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TWIN LAKES STEM ACADEMY

FORMERLY TESFA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

A public, tuition-free K-6 charter school

SPRING 2021



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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MESSAGE

I am excited to announce some major changes at Tesfa International School! From rebranding to Twin Lakes STEM Academy, moving to a new building, and changing our focus to a comprehensive STEM program, I am confident these transitions will lead to success and growth for our students.



Though much is changing, we remain committed to empowering and preparing all students with the empathy, knowledge and skills they need to take risks and pursue goals that contribute meaningfully to their community. Additionally, Twin Lakes STEM Academy will continue to have small class sizes, a rigorous and comprehensive curriculum, measurable student progress and stable teachers.

It is truly a blessing to serve as Executive Director at Twin Lakes STEM Academy! I look forward to seeing everyone working together for the success of our students.

Mr. Jonas Beugen
Executive Director

STEM INSTRUCTION PROVIDES HIGH QUALITY, REAL WORLD LEARNING

Twin Lakes STEM Academy has started the process of implementing a comprehensive Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) program. This engaging, hands-on educational method starts in each homeroom and is imbedded throughout the entire school.



Twin Lakes STEM Academy is partnering with Project Lead the Way (PLTW) to ensure students have access to high-quality, real-world learning from which they develop in-

demand, transportable skills. Additionally, teachers are participating in extensive training and are provided the resources and support they need to lead their students in this new method.

With a focus on STEM, students have opportunities to thrive. Subjects like computer science, engineering, coding, environmental and life sciences, robotics only touch the surface of what students will meet through exploration and discovery. Innovative projects, creative problem-solving and interactive activities empower and inspire students to go beyond the traditional classroom. Students are taught to think critically, communicate well and never give up. These skills are ones that will open up endless opportunities upon leaving Twin Lakes STEM Academy.

Administrators and teachers alike are excited about this new focus. Teacher Abby Hendricks has recently started her training with PLTW and is hoping this will enable students to have more career options after graduation. She says, "PLTW encourages students to explore science, math and engineering in a hands-on way on a daily basis. Students learn confidence, cooperation, empathy and problem-solving skills as they work together to complete the daily lessons. Often the scientific community, as a career path, seems out of reach because students do not understand what scientists and engineers do. PLTW opens up those career paths for many students."

Not only has research indicated a strong demand for STEM programming within the communities Twin Lakes STEM Academy serves, but it has also shown that this transformative learning experience is rich in results. Research has shown that PLTW students outperform their non-PLTW peers in school, are better equipped for post-secondary studies, and are more likely to choose careers as scientists, technology experts, engineers, mathematicians, healthcare providers and researchers compared to their non-PLTW peers.



WE'RE CHANGING OUR NAME: HISTORY OF TWIN LAKES STEM ACADEMY

Twin Lakes STEM Academy started as Tesfa International School back in 2014 with its first year of instruction being offered for the 2015-16 school year. It was created with a passion for offering improved educational options for historically underserved children in the Twin Cities area. Initial financial support from a Federal Charter School program start-up grant and a partnership with Global Academy (a similarly successful Twin Cities charter school) equipped Tesfa International School with the support it needed to successfully open and serve over 130 students in kindergarten through sixth grade that first year.

Since then, Tesfa International School has seen growth in enrollment each year. Along with enrollment growth, the school has had to move locations in order to better accommodate students' educational needs. Most recently, Tesfa International School has been renamed to Twin Lakes STEM Academy and will move July 1, 2021, to 6201 Noble Avenue North in Brooklyn Center. This move will provide needed room for growth in enrollment and programming enhancements.



Twin Lakes STEM Academy is complying with CDC and state COVID guidelines for health and safety.

TWIN LAKES IS MOVING TO A NEW BUILDING

Twin Lakes STEM Academy's new location is 6201 Noble Avenue North in Brooklyn Center. This 13-acre lot includes green space, a playground, sports fields and parking lot. The two-story building is nearly 55,000 square feet and includes 19 classrooms, a gymnasium, administrative offices and kitchen. Over \$2 million was recently spent on upgrades and renovations. Outdoor classrooms and a community garden will also be utilized in conjunction with the new STEM focus.

Part of the planning process associated with the move to the new building is the ability to develop a number of high-quality extracurricular activities which includes: Robotics Team, Environmental Awareness and Service Group, Chess Club, Boys and Girls Soccer, and Boys and Girls Basketball. Additionally, Twin Lakes STEM Academy also plans to expand to serving seventh and eighth graders starting in the fall of 2022.



ACADEMIC GROWTH RANKED TOP 5% OF SCHOOLS IN MINNESOTA

The foundation Twin Lakes STEM Academy starts with is one of growth and success seen in students. This is clearly evident in the results of the most recent Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment taken in the spring of 2019. On these tests, Tesfa International School students demonstrated growth that ranked in the top 5% of the state in both reading and mathematics according to the Minnesota North Star Report.

The Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs) and alternate assessment Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS) are state-required tests that measure how well students in grades three through six have mastered Minnesota academic standards in mathematics, reading and science. The most recent assessments are from spring 2019, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the MCAs not being administered in spring 2020.

The North Star Academic Progress score was developed by the Minnesota Department of Education to measure the collective improvement that schools are demonstrating from one year to the next. Proficiency data is limited in that it does not show the progress made by students who are not yet proficient. However, progress data is especially important for

schools such as Tesfa International where 90% of students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch and over 70% are English Learners.

From spring 2017 to spring 2019, Tesfa International School showed a significant increase in the percent of students who met or achieved the standard across all three subject matters. Students achieved a combined reading growth score of 3.24 (state average of 2.34) and a combined math growth score of 2.62 (state average of 2.01) according to the report. Both of these subject areas show immense growth in students and are far above Minnesota's state averages. Additionally, the assessment results have shown that over time students are less likely to not meet or partially meet the standards and more likely to meet and, in some cases, exceed standards. Mr. Jonas Beugen, Executive Director, summed it up well when he said, "Our students are growing at a rapid rate!"

Though Tesfa International is changing its name to Twin Lakes STEM Academy, the commitment to growth remains the same. The foundation of helping students reach their full potential is what propels Twin Lakes STEM Academy into the future.

BOARD MEMBERS

Patrick ExnerBoard Chair, Community Member
Beth Al-Qudah.....Board Member, Parent
John Groenke.....Board Member, Community Member
Abigail Hendricks.....Board Member, Teacher
Megan Kufahl.....Board Member, Teacher
Amir Orandi.....Board Member, Parent
Mohamed Selim.....Board Member, Community Member
Jonas Beugen.....Executive Director

YOU'RE INVITED

The Tesfa International School Board meets the second Monday of the month at Tesfa International School, 1555 40th Avenue NE, Columbia Heights, MN 55421, 6:00 p.m. unless otherwise noted.

CONTACT US

Office(651) 717-4844
Executive Director Jonas Beugen(612) 269-5451

OUR WEBSITE



tesfainternationalschool.org

Facebooktesfainternationalschool

**Some pictures from previous years.*



TWIN LAKES STEM ACADEMY

Twin Lakes STEM Academy
1550 40th Avenue NE
Columbia Heights, MN 55421

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6201 Noble Avenue North
Brooklyn Center, MN 55429

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WHY CHOOSE TWIN LAKES STEM ACADEMY?

- EXCEPTIONAL ACADEMIC GROWTH RESULTS
- STEM-THEMED PROGRAMMING IN SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING AND MATHEMATICS
- PREPARING STUDENTS FOR FUTURE JOBS AND CAREERS
- FOCUS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE WHOLE CHILD
- SMALLER SCHOOL, WITH CLASS SIZES TARGETED AT A RANGE OF 18-22 STUDENTS
- STABLE ENVIRONMENT, 100% TEACHERS RETENTION LAST YEAR

