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RWU's University College and Saint Raphael Academy Celebrates STEAM Academy Achievement

Recognized as a STEAM Academy by RWU's Center for Workforce & Professional Development, Saint Raphael Academy strives to incorporate STEAM learning in their curriculum for years to come



From left to right: Daniel Ferris, Barbara Larned, Sara Costanzo, Judy Baxter, Tom Pilecki, Jamie Scurry, Daniel Richard

Image Credit: Nancy Cifune, Communications Director at Saint Raphael Academy

May 24, 2019 | By Courtney Dell'Agnes '19

PAWTUCKET, R.I. – For the last three years, the administrators, teachers and students of Saint Raphael Academy have learned and integrated the ‘A’ into STEM. On Monday, May 6 during a special ceremony, Saint Raphael Academy was presented with the STEAM Academy Certificate by RWU’s Center for Workforce & Professional Development.

“We’ve had a wonderful relationship with Roger Williams and it’s been great learning about and spending the last three years embracing STEAM learning. It’s something we want to incorporate in the curriculum for many years to come,” said principal of Saint Raphael Academy, Daniel Richard.

STEM education, which has been gaining momentum in schools across the country, shows students how to critically think and problem solve for real-world applications. But many schools, such as Saint Raphael, are expanding STEM into STEAM.

STEAM takes STEM to the next level, says Richard, allowing students to “connect their learning in core subject areas and link them together with arts practices, elements, design principles and standards.” STEAM coordinator for the Center for Workforce & Professional Development, Tom Pilecki adds that STEAM is about “being creative, getting out of ourselves and taking the knowledge you have and doing something important in the world.”

That's why throughout this school year, Saint Raphael students channeled their inner artist to complete classroom assignments in fun, engaging and creative ways. The students have designed a Monopoly game based off the historic New Deal, built three-dimensional models of cell structures, painted Chinese opera masks, created collages based off Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, and more.

"The education you are receiving is very special. It will change your lives forever." Daniel Ferris, the superintendent of Catholic schools for the Diocese of Providence, said to the students during the ceremony. "My hope is that STEAM instruction will continue here at St. Rays. But it is not simply about receiving the certificate and becoming the first STEAM high school in Rhode Island. Please continue this work so students for a long time will benefit from your efforts."

And the STEAM initiative isn't stopping with Saint Raphael Academy. Teachers from across the district have begun visiting Saint Raphael to observe the practices that are being implemented to incorporate the arts into all subjects. Dawne Pezzuco, the Director of the Center for Workforce & Professional Development says the number of schools that are interested in this program is increasing. They're looking forward to working with Bayview Academy in the fall and have begun conversations with the Scituate school district as well.

"We can only take on so many at a time but it's ready to move on now and grow more," Pezzuco said. "As the word gets out there with STEAM, more people are involved and the more they hear about it the more they want to be included in all this great stuff."

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