

# North Heights Elementary receives STEM certification

South Rome Early Learning Center,  
Alto Park Hall of Presidents  
4-5

Cover Story  
2

Shortcuts  
8

Wednesday  
May 10, 2017



Rome News-Tribune



Perfect place  
to express  
yourself!

To advertise call  
**706.290.5220**



# North Heights Elementary receives STEM certification

## From Rome City Schools

North Heights Elementary just became the second school in Rome and Floyd County and the 49th in the state to be named a STEM-certified school.

An evaluation team from the Georgia Department of Education visited North Heights on May 3 and after touring the school and talking with students, parents and community members, told Principal Tonya Wood that the school qualified. The team is made up of DOE officials, business and industry leaders and teachers from other STEM-certified schools across the state.

"We had 10 team members visit the school," explained Wood. "They talked to our kids, asking them questions about what they've done and how it relates to science and math. They speak to our parents and community members about how they feel the STEM concentration has changed the school."

STEM — which stands for science, technology, engineering and math — is defined as an

education that fully integrates the curriculum as opposed to subjects being taught just in isolation.

Students participating in STEM programs are encouraged to be problem solvers and to develop ideas, make discoveries and use project-based learning.

"When you see how our kids work together now, it is easy to tell they've done this for a while," Wood laughed. "They ask each other's opinions and work together to solve problems. They stay on task and they are all engaged."

Wood said the evaluation team was impressed with North Heights' students as many were able to call up projects they'd worked on for several years.

"STEM certification is generally a three-year process," she explained. "Our students have documentation of every project they've worked on and they can explain these concepts they've studied."

Holly Amerman, Rome City's STEM coordinator, said she was thrilled to see another Rome City School receive certification. Elm Street Elementary is the only other

school in the Rome and Floyd County area that is STEM-certified.

"North Heights is now completely STEM-integrated," she said. "The teachers have even found a way to include STEM in literature and social studies instruction. It's a different culture at the school now."

Because STEM programs encourage students to work through problems, Amerman said she has seen a definite shift in students' ways of dealing with difficulties.

"When a project doesn't work, they just move on and learn from it," she said.

The children were excited about their achievement.

"I heard a lot of 'We did it!' and 'I knew we could do it' after we told them the good news," she laughed.

North Heights held a STEM Showcase at the school Friday all day.

"This is STEM Week, appropriately," she said. "Our kids will be demonstrating their work to each other and of course our community members are welcome to come by."

Amerman added that both North Heights and Elm Street were certified on their first try, which is a point of pride for both schools.

"The DOE was hoping to have 300 schools STEM-certified by this year, but they've only been able to certify 49," she said. "It is a hard thing to have certification happen on the school's first attempt."

At the beginning of the 2017-2018 school year, DOE officials will visit North Heights to deliver the school's STEM certification banner and a presentation about the school's journey will be shown.

"We are extremely proud to have North Heights STEM-certified," said Lou Byars, superintendent. "The entire school has worked hard to make this happen and this is a wonderful achievement for not only the students, faculty and staff, but the parents and community as well."

**On the cover:** North Heights Elementary School sixth-graders Ja'Kiyah Strozier and Tallyah Powell work on a computer as part of a STEM project.



Contributed Photos

**Above:** Kindergartner Benjamin Bayha displays one of his STEM projects during an engineering day at North Heights Elementary School.

**Left:** Fifth-grader Lakia Peugh works on the North Heights Elementary School garden.