



STEM-FOCUSED CLASSROOMS

Sioux Center Community Schools

WHAT DOES THE ROOM LOOK LIKE?

The room is divided into pods to facilitate collaboration between students. The modern and sleek design provides a much different environment than the average classroom and is very interactive, allowing for deeper, substantive conversations. Features of the room include four collaborative tables with high-definition televisions with connectivity to student devices. Each pod seats approximately eight students with node chairs that swivel and have undercarriage baskets for students' personal belongings. The room is furnished with an interactive white board, short throw LCD projector, and a Crestron switching system that can push the control to students at any given pod. The walls are lined with portable white boards that can be taken down and used at the pods.

Community Business partnerships include Dordt College, Premier Communications, Pella Corporation, Interstates Electric, Link Manufacturing, and Trans Ova Genetics. These business partners will help the district achieve the goals for the room. These goals are to develop 21st century learners, maximize business collaboration, create cross-curricular connections, and engage learners.

WHO USES THE ROOM?

The Sioux Center Middle School (grades 5-8) and High School (grades 9-12) have used the STEM classroom for General Business, Media Productions, Language Arts, Science, Algebra 1, and Calculus classes and robotics club. Students periodically use the room for projects that provide a cumulative "tie-in" to a unit or several units where students need to work collaboratively to problem-solve. The room is also used for staff professional development.

HOW DO YOU USE THE ROOM?

The space is used to change the learning environment by promoting collaboration, presentations, inquiry based learning, video conferencing, robotics club, display personal work, and peer review. The district Technology Integrationist provides Teacher Tech Tuesday discussions after school.

WHAT ARE SOME TIPS FOR OTHERS INTERESTED IN DEVELOPING A STEM CLASSROOM?

Teachers should become familiar with the space before going "live" with students. Teacher training on the space should be very intentional and all teachers need to be familiar with all the possible uses of the room. Sound proof walls might be a nice feature as classes sometimes can be pretty loud.

ANY OTHER PIECES OF ADVICE?

Smaller group of students, preferable five or less, per pod seems to be most effective.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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