


3-19-2018

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Fitzpatrick, Edward, "RWU School of Continuing Studies Recognizes All Saints Academy as a STEAM Academy" (2018). *Featured News Story*. 94.
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RWU School of Continuing Studies Recognizes All Saints Academy as a STEAM Academy

Middletown school becomes second school in R.I. to complete training through RWU's Center for Workforce and Professional Development



All Saints Academy Principal Anita Brouse speaks from the podium during the announcement that the school has been recognized as a STEAM Academy by RWU's Center for Workforce and Professional Development. Image Credit: (Mariela O'Neill/Roger Williams University)

March 19, 2018 | Edward Fitzpatrick

MIDDLETOWN, R.I. – The Roger Williams University School of Continuing Studies on March 15 recognized All Saints Academy, a Catholic school based in Middletown, R.I., as a STEAM Academy.

STEAM is an initiative that incorporates the arts (the “A” in STEAM) into STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) curriculum, instruction and assessment. The concept of STEAM has gained momentum in recent years in an effort to boost student achievement in the STEM subjects through greater use of creative and higher-order thinking activities.

All Saints Academy represents just the second school in Rhode Island to be recognized as a STEAM Academy based on training completed through the Center for the Workforce and Professional Development at RWU's School of Continuing Studies. The first was St. Thomas Regional School, in Providence.

The process reflects the efforts of teachers, curriculum specialists and school administrators to create a set of standards for STEAM academies and to endorse a professional development program that prepares teachers to direct and supervise STEAM classroom instruction.

Tom Pilecki, a RWU School of Continuing Studies instructor who co-authored a book titled “From STEM to STEAM,” explained that a national focus on STEM subjects failed to produce better test results. “What was missing from STEM was creativity,” he said. “They were buying more math books but not teaching teachers how to teach creatively and how to get students engaged.”

So now arts integration is providing the missing element, Pilecki said.

"I have always felt kids need the arts to be creative," he said. "The process of creating art teaches kids innately to have stick-to-it-tiveness; they are going to do it until they get it right. If we get kids to be creative and investigative, we are going to have creative scientists and engineers, who need to have more than one way to do what they need to do."

RWU President Donald J. Farish said, "Weaving art into STEM is a way to nurture curiosity in science and engineering. Both science and art involve hands-on learning, and most kids benefit from hands-on learning – rather than talk about, you do it. The larger point is instituting experiential learning in elementary schools."

"It is a great day for All Saints STEAM Academy!" Principal Anita Brouse said. "Our recognition as a STEAM academy marks us as leading the way in education. And we are!"

Brouse said the school strives to do three things: Imagine the design, dream the innovation and launch through fabrication. "We do this every day when we observe our world, ask questions about problems, experiment and try to find solutions," she said. "Right now, our robotics team is presenting their innovation idea with teams around the world that will provide clean water at a faster rate for people who need it after storms. We are making the best of our STEAM education!"

Pilecki said the RWU School of Continuing Studies has begun working on STEAM standards and training with schools in the Pawtucket school district. Any interested schools may contact Dawne Pezzuco, director of RWU's Center for Workforce and Professional Development, at dpezzuco@rwu.edu.

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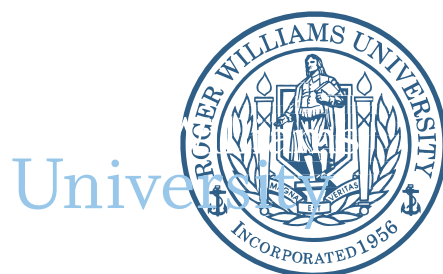
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