

Frequently Asked Questions



What is the Greater Southern STEM Academy?

The Greater Southern Tier STEM Academy is Pathways in Technology Early College High School (P-TECH) that will open in September 2016 and enroll a minimum of 40 students in the first year. The collaborative partnership of school districts, higher education, and business employers will prepare Students in the Greater Southern Tier for high-skills jobs of the future in **advanced technical manufacturing, clean energy and health care**. This 4-6 year model includes college-level, credit-bearing coursework and allows students to choose their own “pathways” to high-skill jobs.

The GST STEM Academy has redesigned secondary education to offer students opportunities to learn the skills necessary to be successful in STEM careers. The GST STEM Academy provides students with:

- **Cost-free, grades 9-14 STEM education** (students may complete the program in up to 6 years)
- **Cost-free Associate degree** or the two-year certification that is the industry-recognized standard
- **Workplace learning** that includes 1:1 mentoring, worksite visits, job shadowing, internships and apprenticeships
- **Intensive, individualized academic support** by K-12 and college faculty that enables students to progress through the program at their own pace
- **Commitment from participating business partners for students to be first in line for job consideration** following completion of the program

Which school districts are participating in the P-TECH program?

Each of the following participating districts have student slots reserved for 2016-17 based on their student enrollment: Elmira, Addison, Bath, Bradford, Campbell-Savona, Corning-Painted Post, Elmira Heights, Hammondsport, Horseheads, Odessa-Montour, Spencer-Van Etten, Watkins Glen and Waverly. The number of reserved spots may change for the district, but this provides a way for each district to plan and budget for the following year.

Where is the GST STEM Academy School?

Classes will be held at Airport Corporate Park, 360 Daniel Zenker Drive, Horseheads, NY 14845. Students will spend their ninth- and 10th-grade years at the new location and their 11th- and 12th-grade years will be spent at GST BOCES and Corning Community College. Years 13-14 (if needed) take place at CCC.

How is P-TECH paid for?

A consortium of GST BOCES, its component school districts, Corning Community College and 16 regional businesses applied for and received a statewide grant for \$3 million in 2015 to launch the Greater Southern Tier STEM Academy. The Elmira City School District is handling the financial administration duties. School districts pay a tuition fee for students they send to P-TECH, which they can be reimbursed through BOCES aid. The grant covers the rest of the costs associated with the school.

Who is teaching at P-TECH?

Supervisor of STEM Education at GST BOCES Jeremy Wheeler serves as the principal. The school employs an English Language Arts teacher, math teacher and science teacher, who work closely together to integrate the subjects in lessons. They are assisted by a part-time STEM instructional coach. The school also has a full-time school counselor on staff.

What kind of students are good candidates for the GST STEM Academy?

A student who will succeed at the STEM Academy will:

- Have an interest in and capacity for real-world applications of math, science and technology.
- Have an interest in design, engineering and understanding of “how things work”.
- Work well in a collaborative team environment and like learning with their peers.
- Be able to persist to solve a problem or complete a project.
- Be motivated to learn in new and exciting ways and thrive in a non-traditional classroom setting.
- Isn't afraid of change and want to create their own pathway to success.
- Desire to build strong skills in communications, critical thinking, problem-solving, and time-management.
- Like to think outside the box.
- Have the desire to use their talents and skills to impact their local and global communities.

When and how do students apply?

Eighth-graders in participating districts can apply. Along with an application and a form that parents fill out, applicants must submit written recommendations from teachers and school counselors. All application materials must be submitted to the offices of the middle school counselor in the student's district of residence by April 1, 2016. Applicants also will participate in an interview session.

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How are students selected for the program?

Along with an application and a form that parents to fill out, applicants must submit written recommendations from teachers and guidance counselors. Applicants also must participate in a personal interview. Each spring, a minimum of 40 students will be accepted for the following school year. Each district's school counselors can provide information on application deadlines. Completed applications received by the deadline are evaluated by the Recruitment and Admissions Team. Selected students are required to attend a "Summer Bridge" program for incoming students.

What if a student is not selected for the GST STEM Academy for 9th grade?

Students who meet the requirements but who are not selected will be placed on a waiting list for their school. Should a slot become available before the start of the school year, it will be offered to a student from the waiting list for that school. If all the available slots for a particular school are not filled, a lottery will be held among students on the waiting lists for all the component school districts.

Is freshman year the only time students can enter the GST STEM Academy?

Yes. Because of the way the curriculum is structured to allow for acceleration into college courses, only current eighth-graders are eligible to apply to P-TECH, and students must enter the program their freshman year of high school.

Is transportation provided to P-TECH students?

Yes, home school districts will transport students from their home school to P-TECH in the morning, as well as from P-TECH back to their home school in the afternoon.

What is P.E. like at the GST STEM Academy?

Physical Education classes are provided through the GST STEM Academy.

Can GST STEM Academy students participate in sports or other extra-curricular activities?

Yes, students are bussed back to their home schools in time to participate in sports or other after-school activities.

What if a student has taken accelerated classes in middle school?

An education at the GST STEM Academy is highly individualized to each student. Students' curriculum will be adjusted to reflect the appropriate level of subject mastery.

Do GST STEM Academy students take part in their home high school graduation?

Yes, students will be able to walk with their peers during graduation, although they won't actually receive their diploma until they complete their selected program pathway.

What associate degrees or other industry-recognized two year certification can students earn through this program?

Advanced Technical Education: Machine Tool Tech; Manufacturing Tech; Mechanical Tech; Electrical Tech; Welding

Health Care: Community Health; Medical Billing/Coding; CNA

Clean Energy: Environmental Science; Sustainability Studies; Chemical Tech

What are the benefits associated with earning an associate degree or other industry-recognized two year certification?

- Nearly 30 percent of Americans with an associate degree now earn more than those with bachelor's degrees. (*Georgetown University's Center on Education and Workforce*)
- A two-year community college degree, at present full rates, costs about \$6,262, according to the College Board. A bachelor's degree from a four-year, private residential university costs approximately \$158,072.
- The Georgetown Center estimates that 29 million jobs paying middle class wages today require only an associate degree, not a bachelor's degree.
- What makes the P-TECH model so beneficial is that not only are graduates armed with skills to succeed, they pay nothing for the AS and AAS degrees.
- The AS and AAS degrees allow students to continue into a four-year bachelor's degree program if they desire.

What college costs are covered for students enrolled in the GST STEM Academy?

All tuition for credits, labs and books are covered, and students are granted the same privileges as other CCC students. However, room and board are not included.

Who are the business partners, and what role do they play?

The regional business partners are committed to serving as mentors for students throughout their program career, meeting with them in person and by virtual communication, as well as guiding internships and putting graduates in line for jobs within their companies. Participating companies are: Corning Incorporated, Hilliard Corporation, Cameron Manufacturing and Design, Hardinge Incorporated, Vulcraft Group, Dresser-Rand A Siemens Business, Southerntier Custom Fabricators, Guthrie Corning Hospital, Arnot Health, Chemung County Health Department and Hunt Engineers, Architects and Surveyors.

If you have other questions, or would like to learn more about PTECH, contact:

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or visit our website at

www.gstbooces.org/stemacademy

***“At schools like P-TECH...students will graduate with a high school diploma and an associate degree...
We need to give every American student opportunities like this.” President Barack Obama***