



## **Old Mission School raises \$100,000 for new STEM lab**

Students now able to participate in daily, interactive STEM sessions enhancing digital capabilities and problem solving skills

Big changes are happening at Old Mission School (OMS), San Luis Obispo's Catholic grammar and middle school, to continue its focus on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) education. More than \$100,000 has been raised for a state-of-the-art STEM lab that includes project-based, collaborative learning. All grades will have access to the classroom on a day-to-day basis.

STEM learning aims to develop learning opportunities for children using multiple disciplines over the course of a lesson. Rather than teaching subjects independently, STEM learning allows students to engage in all four content areas to address real world problems and solutions. It encourages and teaches independence, problem solving, and creativity.

"While some schools in the county have STEM labs, or have STEM learning sessions a few times a month, we plan to fully embrace this and incorporate it in our daily teaching," says Cynthia Fogarty, Old Mission School Principal. "This initiative will set OMS at the forefront of elementary school education in the county."

Working with Los Angeles based expert, Dr. Anita Kreide, OMS plans to roll out the transition to STEM learning over the course of the next three years. "Gradual transition from a traditional classroom to a STEM classroom takes time to implement correctly. OMS wants to ensure its teachers and students are fully supported in the process" says Kreide. "The goal is to work together as a community and ask "why" STEM and "what" will STEM mean for Old Mission School. There is no one size fits all blue print for a school. The plan depends on the community and "how" they envision their STEM learners' graduate profile upon graduation."

Over the last decade STEM jobs grew 24 percent as opposed to non-STEM related jobs at four percent. A [New American Economy study](#) in 2017 showed that more than 12 jobs were posted for every available STEM worker. The [U.S. Department of Commerce](#) found that STEM related jobs command higher wages (29% higher) and STEM employees enjoy higher earnings.

"What makes this so special is the marrying of technology, project based learning, and high moral standards at Old Mission School" says Fogarty. "Our goal is to prepare these children for the new frontier by giving them the educational and ethical tools that they will need to succeed."