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Mounds View's STEAM program 'full steam ahead'

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SHOREVIEW — The Mounds View School District is advancing with its plan to develop a STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) program at the middle schools.

RoAnne Elliot, director of curriculum and instruction, updated the School Board at its meeting last week. She presented a newly published informational brochure and a four-minute video introducing tenets of the plan; both are available at www.moundviewschools.org.

Superintendent Dan Hoverman noted that plans are moving forward in spite of uncertainty about the state's education budget. The program will be initially funded by a \$200,000 grant from the Northwest Suburban Integration School District. The grant will be unaffected by pending decisions at the Legislature regarding the education budget.

"Regardless of what happens with integration revenue, we're full steam ahead ... with our scope and pace," Hoverman said. "I think we're positioned well to continue to work, and we'll be able adapt and flex depending on what happens politically."

Elliot reiterated that Edgewood Middle School will be the center for the curriculum and by the fall of 2012 will encompass a magnet school that will invite 60 students from seven other school districts to attend its full-time STEAM program. But parts of the curriculum Edgewood will use will also be used in the district's two other middle schools.

Under the plan, sixth and seventh grades will kick off Edgewood's program in the 2012-2013 school year and an eighth grade will be added in 2013.

Edgewood was chosen because it's already more ethnically diverse than the district's other two middle schools and could benefit from more stability in its enrollment patterns, school officials announced in March.

A staff team will spend the next 16 months pulling together the new program using resources from the Integration District, the University of Minnesota STEM Center, the Minnesota Science Museum and other local companies and organizations. This fall the district will hold informational events about the new program and in January of 2012 a lottery will be held out of the pool of interested applicants. Parents should know by early 2012 whether their children can start that fall.

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