



# Frequently Asked Questions For Students New to Riverside STEM Academy

## **FAQs About Riverside STEM Academy (RSA)**

### **1. What does STEM stand for?**

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math. Riverside STEM Academy aims to prepare students for a future career in a STEM field.

### **2. Where is Riverside STEM Academy located?**

4466 Mt. Vernon Ave. Riverside, CA 92507. Transportation (via school bus) is available for students in grades 5-8.

### **3. Does Riverside STEM Academy offer busing?**

Yes. Currently, buses pick up and drop students off students at each high school (Arlington, King/Bergamont Park, North, Poly, and Ramona). The district's transportation department will handle all communication regarding bus schedules, routes, and passes. For general information, please contact the school at (951) 788-7308

### **4. What grade level does Riverside STEM Academy serve?**

Riverside STEM Academy serves students from 5th to 12th grade. While the campus is separated into 5th-8th and 9th-12th grades to provide age-appropriate learning environments, we also take advantage of the opportunity to have older students assist younger students. Our high school students can offer tutoring and support on projects, creating a positive learning environment for all.

### **5. How many students are in each class?**

A maximum of 35 students are in each class in 5th-8th grades. PE classes can have up to 52 students.

### **6. What is Riverside STEM Academy's mission and vision?**

Riverside STEM Academy's vision is to inspire and support all students in an innovative learning community. We provide a challenging environment that encourages joy in discovery, fosters collaboration, and develops ethical, creative problem-solvers.

### **7. Why should I consider submitting an application for my child to attend Riverside STEM Academy?**

We encourage families to apply if their child enjoys STEM learning and activities. Riverside STEM Academy offers a unique opportunity to explore science, technology, engineering, and math in-depth. Our challenging learning environment prepares students for high school success and fosters a love of discovery, collaboration, and innovative problem-solving in an ethical and creative way.

## **8. What is the difference between Riverside STEM Academy and my child's current school?**

Riverside STEM Academy follows a middle school model with 85-minute instructional periods for Math, Science, and Humanities (English Language Arts and History). Instead of recess, all students participate in a middle school P.E. class. Students have three academic teachers and one P.E. instructor, offering a more specialized learning experience. The curriculum is accelerated, with students completing their first high school-level math course in 8th grade and being introduced to high school-level Biology and Chemistry in 7th and 8th grade. These changes reflect the rigorous academic environment at Riverside STEM Academy.

## **9. Does Riverside STEM Academy follow the California State Standards and will the school implement the Common Core Standards?**

Yes, Riverside STEM Academy incorporates California State Standards, including Common Core for Math and Language Arts, across all content areas. We offer an engaging, challenging, content-rich curriculum that builds a solid foundation and grows from year to year. The curriculum is designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and career.

## **10. Does Riverside STEM Academy have an afterschool program?**

Yes. Riverside STEM Academy offers Riverside Unified School District's Expanded Learning Program, PRIMETIME, for 5th - 8th grade students. PRIMETIME offers a safe environment in which academic support, enrichment activities, and social-emotional development occur. PRIMETIME ends at 6:00 pm daily, but early release is also available. Busing is also available for students in PRIMETIME.

## **11. Does Riverside STEM Academy offer visual or performing arts?**

Yes, students can participate in band, choir, or our cheer squad. All students also choose an elective class that meets every Wednesday morning. Several arts options are available among the many choices for students.

## **12. Can I visit Riverside STEM Academy?**

Visitation to Riverside STEM Academy is consistent with the RUSD visitor policies. Parents and visitors who wish to visit the campus at any time during school hours must first sign in with the campus supervisor at the kiosk, provide identification, obtain a visitor pass, and have an approved reason for visiting.

## **13. Is there a cafeteria at the Riverside STEM Academy?**

Yes, breakfast and lunch are offered to students. Riverside STEM Academy offers the same Middle School lunch program that other RUSD middle schools offer.

## **FAQs about the Admissions Process**

### **14. Is my child eligible to apply?**

4th grade students enrolled in Riverside Unified School District Schools who are entering 5th grade in the 2025-26 school year may apply during the application window. Students must score "Nearly Meets" (2) on the 3rd grade CAASPP test in Language Arts or Math.

### **15. How can I enroll my child?**

Due to high demand, parents or guardians of eligible students must submit an application and are entered into a lottery.

**16. When can I apply?**

Applications for 2025-26 will be accepted online from November 1, 2024, through January 10, 2025.

**17. Does my child need to be GATE (Gifted and Talented) identified to apply?**

No, GATE identification is not required for admission to Riverside STEM Academy.

**18. My child has an IEP, can they apply for Riverside STEM Academy?**

Yes. Students with IEPs must meet the eligibility requirements shown in the question above, as do all other RUSD students who wish to enroll at Riverside STEM Academy. If selected in the lottery process, a student with an IEP must have an IEP team meeting at their home school to determine if Riverside STEM Academy is an appropriate placement for the student. RSA does not offer special day (i.e. self-contained) classes.

**19. My child is currently in 5th grade (or above). Can I still apply?**

Yes. However, your child will be added to the existing waitlists. Spots may not be available for the upcoming year due to high interest.

**20. How does the lottery work? What are the odds of getting selected?**

A vendor experienced in demography manages the lottery to ensure a diverse student body. The odds are determined by a number of factors including the quantity of applications received. 105 spots in 5th grade are filled based on census blocks to reflect the Riverside community. There are also lottery spots available for children in the local neighboring area near STEM Academy. Per the MOU agreement between UCR and RUSD, a separate lottery exists for UCR Senate Faculty.

**21. I teach at UCR, does my child qualify for the UCR Senate Faculty lottery?**

As defined by the University of California, Riverside, 'Faculty' member is "membership in the UCR Division of the Academic Senate". UCR provides the registration office with a UCR Senate Faculty list. Please consult administration at UCR for confirmation of your faculty status. Only custodial children of UCR Senate Faculty who meet the requirements of the partnership agreement may apply for the UCR Senate Faculty lottery.

**22. If I am on UCR Senate faculty, which lottery will my student be in?**

Your child would take part in the UCR Senate Faculty lottery only.

**23. Do siblings of current RSA students have preference in the lottery?**

No, Riverside STEM Academy does not give sibling preference. Each student is treated individually with their own lottery number. However, twins will have the option of linking their lottery numbers to ensure they stay together.

**24. What should I do if I want to apply for Riverside STEM Academy, but also want to apply for a transfer to another school in case my student is waitlisted?**

You can submit an online application to Riverside STEM Academy and simultaneously request a transfer to another school. If your student's lottery number is selected for Riverside STEM Academy, you will be required to sign a transfer form for our program, which will automatically cancel and revoke any other transfer requests submitted.

## **FAQs about what happens after you submit an application**

### **25. I submitted my application, what happens next?**

You will get a confirmation response message indicating that your application has been submitted. Eligible student applications will be assigned a lottery number, which will be sent to custodial parents or guardians via email and US mail. Lottery numbers are not assigned until after the close of the application window on the date designated by the Pupil Services department each year. The transfer window dates can be found on the RUSD Pupil Services website. You can expect to receive your child's lottery number both by email and U.S. mail about two weeks after the application window closes.

### **26. When will the lottery results be available?**

Results are posted on our website approximately 1-2 months after the close of the application window.

### **27. My child received a spot at the school. Now what?**

Our registrar will reach out to you to complete the registration and transfer forms.

### **28. My child did not receive a spot at the school. Now what?**

Your child's lottery number will be posted on one of our waitlists.

### **29. I can't find my child's lottery number on the waitlists. How can I find it?**

Your child's waitlist position depends on the high school of residence that is assigned to your home address. Lottery numbers are listed according to this school assignment. You can find your zoned high school using the RUSD School Locator website: <https://webapps.riversideunified.org/apps/SchoolLocator/>

If you still can't find your lottery number after checking the school locator, please contact the school at (951)788-7308.

### **30. What if an accepted student decides not to attend Riverside STEM Academy?**

If an accepted student declines enrollment or later withdraws, a waitlisted student may be offered a spot to maintain demographic representation. Once the spot is declined, the student's name is removed from the waitlist and cannot be added back to the waitlist until the next application window.

### **31. If my child is on the waitlist, how will I know that a spot becomes available?**

Our registrar will notify the parents of waitlisted students when a spot becomes available. Once notified, you will have 48 hours to accept or decline the spot.

### **32. Are there any special requirements for 7th or 8th graders joining Riverside STEM Academy?**

Yes, students must be enrolled in one of the following math classes at their current school:

7th grade: Accelerated Math 7

8th grade: Math 1 Accelerated

## **FAQs about what happens after registration is complete**

### **33. How does RSA help my incoming 5th grade child be successful?**

We take many steps to ensure your child feels welcome and acclimates to their new school. Students will be invited to attend an orientation day prior to the start of the new school year.

### **34. Do you offer parents an orientation session?**

Yes, we strive to partner with parents in their child's education. Parents are invited to attend an orientation prior to the start of the school year.

### **35. Are there opportunities for parents to volunteer on campus?**

Yes! We have a very active PTSA who need volunteers for a variety of activities. You may also contact your student's teachers via email to inquire about opportunities to volunteer. Please note that volunteers must obtain clearance from the RUSD Personnel Department. If you wish to become involved with the school, please email the PTSA at: [stemptsacares@gmail.com](mailto:stemptsacares@gmail.com).

### **36. Can my child return to their previous school after accepting a transfer to RSA?**

Students can return to their school of residence. If your child was on a transfer to another school, the transfer to your previous school is voided once the transfer to RSA is accepted. For more information about transfers, please visit the Riverside Unified School District website: [Transfers - RUSD](#)

### **37. Is there a Riverside STEM Academy High School?**

Yes, the Riverside STEM Academy enrolls grades 5 through 8 in our middle school and 9 through 12 for our high school. Middle School students are NOT guaranteed acceptance into the High School due to lower capacity. However, current RSA 8th graders have priority for high school enrollment.