

# SEM Lab School

## Heightening, Enriching, and Deepening our Students' Learning Journey

For Students Grades Six Through Twelve

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“Once upon a time, America sheltered an Einstein, went to the Moon, and gave the world the laser, electronic computer, nylons, television, and the cure for polio. Today we are in the process . . . of abandoning this leadership role. Every school and classroom in this country has in it young people who are capable of continuing this remarkable tradition. But that tradition will not survive without a . . . resolve to invest in the talent potential of all of our young people. Every school has within it students who possess the highest potential for advanced level learning, creative problem solving, and the motivation to pursue rigorous and rewarding work. It’s time to recognize that we have been wasting far too many minds.

~Dr. Leon Lederman, Nobel Prize winning physicist

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## Overview: The SEM Lab School At Union Local

The SEM Lab School's guide and base is Joseph Renzulli's Schoolwide Enrichment Model. Initially a model for gifted and talented education, Renzulli and his team recognized that enrichment and rigor are necessary for the success of *all* students. They tell us that "a rising tide lifts all ships." Four decades of research point to SEM's effectiveness, and currently 23 school districts and countless individual schools have instituted some form of the SEM Model in the U.S. alone.

At SEM's heart is its focus on learning engagement, enrichment, and enjoyment and is based on students' strengths: what they know, want to know, and do well; what they enjoy; and how to use meaningful, enriching learning as well as individualized, differentiated approaches to help students rigorously and solidly improve their academic performance.

More specifically, the SEM Lab School will be a "one room schoolhouse" of sorts offered to students grades six through twelve. Its three major elements are:

- ❖ Use of a **digital learning platform** plus individual and small group instruction, tutoring, curriculum compacting, and curricular modifications.
- ❖ A set, weekly period of time in which students engage in "**Genius Hours**" enrichment. Students will:
  - Engage in problem-based learning and research
  - Work individually or in small groups
  - Develop, display, and assess "capstone" products and projects
  - Use "Makerspace" philosophy and materials
- ❖ Development of a **Total Talent Portfolio** (electronic and physical) that will include, among other items:
  - Students' Individual Learning Paths
  - Student inventories to include interest inventories and a talent inventory based on Garner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences
  - Student-created problem-solving solutions, products, and projects
  - Documented evidence of students' academic growth

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## **Additional Elements of UL's SEM Lab School**

As set forth by the SEM model as well as additional, well-researched and effective approaches to learning and teaching, the SEM Lab School will also include:

- ❖ Learning through learning centers, based on Grace Pilon's "Workshop Way" philosophy and approach
- ❖ Direct instruction and application of higher-level thinking skills, critical thinking skills, and creative thinking skills
- ❖ Peer tutoring
- ❖ Developing and strengthening skills in
  - Emotional intelligence
  - Executive functioning
  - Autonomy and self-directed learning
  - Responsibility
  - Leadership
  - Teamwork
- ❖ Staff development and teacher training
- ❖ Facilitation of Quality Interactions (QI) among all

. . . and the most important element may be that the SEM Lab School is steeped in the courage that we as a district of forward-thinking educators can shed the trappings of outdated educational practices and embrace child-centered, innovative, and enriching learning for all of our students.

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SEM Lab School Q & A

**1. Who is eligible for the SEM Lab School?**

*Students grades six through twelve are eligible.*

**2. Do students have to be in the Lab School all day long or can they take courses in the traditional school such as electives and College Prep or College Credit Plus?**

*Yes, students may participate in traditional courses in the Middle and High School. Each student's needs are unique, and their program and courses will be tailored to meet those needs.*

**3. How do students enroll in the Lab School?**

*Students and parents may complete an application, found online at [ulschools.com](http://ulschools.com) or in this brochure, and attend a phone, virtual or in-person meeting with Lab School staff.*

**4. Can students return to the traditional school if they find that the Lab School isn't right for them?**

*Yes, students may return to the traditional school but only at the end of each nine week period. Students may also enter the Lab School at the beginning of each nine week period.*

**5. How will students complete their required coursework in all subjects?**

*Students will complete their required coursework through an online learning platform and will also participate in individual and small group tutoring and instructional sessions through the school day and week.*

**6. If students don't want to complete enrichment projects and activities, do they have to?**

*Enrichment is an important element of the SEM Lab School, and all students must participate in these activities.*

**7. How can I get more information about the Lab School?**

*Contact the Middle or High School, and we will gladly set up a phone or in-person meeting with you to talk about the school and answer your questions.*

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**SEM Lab School Student Application**

**Student Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Grade:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Birthdate:** \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

**Parent(s) Name(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent(s) Address(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent(s) Phone Number(s):** \_\_\_\_\_ **(home)** \_\_\_\_\_ **(cell)**

**Parent(s) Email Address(s)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Does your family have home internet access? (Please check one)** \_\_\_ **Yes** \_\_\_ **No**

**Please list your child's strengths:**

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**Please list school concerns you or your child have:**

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**We (parent and student) are willing to sign and adhere to the SEM Lab School Parent/Student Contract. (Please check one)** \_\_\_ **Yes** \_\_\_ **No**

**Parent Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_



## **SEM Lab School: Mission, Vision, Values**

### **Mission**

*SEM Lab School is a unique space within Union Local School District as it continues its quest for 21st century learning excellence. In this space and place, students will have the opportunity to develop their strengths and talents through engaging in: enrichment opportunities, rigorous academic experiences, and thinking and learning at the highest and deepest levels.*

### **Vision**

*All of UL's students are worthy of valuable, lifelong learning. In the SEM Lab School, the community of learners will learn deeply, flourish and thrive in an enriching environment, and develop their innate talents and abilities and therefore positively impact the world around them.*

### **Values**

- ★ UL's students deserve the highest quality of teaching and learning that our school district and talented teachers can provide.
- ★ Students learn and grow in an educational environment that offers a combination of high care and high press. High care is words, actions, and environmental characteristics that tell students that they are cared for and valued deeply by all. High press is words, actions, and environmental characteristics that tell students that they are worthy of and capable of learning and growing at the highest and deepest levels.
- ★ In the right learning environment, students will learn joyfully, eagerly, and intensely.
- ★ Students, families, communities, and society as a whole benefit when students are the recipients of a high-quality education and deeply develop their innate talents and abilities.
- ★ Teachers and all school personnel will grow and prosper in an enriching and rigorous teaching and learning environment.

