WHAT DOES STEAM LOOK LIKE?
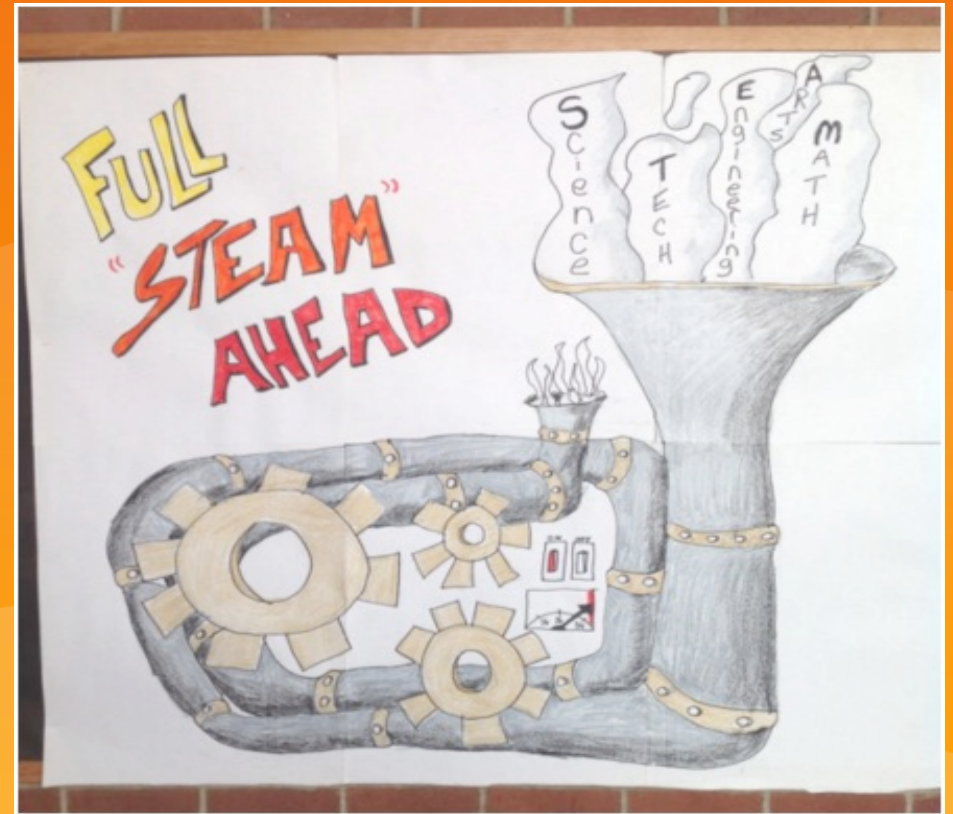
Thematic Trimesters May Include:

- **Exploration of World War II.**

  o Journalistic writing focused on the Pearl Harbor attack (Information Writing)

  o Exploring industry of the war and analyzing the impact on the economy (Social Studies and Math)

  o Ashford World War II veterans speak to the students about their personal experience

  o Culminating Project: Students create a World War II museum complete with diary entries, video interviews, paintings of famous battles, etc.

- **Exploration of the Seasons**

  o Study of the impact of the seasons on nature (science)

  o Symmetry leaf drawings (Art)

  o Environmental professor from UConn comes in to speak to students

  o Culminating Project: Students create a cartoon about the seasons using narrative, drawing, and music.

AND MANY MORE CREATIVE WAYS TO ENGAGE OUR STUDENTS IN AUTHENTIC LEARNING

Ashford School

INTERDISCIPLINARY LEARNING
DRIVEN BY STUDENT CHOICE

We Optimize Learning for All

STEAM is how we empower students to use all of their learning to think about the world, solve problems, and show what they know.

Why STEAM?

A NEW WAY OF EDUCATING OUR STUDENTS:

Traditional education compartmentalizes student learning into the traditional core subjects. Our life experiences are not chunked into 30 minutes of math, 30 minutes of science, etc. A STEAM approach empowers students to view the world as the complex, dynamic, and interconnected place it is.

WHAT ARE THE ARTS? WHY DO THEY MATTER?

We use the term "Arts" to refer to the visual and performing arts (painting, puppetry, theatre, music), as well as the Liberal Arts (Social Studies, Language Arts).

More than just "adding Arts" to our STEM program, Ashford School seeks to incorporate the arts into student exploration, learning, and expression.

Incorporating the "Arts" does not mean simply adding an art project on to the end of a unit. Instead, the arts can become the starting point, another lens through which students learn core content; alternatively the Arts can be an alternative means for introducing core content and/or assessing student learning.

HOW DOES STEAM IMPROVE LEARNING?

We believe that the STEAM approach prepares our students to be better problem solvers because it empowers them to look at problems from multiple angles. This will serve them as citizens in a globalized world and help them to develop skills that employers and universities value.

WHY INTERDISCIPLINARY LEARNING?

An interdisciplinary approach through STEAM inherently encourages individual student choice, increasing student buy-in as well as ownership over their learning. This may mean that within a given classroom, there are diverse, simultaneous, student-led projects occurring around a common learning goal.

In times of change, learners inherit the earth, while the learned find themselves beautifully equipped to deal with a world that no longer exists.

– Eric Hoffer
Presidential Medal of Freedom Recipient

STEAM AT ASHFORD SCHOOL

WHERE ARE WE?

Over the last several years, Ashford School has developed a strong technology base for a comprehensive STEAM program that includes multiple learning opportunities for students, such as the use of a 3-D printer, a Robotics lab, keyboard stations, multiple computer stations, laptops, smart-boards, iPad carts, and a comprehensive technology update plan.

In addition, teachers have received training on the STEAM model and have begun to implement the initiative across Ashford School. STEAM learning, projects, courses, and celebrations have already been put in place in various classrooms across the school. Units such as the fourth grade interdisciplinary focus on whaling and events such as STEAM DAY are a strong start to STEAM implementation as an integral part of the Ashford experience.

WHERE ARE WE HEADED?

The three-year school plan focuses on developing year-round STEAM themes/inquiry projects. Every trimester of the school year will provide students with a unique opportunity to explore a major social issue, to learn about a new part of the world, or to engage in a creative story-based learning experience. The sky is the limit!

2015-2016 School Year

Professional development focuses on integrating STEAM connections across the curriculum. Staff will create an overarching STEAM theme for implementation during the second trimester. The third trimester will provide time for reflection and further planning.

2016-2017 School Year

The staff will implement a second STEAM theme, will implement a revised version of their original theme, and will begin planning for a third thematic trimester.

2017-2018 School Year

Full STEAM implementation, with thematic, STEAM-based learning occurring over the entire school year.