

New Elementary Science Program!

June 2017

Dear Parents,

Middletown Township School District is pleased to share that following up on last year's adoption of STEMscopes, an online science program from Accelerate Learning, as our primary instructional tool for teaching science in our middle schools, we have adopted STEMscopes for our elementary schools as well effective with 2017-2018 school year. This program is aligned to the *Next Generation Science Standards* (NGSS) which are required by the NJ State Department of Education to be taught at the elementary level as of September 1, 2017.

During the 2016-17, twelve classrooms including two from each grade level K-5 in our district piloted the use of the STEMscopes program and recommended it be adopted district-wide. Based on the experiences of the pilot teachers, our curriculum was revised to teach the NGSS using the *STEMscopes* tool as appropriate.

Using an instructional philosophy that centers on students learning science through hands-on exploration and inquiry, the program includes investigations and activities to bring science to life for our students so that they can “learn by doing” and fully engage in the scientific process. Through the research-based “5E+IA” model, which stands for *Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, Evaluate, Intervention, and Acceleration*, each of the components features specific resources to support our students' understanding of scientific concepts. The program also includes resources that incorporate literacy, math, music and videos, interactive tools, and a variety of assessment methods. Developed in partnership with Rice University, it has been utilized since 2007 in school districts across the country.

Your child will receive login credentials to access the program, which features some always-available resources that can be browsed at home, including a Video Glossary and a reference resource called *STEMscopedia*. Each of these *STEMscopedia* reading passages incorporates hands-on activities and a “Connecting with your Child” piece to encourage scientific dialogue. This piece offers a series of questions that you can ask your child to further reinforce concepts learned in school. We encourage your involvement in supporting your child as we implement our new curriculum.

As always, if you have any questions, please contact your child's teacher.

Sincerely,

Marjorie M. Caruso

District Director of Curriculum for Mathematics and Science K-12