatives: Forsyth Virtual Academy, iAchieve Academy (6 – 12), GA Virtual School (6 – 12), GA Cyber Academy (K – 12), GA Connections Academy (K – 12)

Appendix A - STEM Handbook

STEM Handbook: Stakeholder Engagement & Partnership

Our STEM Mission

At Daves Creek Elementary School, our STEM mission is:

> **Developing Children's Excellence and Success through Students Thinking, Exploring, and Making Real-World Connections.**

STEM is an important part of the Daves Creek learning experience. Our approach goes beyond simply teaching science, technology, engineering, and mathematics as separate subjects. Students are provided

opportunities to **a**sk questions, investigate authentic problems, collaborate with others, design and test solutions, use technology purposefully, and communicate their thinking.

Through these experiences, we seek to develop students who are curious, creative, collaborative, resilient, and prepared to apply their learning to the world around them.

Our STEM Journey

Daves Creek's STEM journey is rooted in stakeholder involvement. In 2016, interest from parents and community members during a Local School Council meeting helped initiate the school's exploration of STEM certification. Teachers subsequently visited other schools, developed a multiyear implementation plan, participated in STEM-focused professional learning, and strengthened interdisciplinary and problem-based learning experiences.

Today, STEM continues to evolve as an integral part of our instructional program and school identity.

What STEM Looks Like at Daves Creek

Students experience STEM through classroom instruction, interdisciplinary units, specials, technology integration, robotics, engineering challenges, performance-based tasks, choice opportunities, and extracurricular experiences.

Our STEM learning experiences are designed to promote:

- Inquiry and curiosity
- Critical thinking and problem-solving
- Collaboration and communication
- Creativity and innovation
- Engineering design and iterative thinking
- Student voice, choice, and ownership
- Authentic application of academic standards
- Connections across STEM disciplines
- Real-world and community connections
- Reflection, self-assessment, and perseverance

Examples documented in Daves Creek's STEM program include robotics and Bee-Bot programming, engineering design challenges, STEM journals, 3D printing, interdisciplinary environmental investigations, STEM specials, Math League, technology competitions, and programs connected to Georgia Tech InVenture and TICCIT.

Our Stakeholders

We believe STEM education is strongest when the school, students, families, and community share responsibility for its success. Stakeholders are not simply recipients of information. They are partners whose perspectives, expertise, feedback, and participation help us continuously improve our STEM program.

Students

Students are at the center of our STEM work.

Students are encouraged to:

- Ask meaningful questions and pursue solutions.
- Work collaboratively with peers.
- Take appropriate academic risks.
- Design, create, test, revise, and reflect.
- Use STEM journals, rubrics, and self-assessments to monitor learning.
- Share feedback about their STEM experiences.
- Demonstrate learning through authentic and performance-based tasks.
- Make connections between classroom learning and real-world problems.

Families

Families are essential partners in supporting STEM learning. Daves Creek provides opportunities for families to learn about, experience, contribute to, and provide feedback on STEM implementation.

These opportunities may include:

- STEM Night and other family learning experiences
- STEM Parent Advisory opportunities
- Local School Council discussions
- Family surveys and feedback
- School communications and the Dolphin Dispatch
- Sharing professional expertise or career experiences
- Supporting STEM projects and activities
- Participating in community and schoolwide STEM experiences

For example, Daves Creek hosted STEM NIGHT on October 13, 2026, as a schoolwide STEM engagement opportunity.

Staff

Teachers and staff sustain the school's STEM culture through high-quality instructional practices and continuous professional learning.

Staff members:

- Design authentic and interdisciplinary STEM learning experiences.
- Facilitate inquiry rather than simply provide answers.
- Incorporate collaboration, problem-solving, and student reflection.
- Examine student work and assessment results.
- Collaboratively plan within Professional Learning Communities.
- Participate in STEM-specific professional learning.
- Use classroom observations and data to refine instruction.
- Provide opportunities for students to demonstrate and reflect on their learning.

Daves Creek's documented professional-learning structures include STEM professional learning plans, Elevate PLCs, Wixie professional learning, PhD Science implementation support, CTAE professional learning, and other STEM-specific development experiences.

Community and Business Partners

Community partners help students answer an important question:

“How does what I am learning connect to the real world?”

Partners may:

- Serve as STEM experts or guest speakers.
- Provide authentic problems for students to investigate.
- Share STEM careers and career pathways.
- Mentor or provide feedback to students.
- Participate in STEM Night or Future You Day.
- Provide resources, expertise, experiences, or materials.
- Connect classroom learning to local and global challenges.

Daves Creek's current evidence specifically identifies a diverse network of community partners and stakeholders as part of sustaining its STEM program, with examples including the Parent Advisory Panel, Ag Day, Future You Day, STEM Night, specials integration, and K-12 InVenture connections.

Stakeholder Voice Matters

Daves Creek is committed to providing stakeholders with ongoing opportunities to learn about STEM implementation and influence its continued development.

Stakeholder feedback may be gathered through:

- Student surveys
- Staff surveys and reflections
- Parent and family feedback
- STEM Parent Advisory discussions
- Local School Council input
- Classroom/STEM observations
- Professional Learning Community discussions
- Data chats
- Community partner feedback
- Cognia stakeholder feedback and interviews

This feedback is considered alongside academic achievement, classroom observations, student work, performance-based assessments, and other STEM evidence to identify areas of strength and priorities for improvement. The school's current STEM evidence specifically includes the STEM Parent Advisory, Local School Council minutes, parent interview quotes, STEM observations, professional-learning surveys, student achievement measures, and other stakeholder evidence.

Continuous Improvement

STEM at Daves Creek is an ongoing process rather than a single program, event, or certification.

School leaders and staff regularly consider:

1. What are students experiencing?
2. How effectively are students applying STEM practices?
3. What does student work and achievement data tell us?
4. What are students, staff, families, and partners telling us?
5. Where do we see consistent strengths?
6. Where are there opportunities for greater access, rigor, authenticity, or student ownership?
7. What professional learning or resources will help us improve?

Daves Creek uses multiple measures, including standardized assessments, diagnostic data, performance-based STEM tasks, student work, STEM journals, rubrics, student self-assessments, and classroom observations, to monitor learning and inform instructional decisions.

Communication With Stakeholders

We believe stakeholders should understand not only what Daves Creek is doing in STEM, but also why we are doing it and what impact it is having on students.

STEM information and celebrations may be communicated through school newsletters, the Dolphin Dispatch, family events, Local School Council meetings, parent advisory opportunities, classroom communications, student showcases, videos, and other school communication platforms. Daves Creek's current certification evidence specifically identifies the Dolphin Dispatch, LSC minutes, Future You Day, STEM Parent Advisory, and other resources as evidence of stakeholder access to STEM implementation information.

How Stakeholders Can Get Involved

Families and community members can Make a Splash in STEM by:

- Sharing a STEM-related career, hobby, or area of expertise.
- Serving as a classroom or schoolwide guest speaker.
- Participating in STEM Night or other family activities.
- Joining STEM advisory conversations.
- Providing feedback through stakeholder surveys.
- Connecting teachers with businesses, universities, organizations, or STEM professionals.
- Serving as an authentic audience for student projects.
- Helping students make connections between classroom learning and real-world challenges.

Our Shared Commitment

At Daves Creek, STEM belongs to all of us.

Students bring curiosity.
Teachers create meaningful learning opportunities.
Families provide perspective and support.
Community partners bring real-world expertise.
School leaders provide vision, resources, and opportunities for continuous improvement.

Together, we are **Developing Children's Excellence and Success through Students Thinking, Exploring, and Making Real-World Connections** and creating a STEM culture where every Dolphin has opportunities to **Connect, Engage, and Grow**.

STEM Handbook: Stakeholder Engagement & Partnership

Our STEM Mission

At Daves Creek Elementary School, our STEM mission is:

Developing Children's Excellence and Success through Students Thinking, Exploring, and Making Real-World Connections.

STEM is an important part of the Daves Creek learning experience. Our approach goes beyond simply teaching science, technology, engineering, and mathematics as separate subjects. Students are provided opportunities to ask questions, investigate authentic problems, collaborate with others, design and test solutions, use technology purposefully, and communicate their thinking. Through these experiences, we seek to develop students who are curious, creative, collaborative, resilient, and prepared to apply their learning to the world around them.

Our STEM Journey

Daves Creek's STEM journey is rooted in stakeholder involvement. In 2016, interest from parents and community members during a Local School Council meeting helped initiate the school's exploration of STEM certification. Teachers subsequently visited other schools, developed a multiyear implementation plan, participated in STEM-focused professional learning, and strengthened interdisciplinary and problem-based learning experiences.

Today, STEM continues to evolve as an integral part of our instructional program and school identity.

What STEM Looks Like at Daves Creek

Students experience STEM through classroom instruction, interdisciplinary units, specials, technology integration, robotics, engineering challenges, performance-based tasks, choice opportunities, and extracurricular experiences.

Our STEM learning experiences are designed to promote:

- Inquiry and curiosity
- Critical thinking and problem-solving
- Collaboration and communication
- Creativity and innovation
- Engineering design and iterative thinking
- Student voice, choice, and ownership
- Authentic application of academic standards
- Connections across STEM disciplines
- Real-world and community connections
- Reflection, self-assessment, and perseverance

Examples documented in Daves Creek's STEM program include robotics and Bee-Bot programming, engineering design challenges, STEM journals, 3D printing, interdisciplinary environmental investigations, STEM specials, Math League, technology competitions, and programs connected to Georgia Tech InVenture and TICCIT.