

Sherman Thomas STEM Academy

Dream it. Think it. Do it.



Parent/Student Handbook
2025-2026

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Sherman Thomas STEM Academy (“STA”) Staff

STA Staff

Executive Director	Tera Napier
Chief Business Officer	Sarina Lopez
Principal	Jamie Brock
Office Manager	Faith Aguilar
Eighth Grade Teacher	Jamie Brock
Seventh Grade Teacher	Julie Nichols
Sixth Grade Teacher	Angela Reed
School Counselor	Ashley Wilson-Camy
Special Education Teacher	Kevin Kelley
Intervention/EL/504 Coordinator	Angela Reed
Cafeteria Manager	Faith Aguilar
Yard Duty Supervisor	Faith Aguilar
Instructional Aide	Natalie Valdovinos
Yard Duty/Office Assistant	Kacie Lehman
	Cathy Mount
Speech Therapist	TBD
Nurse	Karina Tovar
Maintenance	Paul Perez Paul
	Michael Perez
	Steve Mount
Janitorial	Matthew Mount

Board of Directors of Sherman Thomas Charter Schools

Board Chair	Tasha Manfredi-Garlick
Vice Chair	Charles Rigby
Director	Cynthia Dolph
Director	Yuliana Franco
Director	Candy Lorange

SCHOOL SCHEDULE

Monday – Thursday

8:00am – 10:15am	Instruction
10:15am – 10:30am	Break
10:30am – 12:15pm	Instruction
12:15pm – 1:00pm	Lunch
1:00pm – 3:30pm	Instruction
3:30pm	Dismissal

Friday

8:00am – 11:45am	Instruction
11:45am – 12:00pm	Lunch
12:00pm	Dismissal

Unique Scheduling

Our program is unique in that we offer a slightly longer day Monday-Thursday (8:00am-3:30pm) and a half day on Fridays (8:00am-12:00pm). This half day is dedicated to exploring careers and “getting our hands dirty” with projects in the following ways:

1. Guest Speakers – Inviting local businesses into our school to share about their industry, including educational requirements to enter their field.
2. Field Trips – Visiting local businesses to see projects “as they happen” and connecting with what students learn in the classroom, as well as out of town field trips to locations that promote learning in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (“STEM”) fields.
3. Challenge Days – Students work in peer groups to create an object or overcome an obstacle given a specific set of parameters. Students will employ skills in collaboration and problem solving through the Engineering Design Process to meet the goals of each challenge.
4. Guest Teachers – Inviting members of our community to work alongside students, share their experience, and model planning and project management techniques. This brings the community into our program and continues to nurture the seeds of career readiness for our students.

ACADEMICS

Classes

All students will be enrolled in six (6) classes: English, Math, History, Science, P.E., and our elective course, “The Nest.” We will be teaching the California Common Core Standards in English and Mathematics, the California History-Social Science Framework and the National Next Generation Science Standards. All classes will be used to calculate GPA, to determine awards as well as eligibility for extra-curricular activities and graduation.

Homework

Usually, but not always, homework will be limited to work not finished in class. It will be an opportunity for further practice and mastery of concepts being discussed in school. If there is *no* homework, we expect students to read a book (ideally making progress toward their AR goal) each night for 30 minutes. Typically, homework should be limited to 30 minutes to an hour. If it is consistently taking longer, please set up a conference with your child’s teacher so it can be addressed. Also, please know that as a school we will not assign homework on Fridays, *but* if your child is missing any work, that is the perfect opportunity to get caught up.

Physical Education

All students will have P.E. 2-4 times weekly. Students are required to participate every day, unless they have a medical exemption. Students must wear closed toe shoes with laces (no boots or crocs). Each student is given a daily P.E. score for participation and being absent does not excuse P.E. attendance/scores. Part of the participation grade includes appropriate P.E. attire (see Dress Code). At the end of the semester, the 4 lowest scores will be dropped (so a student absent four days, as long as they participate on all of the other days, would still have a 100% in P.E.). Students who miss P.E. because they are at practice and/or a game for a school athletic team (Thomas Jefferson, Martin Luther King, or Desmond) will receive full PE credit as long as they have submitted the required paperwork. If a student is absent from P.E. more than 4 times, please speak with your teacher about alternative assignments.

Science

We teach Science in a whole school format to allow for mixed groups and ability levels, and more individuality in terms of rigor as students grow in our program. All new students work their first year with us in our “lecture group” where they create a graded journal as they learn the basic content behind the Next Generation Science Standards. Students that have mastered the content are then working in our “research group” in subsequent years, where they learn deeper level content through reading about discoveries and new theories in the scientific community, and writing claims backed up with observations and scientific reasoning. Students are invited into the research group on a unit-by-unit basis. Absent students are responsible for making up any notes they missed in their scored journal (lecture group) and continuing their independent work (research group) to stay on track.

“The Nest”

The Nest class will be held regularly on Fridays from 8:00am – 11:45am and may also have a few assignments throughout the week. This class will be comprised of units on technology, professionalism, college and career exploration, problem solving, critical thinking, investigative

exploration and research, hands on projects, the arts, scientific inquiry, field trip participation, and the digital portfolio.

Digital Portfolio

In May, students will have access to a digital folder of photos taken throughout the year. They will narrow their photos down to a “highlight reel” and prepare a digital portfolio presentation which they will present to the school and a small panel. Specific requirements and grading rubric will be provided.

8th Grade Graduation Requirements

In order for a student to participate in the 8th grade graduation ceremony, they must earn a cumulative 2.0 GPA for their 8th grade year and participate in the 8th grade showcase. Students who do not have a 2.0 GPA, or are in poor attendance or behavior standing, will still be promoted on to high school unless it is deemed that retention would benefit the student. Any student who has below a 1.0 GPA will be required to have a Student Success Team (“SST”) meeting to evaluate whether retention would be of benefit to the student. Participation in the graduation ceremony is a privilege, not a right, and participation may be conditional on appropriate grades, attendance, and behavior and is at the discretion of the principal.

8th Grade Showcase

All 8th graders are required to create an end of year project. This project must demonstrate knowledge of the Scientific Method or Engineering Design Process, which is taught several times throughout the year and applied frequently in group activities. A more detailed description of this assignment will be provided by the first week of May, including deadlines for project proposal and completion, and presentation rubric. In addition, this serves as a leadership project. Each 8th grader will be assigned a “research and development team” made up of 6th and 7th graders. Students will have approximately 20 hours of class time to work with their team on the project, but it is expected that 8th graders will have already spent some time before that point coming up with their idea and doing initial research. Teams will present their project in a formal presentation to the whole school.

Late Work

Late work will be accepted in all classes. All late work, in any subject, will receive a deduction in points (varies based on lateness and total point value of the assignment). We do have cut-off points throughout the year when we announce that any work assigned prior to a given date will no longer be accepted after the cut-off date. This is always clearly communicated to parents and students at least a week in advance.

Learning Loss

All students go through some degree of loss over the summer, and many students are lacking in some foundational skills. As such, the beginning of our year is something we call “boot camp,” where we start with remediation and foundational skills to both build confidence as well as evaluate student levels. Teachers are mindful of varying levels of strengths and weaknesses and plan and differentiate accordingly. In light of the 2020-21 school year, where most of the year was done through “distance learning,” we are even more mindful of the backfilling that might be necessary. That being said, the majority of class time and assignments, especially after the first few weeks of instruction, will be grade level rigor. If your child is behind and lacks skills from earlier grades, we would strongly suggest

utilizing the school resource IXL. The school has paid for an account for all students that includes practice in ELA and Math for grades K-12. All students will be familiar with the program as it is utilized in all classes by the teachers. One of the first assignments that all students will be completing is a Diagnostic in IXL. When this is complete, it will give all students an approximate grade level equivalency for several strands of Mathematics, Reading, and overall English Language Arts. On that report (which is online) students can click on links that will give them practice problems that they can complete. The program tells them if they are right or wrong and if they are wrong it will explain why. This is a great resource that all students will have, and we recommend spending time on the weekends, or after completing graded assignments daily, working on old skills.

Intervention

We frequently monitor student performance and determine our small intervention groups in 3- to 5-week periods, where we focus instruction and practice on foundational areas of need in English Language Arts (“ELA”) and Mathematics. However, we may also do other types of units, such as social/emotional skills or Gifted and Talented Education (GATE). Our goal is that every student may be in intervention at some point in the year. This helps with removing the stigma that can frustrate middle school students in particular – if everyone goes to intervention we’ve taken “different” and made it “normal.” We also believe that by being focused – only working on ONE thing, it will improve results.

Progress Monitoring

Grades will be updated on a weekly basis. You will be given a unique password to log into PowerSchool to check your child’s grades at any time. We will also be sending home a grade check (on paper) stapled to any graded paper-based work on a weekly basis. Lastly, you will be sent digitally (through email or Remind) a list of all grade-level specific assignments that are due for the week by Monday morning of each week.

Report Cards and Progress Reports

Report cards will be sent home with students twice each year, at the end of each semester. Grade checks will be sent home weekly. We encourage families to make regular use of our online grade book program, Powerschool, for the most up to date information. There is a link on our website, and personal codes can be obtained in our office.

Student Success Team (S.S.T.)

The S.S.T. is composed of a team of teachers who meet with parents or guardians to resolve any academic, social, emotional, or discipline problems a child might be experiencing at school. Parents as well as teachers are welcome to refer a child to the S.S.T. By working together, we can make every child’s education a rewarding experience at Sherman Thomas STEM Academy.

AWARDS

Honor Roll/Raven Roll

Honor Roll award recipients will be recognized twice a year at the semester family nights. In order to be on Honor Roll, you must earn a 3.5 to 3.9 GPA. Raven Roll recipients will be those students who earn a 4.0 GPA.

Perfect Attendance

At the year-end Family Night there will be a special Perfect Attendance award for students who start the year on the first day of school and do not miss one day of school for any reason. **Excused and “cleared” absences are still considered absences in this context;** students must be physically present every day, for at least a portion of the day.

RAVEN Award

All students who are willing to work hard and exhibit good character, regardless of academic ability, are capable of achieving this well-rounded award. The RAVEN Award will be given out yearly to all students who have earned it at the end-of-year Family Night. The deadline for submitting all RAVEN paperwork is the Friday before Memorial Day. The student must earn a minimum of 70 points in order to receive this award. *Student* qualifications are as follows:

Relentless: Every week that you turn in all assignments in every subject on time (and complete) you earn one point. You must have a minimum of 28 points in this section.

Attendance and Academics: For every quarter you have a perfect attendance you will receive 3 points. Also, for every quarter you can earn points based on your GPA (1 point for 2.0 – 2.4, 2 points for 2.5 – 2.9, 3 points for 3.0 – 3.4, 4 points for 3.5 – 3.9, and 5 points for 4.0). You must earn a minimum of 12 points for this section.

Volunteer: You will earn 1 point for every hour you volunteer at STA. Opportunities will be announced in class throughout the year, varying in time and location (many will occur during the school day). When there are off-campus or evening/weekend activities, you are responsible to arrange approval from your parents – they may not be able to get you where you need to be! In addition, you will receive 1 point for every hour you volunteer with a charitable organization (that must be pre-approved by administration, see the office for a form) outside of school. You must receive a minimum of 12 points for STA volunteerism and a minimum of 20 overall points for this section (the last 8 points could come from STA or outside).

Extra-curricular Involvement: You will receive points for each STA team you are a part of, from start to finish. Academic Pentathlon is worth 5 points, Yearbook is worth 2-4 points (varies by commitment); Battle of the Books is worth 3 points, Robotics, Geek Squad, Student Council, and Math Team are worth 2 points each. In addition, you may earn 2 points for a club or organization in our community, such as 4-H, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Campfire, Leo’s Club, Drama, Dance, or an Athletic Team. These outside clubs must have prior approval by administration, and we ask you to document your participation with a signature of the leader and a few photos of you actively participating. You must have a minimum of 2 points in this section.

Noble: Any detentions result in a 5-point deduction in overall points. A suspension is a 10-point deduction. More than one suspension or more than two detentions will automatically disqualify you from this award.

CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

All students participating in STA co-curricular activities must sign a contract which outlines the expectations and limits of that activity.

Academic Pentathlon

Students are invited to try out for the Academic Pentathlon team. Students must meet the eligibility requirements designated by the coaches, including maintaining a 2.0 GPA. The coaches will determine the team based on a variety of measures which may include evaluating classroom grades, behavior, and a competition among all interested participants. The selection of the Academic Pentathlon team is at the discretion of the coaches.

Battle of the Books

6th grade students are invited to try out for the Battle of the Books team. Students on this team will read as many of 20 pre-determined books as they can, before the competition. Students must meet eligibility requirements designated by the coaches, including maintaining a 2.0 GPA. The team will have a maximum of 5 members. If more than 5 students are interested, the coaches will determine the team based on a variety of measures which may include evaluating classroom grades, behavior, and competition among all interested participants. The selection of the Battle of the Books team is at the discretion of the coaches.

Geek Squad

The “Geek Squad” are our “first responders.” If we are having a technology issue, they will be called on to trouble shoot and try to find the solution. If they can’t solve it, the teacher will help. They will be responsible for making sure all devices are properly stowed each day, as well as attending mandatory training. Students must maintain a 2.0 GPA to remain on the squad.

Math Team

The math team will represent our school at the Madera County Superintendent of Schools Math Tournament. There will be a try-out in February or March, and students selected will have to commit to all after school practices. Students must have at least a 2.0 GPA and at least a B in Math to try out for the team. The selection of the math team is at the discretion of the coach.

Robotics Team

Robotics is an in-house extra-curricular activity. This group will meet after school in September and October (detailed practice dates will be given at Back To School Night). Interested students need to sign up by the deadline. We will have a “Robot Challenge Day” during school before that date so students can see if it is something they would be interested in or not. Students should only sign up to be in the activity if they can commit to being at most practices. Students must maintain a 2.0 GPA to remain in the group. Small groups will work together each week on their robot, building and programming it to complete a series of tasks. Students who participate in the activity from beginning to end, with minimal absences (detailed in the participation contract) and join the competition will earn 2 extra-curricular points towards the RAVEN award.

Sports

Students are allowed, per agreement with Madera Unified School District, to participate in sports programs at the Madera Unified School District’s junior high within their attendance boundary during

7th and 8th grade. All work missed due to sports absences may be made up within a day. Students are expected to provide Ms. Brock with a game and practice schedule and to let us know when they will be leaving school early, as well as coach contact information. STA will submit student's GPA to coaches. Participating students will sign an agreement before each season, where all expectations will be clearly outlined for them.

Student Council

In order to offer the most opportunity for students to participate in leadership, we will offer two rounds of Student Council, one per semester. All officer elections (for both semesters) will be held during the 2nd week of school, and terms will last one semester. A student cannot be in Student Council for more than one position per year. All elected members of the council are expected to attend council meetings, maintain a 2.5 GPA, and sign a Code of Conduct agreement stating their commitment to demonstrate exemplary character. They are also required to attend and help plan the two Family Nights that take place during their semester on the council. Failure to meet these requirements could result in dismissal from the council. Participation in student council is at the discretion of the principal.

Yearbook

Students who are a part of Yearbook will be responsible for culling pictures of a short list of students. Students will have to commit to meetings, which will take place during lunches. In addition, there may be a few after school meetings toward the end of the year. To be a part of this club you must maintain a minimum of a 2.0 GPA, maintain a "C" or better in English, and meet a few regular deadlines, which are announced periodically during the year.

CAMPUS POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Arrival and Dismissal from School

Students may not arrive earlier than 7:30 am. Students are to be picked up immediately after the end of school each day unless an emergency situation exists, and prior arrangements have been made with the Principal or Office Manager and/or they are registered for the after-school program. We will have supervision during this pickup time from 3:30pm to 3:45pm. Students who are still on campus at that point will go to the office.

Bicycles

Bicycles may be ridden to and from school. They are to be parked in the designated area. Bicycles are not allowed elsewhere on the school grounds at any time. Be sure to always lock your bicycle. The school assumes no liability for any bicycle or bicycle equipment.

Birthdays

Parents are welcome to treat *their own child* without notifying the principal. Due to dietary issues (allergies, religious restrictions, current health related concerns), if a parent wishes to bring treats for the rest of the school, items must be store-bought (prepared in a commercial kitchen with a full ingredient list). Treats must be provided for the whole school (we are a class of 75 students).

Field Trips

Throughout the school year, students will occasionally be going on field trips. Parent permission slips must be signed and returned to school personnel prior to the trip. All standard rules of conduct and procedures used in the daily transportation of pupils will be observed and enforced on field trips. Any student not in the pre-designated proper field trip attire (which students will be notified of prior to the trip) will not be allowed to attend the field trip.

Parents are needed and encouraged to be chaperones for field trips, but space is limited. For most field trips, we accept parents on a first come, first serve basis as soon as the sign-up window opens. Parents will be notified of the date and time the window will open, which will typically be approximately one month before the field trip.

Health and Safety - Face Coverings and Zero Tolerance

When mandated by local, state, or federal authorities, our students will be required to follow any current regulations regarding face covering on campus. These agencies have specific rules as to what constitutes an allowable face covering, locations/circumstances in which a covering is required, and what types of isolation policies a potential health risk case may have to follow. For current guidelines, please contact our office or Ms. Brock. These guidelines are subject to change at any time throughout the year, and parents will be notified of any changes.

We understand that families have different perspectives on communicable diseases, whether that be dangers, best precautionary measures, politics, science, et. At STA, it is expected that NO student will be criticized or made fun of in any way for their face coverings or other precaution measures. In addition, NO jokes of any kind will be tolerated regarding communicable diseases, including but not limited to symptoms, illness, the name, supposed country of origin, etc. Any student pretending to cough or sneeze on another student will immediately be sent to the principal, as this is seen as a threat to another student's and/or staff member's safety and will be treated as such.

Library

Students are allowed to check out one book at a time from our school library. All books need to be returned, in reasonable condition, by the end of the school year or parents/guardians will be responsible for the fair market value of the book. Again, be wary of liquids carried in backpacks.

Lost and Found

Articles found on the school grounds will be turned in to the office. Children should look first for items that they may have lost. Parents/guardians are advised to write children's names on lunch boxes, sweaters, coats, etc. Items of significant value need to be claimed by parents/legal guardians. Articles not claimed will be given away periodically.

Lost or Damaged School Property

If a student willfully damages the Charter School's property or the personal property of a Charter School employee, or fails to return a textbook, library book, computer/tablet or other Charter School property that has been loaned to the student, the student's parents/guardians are liable for all damages caused by the student's misconduct not to exceed ten thousand dollars (\$10,000), adjusted annually for inflation. After notifying the student's parent or guardian in writing of the student's alleged misconduct and affording the student due process, the Charter School may withhold the student's grades/transcripts, until the damages have been paid. If the student and the student's parent/guardian are unable to pay for the damages or to return the property, the Charter School will provide a program of voluntary work for the minor in lieu of the payment of monetary damages. Upon completion of the voluntary work, the student's grades will be released.

Medication

Parents/guardians are required to inform the school of any medication to be taken by the child at school. Facts on current dosage and the name and signature of the supervising physician are needed for all medication, prescription *and* over-the-counter. Parents must fill out a form requesting that medication be given at school before any medication is dispensed. Forms may be obtained through the school office. **Parents/Guardians must transport all medications to the office and sign the medications in. Do not send with the student.**

Personal Possessions

We discourage children from bringing personal possessions or extra money to school unless requested by the Teacher or Principal for a specific purpose. We do this because we will not be responsible for lost or stolen property. While we attempt to recover stolen property, it is very difficult. When money is sent to school, it should be placed in an envelope with the child's name and purpose written on it. Students are not to bring videos, toys, personal electronic devices, etc. without prior permission from the teacher. Anything brought to school without prior permission will be kept in the office for one week for parents to claim. Items not claimed will be disposed of periodically. Please note: students are not allowed to be on any personal electronic devices, which includes "Smart" watches, iPods and cell phones, while on campus between the hours of 7:30am and 3:30pm. If you choose to send your child with an electronic device, it must remain off and in a backpack, at the student's own risk. If we see a device, we will confiscate it, and a parent must pick it up. If you need to get in touch with your child during the school day, please do not text them. You can call the school office and we will relay any messages you need delivered.

Pets at School

With the exception of service animals, students are not allowed to bring animals to school without permission from the principal.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is always something that students have difficulty with – even with the best intentions, they have difficulty citing sources. There are also students who just blatantly copy

and paste and hope to not get caught, knowing that what they are doing is wrong. Please know, all teachers will be going over this in class and teaching the students how to cite sources, paraphrase and summarize. If a student copies and pastes something, without giving credit to the original source (and even if they do give credit but the assignment required them to put something in their own words), at the very least it will result in them having to redo the assignment within a specified time frame. It could result in an automatic zero (0 points), depending on the situation (first offense, how much explanation was given, was it a test, etc.). Plagiarism could also result in a meeting with administration and further school consequences, including detention. If administration is involved, parents will be notified. Parents could also be notified, by the teacher, as a step before involving school administration, again, varying depending on the situation and circumstances.

Safety Drills

Safety drills are held periodically. All students are expected to participate in all safety drills when on the property. Absolutely no misbehavior will be tolerated during drills.

CODE OF CONDUCT

School Expectations for Students

It is expected that students will demonstrate appropriate behaviors and attitudes including respect, honesty, and fairness necessary to maintain a productive, healthy, and safe school climate. Sherman Thomas STEM Academy students are expected to:

- be active, self-directed learners who examine options as they initiate and complete tasks.
- be effective collaborators who assume various roles to accomplish group or community goals using self-knowledge, compromise, cooperation, and respect.
- be good decision makers who consider consequences and make choices demonstrating integrity and evaluation.
- be community participants understanding and practicing our democratic traditions and values respecting human dignity, honesty, and fairness who can accept the consequences for their action.

Unacceptable Behaviors for Students

It is expected that students will not demonstrate the following behaviors, which seriously interfere with teaching and learning:

1. Use of abusive language or inappropriate gestures
2. Violating classroom and/or school rules
3. Bullying
4. Disrespecting other students
5. Any other conduct outlined as an enumerated offense in the Suspension and Expulsion Policy and Procedures

Consequences

Below is a brief list of consequences which will depend on the severity and frequency of the unacceptable behavior in accordance with the classroom discipline plan and the general inappropriate behaviors listed above. Corrective actions may include:

1. Parent/guardian notification (Teacher and/or Administration)
2. Restitution
3. Detention
4. Suspension
5. Police Notification (if breaking a law is involved)
6. Involuntary removal/Expulsion from school

The suspension, expulsion, and/or involuntary removal of a student from STA shall be conducted in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Suspension and Expulsion Policy and Procedures.

Behavior SST

It is our goal to educate all children and to ensure the safety of all students and staff. We believe not only in educating the child academically but in social situations as well. It is not our desire to suspend any student or to see any student expelled or involuntarily removed from the Sherman Thomas STEM Academy. Therefore, if a student is suspended twice (2) in the same academic year, regardless of the offense, there will be a behavioral SST assembled to develop the best strategy for the student's success. A plan will be created with the goal of correcting unacceptable behaviors and refocusing the student's attention on academic success and engagement.

DRESS CODE

The philosophy of STA is to educate and prepare students for whatever job or career they choose. Most positions require a uniform or professional attire. The overarching dynamic is not about everyone's personal preference when it comes to attire, piercings, or other styles in fashion, but to help students understand that their attire at school (or work) has a standard of expectation. To that end we are preparing them for a variety of professional careers.

Shirts: All shirts/blouses must be solid or patterned black, green, grey, or white and have a collar. A small logo, less than 1 inch, is acceptable. Official STA logo apparel (purchased at the school) is also acceptable and is optional/not required. On Fridays, students are also allowed to wear Sherman Thomas Charter School ("STCS"), Sherman Thomas Charter High School ("STCHS"), college/university, or military T-Shirts. Shirts must fully cover the torso from the waist to the collarbone.

Pants/Shorts/Skirts: All pants/shorts/skirts must be a solid or patterned black, grey or khaki, or blue denim. Fabric may be canvas or denim, and "cargo styles" are allowed. Waistbands must fall at, or above, the students' natural waistline. The hemline of skirts must be no higher than 3 inches above the knee. The hemline of shorts must be long enough to reach mid-thigh.

Dresses: Dresses must be solid or patterned black, green, or white or grey and cover the shoulder. The hemline must be no higher than 3 inches above the knee.

Shoes: Must have a heel strap.

Hats/Beanies: Must not present a distraction to learning (nothing deemed offensive, violent, or gang related) and may only be worn outside. Only headwear worn for religious reasons may be worn inside as well as outside.

Outerwear: All sweaters and sweatshirts must be solid black, green, white, grey or an optional official STA sweatshirt. Jackets (must have a full-length zipper or other closure) must be black, green, white, grey, or a combination of any of those colors.

Athletic/Leisure Wear: Athletic and leisure wear is not acceptable for regular classroom work. This includes, but is not limited to, athletic shorts or pants, yoga pants, leggings worn as pants, and pajama pants (any of these might be acceptable on a designated school activity day and students will be notified when these are acceptable ahead of time by STA staff).

All Clothing: All clothing must be solid (unless it is official STA logo apparel) and in good repair without rips, tears, holes, or fraying (either intentional or unintentional).

Hair: Hair must not present a distraction to learning. No mohawks greater than 2 inches will be allowed. It must be clean and brushed/combed.

Piercings: Students are allowed to have up to two earrings in each ear. Gauge earrings and facial piercings are not allowed. Students are not allowed to wear "spikes." All earrings, including hoops, cannot hang more than one inch below the earlobe.

Jewelry/Accessories and Make-Up: Attire, including jewelry/accessories that present a safety hazard or distraction to the educational environment are not permissible. Make-up must not present a distraction to learning.

P.E. Attire: Students are *allowed* to change for P.E. but are *not required* to dress out (except shoes) and will be provided minimal time to change before P.E. Appropriate clothing includes a loose-fitting T-shirt, athletic shorts or pants (i.e. warmups, sweats) in black, green, white, grey, or a combination of any of those colors. Please note that athletic wear must be long enough to cover the mid-thigh. Students must wear completely closed shoes with laces. When temperatures during P.E. exceed 90 degrees, students will be expected to remove excessive outerwear (i.e. sweatshirts and jackets) for their safety unless a parent has communicated with us in advance.

Field Trip Attire: When going into the community, we are representatives of our school and wish to look professional. Typically, students are expected to wear a black, green, grey, or white collared shirt and comfortable/loose fitting khaki, gray, or black trousers. Closed-toe shoes are also required. Field trip attire expectations, if different due to special circumstances related to the location of the event, will be communicated to families in advance.

Dress Code Violations

If a student violates the dress code the following steps will be taken:

1st Offense: Teacher explains to student the violation

2nd Offense: Teacher explains to student the violation and parents will be notified

3rd Offense: Student sent to office, parent(s) called to bring proper attire or “loaners” will be used if available

4th Offense: Sent to office, parents notified, student given detention, behavior SST

All subsequent violations, the student may be disciplined in accordance with the behavior SST contract, which will include, but not be limited to, the loss of field trip privileges.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

One of our core values at Sherman Thomas STEM Academy states that, “Parents are the first and primary teachers. They are responsible for their children’s basic needs and values.” It is our goal to partner alongside you and work together to help your child grow, educationally as well as socially.

Family Nights

We plan four Family Nights each year. All students are encouraged to bring their whole family. These Family Nights last approximately one hour and will be fast paced, designed to keep the whole family engaged. These may consist of a small performance, awards, a small family STEM challenge, and/or a brief guest speaker. These dates are provided in August on our website as well as on a calendar provided at Back to School Night and on the back cover of this handbook.

STAff Chats

Once a month, we will have a one-hour time for parents and/or community members to meet with STA staff and discuss the school. These times will be set aside for administration to share about events that have happened as well as any upcoming functions. This is also a time for parents to share about things they are pleased with and areas for improvement, as well as feedback regarding the Local Control Accountability Plan (“LCAP”). These dates are on the calendar provided at Back to School Night.

Visitors – Observing and Volunteering

All visitors are to sign in at the front office before entering campus. Non-enrolled children are not permitted to be on campus unless accompanied by a parent. High School students wishing to volunteer must have prior written approval by STA administration. All visitors (including adults) are expected to be in appropriate school attire, which would include having the shoulders covered, the hemline for all shorts/skirts being no more than 3 inches above the knee, no holes or frays in clothing, and no images deemed offensive/inappropriate.

Visitors/Volunteers are allowed on campus subject to any current health restrictions. If a parent wishes to visit/volunteer, they must provide the teacher with at least 24 hours’ notice before coming, and the teacher will notify STA administration. Video recording is not allowed without administrative approval. All visitors/volunteers must observe class in as quiet and unobtrusive a manner as possible. Please save all questions for the teacher until after class. Special parent/teacher conferences must be arranged for before or after instructional time. The teacher will not talk with you about your child during class time. Visitors/volunteers who violate this rule may be asked to leave campus.

Parents/community members are encouraged to become involved in the activities of the school. As stated, we need at least 24 hours’ notice in order to prepare things for you to do to be helpful. Please let us know when you would like to come and for approximately how long you will be there, so we can plan accordingly. When in the classroom and working with students, you will see and hear things that could be deemed confidential. Any parents who share information about students, specifically with regard to academic performance, could be prevented from future volunteering opportunities. We wish to respect the confidentiality and privacy of all of our students.

SHORT TERM INDEPENDENT STUDY PROGRAM

Our school participates in a “Short Term Independent Study” program. This program allows students who are absent from in-person attendance to remain current in their studies. Students are strongly encouraged to be in class whenever possible to get the most instruction and assistance, but if they must be absent, they may still have their assignments while at home. This helps a child, upon return to the classroom, to manage assignments with as little “catching up” as possible, optimizing their learning. Students who comply with the Short Term Independent Study contract have the potential to earn full credit for their returned work. This program is not offered without a signed Master Agreement for Independent Study in advance of any absences (whenever possible).

There are two documents required for participation in this program, along with the student’s completed work.

Master Agreement: This document outlines the purpose and requirements for credit, following state regulations. It is signed by the parent, student, and teacher before participation can be allowed.

Attendance and Work Engagement Record (AWR): This document is written by the teacher and remains in house, attached to the student’s returned work. Please note that student work on this record is filed on campus and not returned to the student/parent in our regular weekly grade check packets. If a student or parent wishes to see this work, they may review it in our office during normal office hours. Scores are posted by the teacher in our electronic grade book (PowerSchool) during our regular grading cycle.

To utilize Short Term Independent Study, **the office must be notified by 8:30 am on the day of absence or as soon as possible if extended absence is foreseeable.** Call and leave a voice mail indicating that your child will be absent and the reason why. Participation in the Short Term Independent Study program is based on Executive Director/Principal discretion and is only available for up to fifteen (15) cumulative days in a school year.

Student work should be picked up from 1:00pm-3:45pm the same day the school is notified of the child’s participation in short term independent study (teachers will have materials and any pertinent instructions ready in the office). The student may email the teacher if there are any questions pertaining to directions. The teacher will communicate when work is due, but students should be working while they are away from school to keep up on assignments.

Contact Page

Tera Napier, Executive Director

tnapier@mystcs.org
(559) 675-6613

Jamie Brock, Principal, 8th Grade Teacher

Academic Pentathlon, Student Council, Robotics, Geek Squad, Math Team, Drama, Battle of the Books, Special Education, "Incidents," Field Trips, General Concerns
jabrock@stcsca.org
(559) 871-5490

Julie Nichols, 7th Grade Teacher

jnichols@stcsca.org
(559) 660-6423

Angie Reed, 6th Grade Teacher

Intervention, Section 504, English Learners
areed@stcsca.org
(559) 479-1363

Faith Aguilar, Office Manager

Food Services, Yard Duty Supervisor
faguilar@stcsca.org
(559) 598-0228 (attendance, phone calls only)
(559) 598-0357 (text only)

Michele Longoria, Spanish Translator

STCS District Office
mlongoria@mystcs.org
(559) 632-0138

Mailing Address:

Sherman Thomas STEM Academy
101 W. Adell St.
Madera, CA 93638

Physical Address:

Sherman Thomas STEM Academy
51 E. Adell St.
Madera, CA 93638

Website: <https://stcsca.org/sherman-thomas-stem-academy/>

School Calendar

Back to School Night

August 7 (6:00pm – 7:15pm)

First Day of School

August 13

No School

September 1

October 3 (parent/teacher conferences)

October 17

November 10-11

November 24-28

December 20 – January 11

January 19

February 13-16

March 30-31

April 1-6

May 25

Last Day of School

June 2

Graduation – June 2

Ceremony at 6:00pm

Semester 1

Q1 August 13 – October 17

Q2 October 20 – January 16

Semester 2

Q3 January 20 – March 20

Q4 March 23 – June 2

Family Nights (begin at 6:00 pm)

Thursday, October 23

Thursday, January 22

Tuesday, March 24

Tuesday, May 26

STAff Chats (begin at 6:00pm)

Thursday, September 11

Thursday, October 9

Thursday, November 6

Tuesday, December 16 (Camp Focus)

Monday, January 26

Thursday, February 26

Thursday, March 19

Tuesday, April 21

Thursday, May 7

Half Day Schedule Students released at 12:00. All are Fridays unless otherwise noted.

1st Semester

Aug 15	Sept 5	Oct 10	Nov 7	Dec 5	
Aug 22	Sept 12	Oct 15 (Wed)	Nov 14	Dec 12	
Aug 29	Sept 19	Oct 16 (Thurs)	Nov 21	Dec 19	
	Sept 26	Oct 24			
		Oct 31			

2nd Semester

Jan 23	Feb 6	Mar 6	Apr 10	May 1	Jun 2 (Tues)
Jan 30	Feb 20	Mar 13	Apr 17	May 8	
	Feb 27	Mar 20	Apr 24	May 15	
		Mar 27		May 22	
				May 30	

Please note: On some out-of-town field trips, we will not be back by 12:00pm.

STA 2025-26 Calendar

August 2025						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

September 2025						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

October 2025						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

November 2025						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29

December 2025						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
30	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

January 2026						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

February 2026						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

March 2026						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

April 2026						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

May 2026						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

June 2026						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

First day of school	
Last Day of School	
No School - Office Open	
No School - PT Conferences	
No School - Office Closed	
Science Camp	
Half Days	
Half Days end at 12:00	

Semester 1
Semester 2

August 13 - January 16
January 20 - June 2

Back to School Night
Parent Teacher Conferences
Graduation

August 7th @ 6:00pm
October 3rd (all day) - no school for students
June 2 at 6:00pm at 101 W. Adell St.