



Kentucky Student
Voice Team

STEAM ACADEMY

BCTC / OFF CAMPUS
SCHOOL CLIMATE AUDIT
STUDENT SNAPSHOT REPORT

MAY 2025



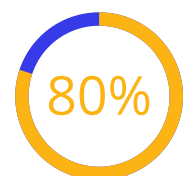
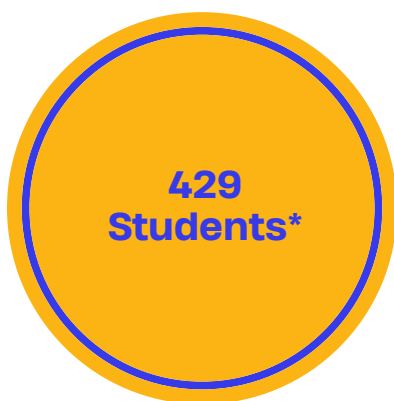
What is a Student Success Audit?

This STEAM Off-Campus Student Success Audit is a mixed-methods study that was conducted by an intergenerational team representing students, families, and teachers STEAM Academy, a public high school in Lexington, Kentucky, working with the Kentucky Student Voice Team during the spring semester of the 2024-2025 school year. It includes data derived from two research tools:

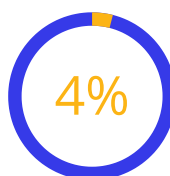
1. Peer-led interviews with 9 students from various backgrounds, 3 parents, and 4 teachers;
2. A student survey targeting students who attend STEAM's programming off campus at Bluegrass Community and Technical College (BCTC), completed by 113 students, or 26% of the student population. (Note that a different survey was completed by 172 STEAM students who attend programming mostly on campus.)

This Snapshot Report is intended to spark community-wide conversations about how STEAM Academy cultivates student success. It is part of a larger effort to elevate the perspectives of those most impacted by school decisions—students themselves—in reimagining school in ways that work better for everyone.

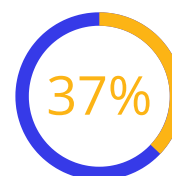
STEAM Academy Student Demographics



Score Proficient in 10th Grade Reading



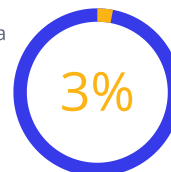
Identified as a Student with a Disability



Economically Disadvantaged



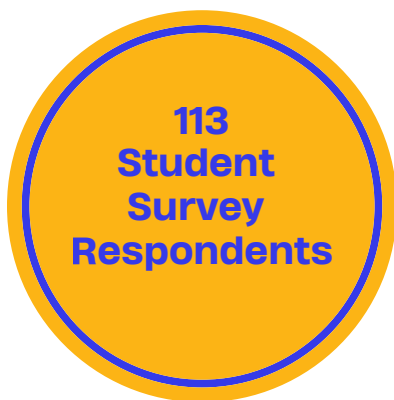
Average ACT Score



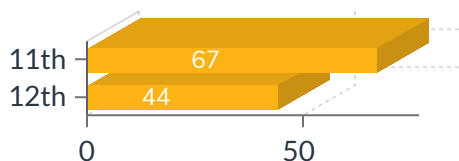
Identify as English Language Learners.

*Data from KDE 2024-25 School Report Card

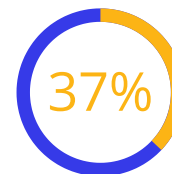
STEAM Off-Campus Survey Respondents



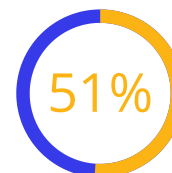
Grade Level



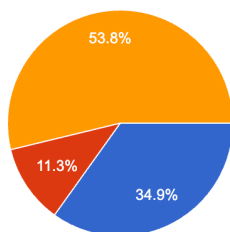
Participant #



Students of Color



Work for Pay



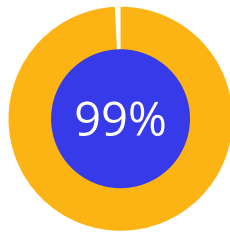
- I am a full time BCTC student.
- I participate in the BCTC and Tech program.
- I participate in the BCTC and Internship program.

Investment & Enjoyment



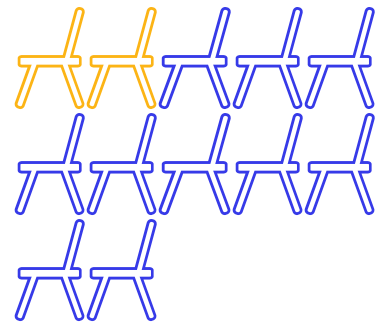
Nearly 7 in 10 of STEAM's BCTC students (68%) say they feel "invested" or "extremely invested" in the BCTC culture and community.

And...



Of STEAM's BCTC students say it is "important" or "extremely important" to them to do well in their classes.

Yet...



Nearly 2 in 10 (18%) of STEAM's BCTC students say that they "rarely" or "never" enjoy going to class.

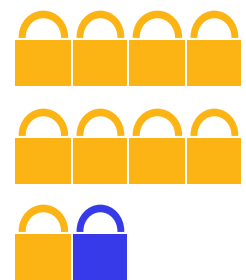
Environment & Safety



More than 9 in 10 STEAM students (96%) say that the physical space is "pleasant" or "extremely pleasant" at BCTC.

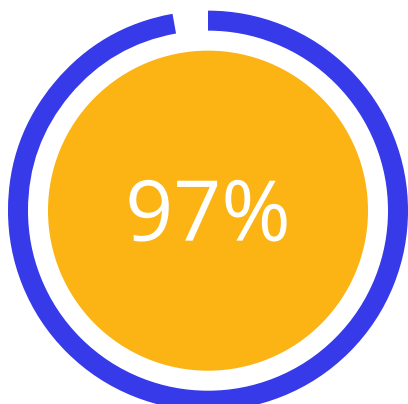
"Very quickly at STEAM, you find people to connect with because they really, really center the school around finding something that you like. If you can find something you like, you can find people in that group that like the same thing that you like."

And...



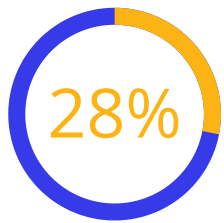
More than 9 in 10 STEAM students (97%) students say they feel physically "safe" or "extremely safe" at BCTC.

And...



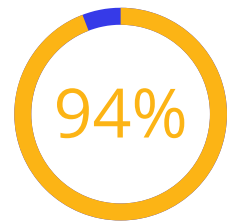
Of STEAM students say they feel "socially safe" or "extremely socially safe" at BCTC.

Student Relationships



Nearly a third of STEAM students say that they "rarely" or "never" feel like they matter to other students at BCTC.

But...

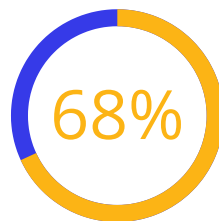


9 in 10 students say that they like interacting with other students at BCTC "sometimes" or "often" each day.

"Everyone except the dual credit students from STEAM are typically so far out of my age range that I find it difficult to speak to them."

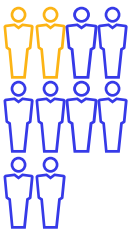
"It is hard to enjoy college courses without your friends in the class. Unless you enjoy the subject so much or the course is a free pass, you will be stressing."

And...



More than two thirds of students say that other students at BCTC "rarely" or "never" contribute to their learning.

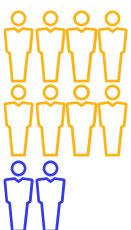
Teacher & Student Relationships



Nearly 2 in 10 (19%) of STEAM's BCTC students say they feel "disconnected" and 1% of students say they feel "extremely disconnected" from STEAM staff members.

"Keep hiring similar people to those already on staff, because there are some great people here."

Yet...



Exactly 8 in 10 of STEAM's BCTC students (80%) say they feel "connected" or "extremely connected" to STEAM staff members.



And...

More than 9 in 10 of STEAM's BCTC students (94%) say they "often" or "always" feel that they matter to STEAM staff members.

Relevance of Learning

17%

Of STEAM's BCTC students say that what they are learning in school feels "irrelevant" and 2% say it feels "extremely irrelevant" to their future.



And...

Nearly 7 in 10 students (67%) say that they "sometimes" or "often" think or talk about ideas from their classes outside of school

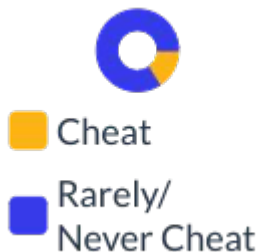
Yet...



More than 8 in 10 BCTC students (81%) say that the STEAM Habits are "relevant" or "extremely relevant" to their life.

"Content learned in classes is very relevant when I am given the option to choose my classes."

Grading



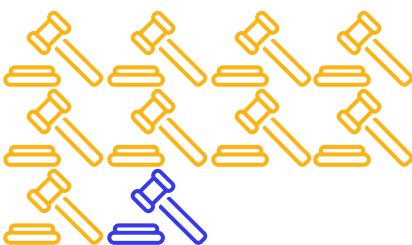
16 % of STEAM's BCTC students say that they "sometimes" or "often" cheat to get a better grade at school.

And...

29%

Of STEAM's BCTC students say they believe that their grades "often" reflect their value as a person.

Yet...



More than 9 in 10 of STEAM's BCTC students (92%) are "convinced" or "extremely convinced" that the way they are graded in their classes is fair and unbiased.

"Doing well to me means feeling satisfied. It means having my grades up and knowing people see I'm doing well. For others, it might be something different—like feeling accepted by friends or supported by teachers."

And...

86%

Of STEAM's BCTC students say that their grades reflect their desire to do well in school "accurately" or "extremely accurately".

Feedback



An overwhelming majority of STEAM students (91%) cite classroom feedback from teachers as helpful to their learning.



Yet..

Close to 3 in 10 STEAM students (28%) say they "rarely" or "never" feel they have a meaningful voice in decisions about how learning is supported at school.

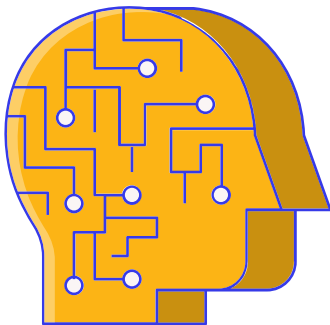
And...

81%

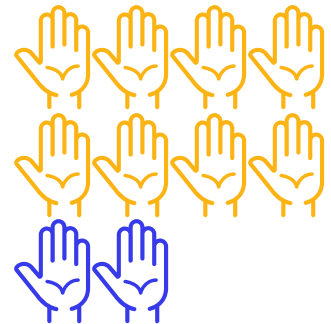
Of STEAM students say they "often" or "sometimes" receive feedback at home for what they do in school.

"I think that the quiet kids tend to be very excluded because we do have a lot of outspoken people here. It can be really hard for people to express their opinions when they don't feel like they're being heard."

Assessments



More than 1 in 10 STEAM students (14%) say that the assessments in their classes do not encourage critical thinking and problem solving skills "well" or "well at all."



But...

STEAM students say that a variety of ways of demonstrating their understanding and skills are meaningful to them.

And...

Nearly 8 in 10 STEAM students (79%) say that they are "satisfied" or "extremely satisfied" with the variety of assessments used in their classes to evaluate their understanding and skills.

Top Assessments



More STEAM BCTC Student Voice



SOCIAL SUPPORT

"Keep on supporting the students no matter what, and always offer a helping hand."

"Everyone except the dual credit students from STEAM are typically so far out of my age range that I find it difficult to speak to them. My interactions with them are usually limited and scope and we do not grow past acquaintances. The school is physically fine, I do not pay very much attention to it."

"Content learned in classes is very relevant when I am given the option to choose my classes."

"Classes can be fun, but it heavily depends on the coursework and subject. Even fun subjects can be made monotonous by repetitive and uninteresting work; though I'd say that's common knowledge."

"[It's helpful] having teachers that know a lot about the school and their programs."

EXPECTATIONS

"STEAM could be more supportive of students who enroll as a full time BCTC student. When I was first introduced to the idea, I was put under the impression that its highly likely I could fail, and it's one of the hardest things I could do, when in fact it feels it was the opposite of that."



Word Cloud featuring things STEAM's off campus students say they are passionate about.

"[Keep] the Friday events and Defense of Learning."

"The weekly dual credit meetings are good support for my success."

"I think [STEAM should] include us in more events with the freshmen and sophomores."

"I'm almost never on campus, so my high school experience really ended during my Junior year."

CLASSROOM CONTENT

"Learning to me is simply a very long and important step in growing into a proper adult, as well as a method to obtain skills that will be useful in the future."

"It is hard to enjoy college courses without your friends in the class. Unless you enjoy the subject so much or the course is a free pass, you will be stressing over work"

"STEAM is doing wonderful with starting to incorporate more art. Continue down this path, and I think it'll continue to be more and more loved."

TEACHERS & STAFF

"Keep hiring similar people to those already in the staff, because there are some great people here."

The guidance counselors are the backbone of going to BCTC as a STEAM student, [and] having those outside of school activities and grade checks are very important.

RECOGNITION

"STEAM Could Improve on giving recognition for students. Sometimes it feels as though people go unnoticed for the work they put in."

More STEAM BCTC Student Voice



RELEVANCE & MOTIVATION

"Setting aside time for students to learn and do things on their own I feel preps you for doing both since professors expect you to do that same thing."	"The information we get about the future, whether it be about college or jobs is helpful."	"[STEAM should] continue to push helping us decide anticipated majors and doing so by interests."
"There's less investment in BCTC classes; however, the classes with more talking and in person assignments are different!"		"[More] college prep could help with actual applying for scholarships and colleges."
"Classes can be fun, but it heavily depends on the coursework and subject. Even fun subjects can be made monotonous by repetitive and uninteresting work; though I'd say that's common knowledge."	"Class engagement typically depends on the professor."	"STEAM does well with their different pathways."
"I wish I was asked about the way we perform the Defense of Learning's, I enjoyed the recent Defense with one on one Job Interviews I believe activities like this are more useful for the students."	"The classes at BCTC that I'm taking just don't line up with my career path. I know that a few will transfer as core classes but in terms of my major my science classes and math classes are the only ones really relevant for my future. This is also why I don't often think about my classes outside of school because the topics are just not what I'm interested in doing."	
"I think STEAM doesn't really [give] consequences to those who misbehave or just choose to put minimal effort into things like our presentations of learning, so it starts to feel pointless when other students aren't putting in any effort and still pass without consequence."	"I really only enjoy a class when a class is fun for me, which unfortunately is not always the case."	

ASSESSMENTS

STUDENT AGENCY

Asking what students feel about how they are doing could reveal problems that may need fixing.	"[I prefer] projects over standardized tests."	"There's less investment in BCTC classes; however, the classes with more talking and in person assignments are different!"
"Make the everyday 10 minute advisory period meaningful. I know for a fact that the vast majority of students just use that time to look at their phones."	Learning to me is simply a very long and important step in growing into a proper adult, as well as a method to obtain skills that will be useful in the future. I do not particularly enjoy most of what I learn and how it is measured does not matter as I personally monitor what truly sticks with me depending on if I think it will be useful to me in the future.	
"[It helps to] facilitate an active and engaging learning environment."		

So, what now?

Questions to Consider:

- Does anything in this report particularly surprise you?
- Do you feel the way a majority of others in this report do about your experiences in school? Why do you think that is?
- What about people who hold perspectives or opinions that are in the minority? Is it important to amplify their voices the way we have in this report, or would you have presented them differently?
- What obligation, if any, do students who feel seen and successful in school have to create a better environment for those who do not?
- Is it important to you that students themselves have a say in how their school supports student success? Why or why not?
- This report includes a number of specific suggestions to ensure more students at STEAM can feel successful. Are there any you have read or any others you can think of that you think are especially worthy and actionable? What would it take to implement one or more of the solutions?
- What else would you like to know about the way STEAM supports student success beyond this snapshot report?



Survey Feedback



I am really glad you all did this survey! It looks absolutely amazing, and it looks more intriguing than many of the other Google Forms I've done before. I also like that you made all of the questions optional! Some people aren't comfortable answering some of the questions and I'm glad you acknowledged that! I really love what you all are doing!

I like this survey. It's not overwhelming me with questions, and they are easy to understand. I do not have anything to critique as I think you all did incredibly well. Good job!



The questions made sense, and I knew what I was answering when I read [them].

[The survey] was kind of long, and some questions were confusing or worded in a weird way.

I think the only thing you all could improve upon is allowing there to be an answer for people who are unsure of or kind of in the middle. This is a super easy fix, but I think adding this option allows students to have a middle ground option rather than just having two different sides to pick from.

Honestly, [it] just feels like a waste of time. Even if you all read it, nothing changes.

Listen to students better. Actually implement changes the students suggest, and work on changes based on the student answers from this survey.

The bigger words were not necessary.

I think you guys did really good. Please do it again.

This survey is great for this school, and I feel it will improve it.

Researcher Reflections



"The only thing that was really surprising was how many people actually told the genuine truth because I thought that a lot of people were going to do what they do on most surveys--and just lie to get it over with. But there was definitely a lot of truth and a lot of real feelings in there about STEAM, and I think that makes [our report] a lot more authentic."

~**Alivia Rhodes, STEAM Student**

"I like how we include the negative parts a lot. It lets the students know that our data is real. We're not just showing them what they want to see. I feel like that would help [readers] take it in a lot better instead of just thinking about 'What are they not telling us?' Because we're telling them everything."

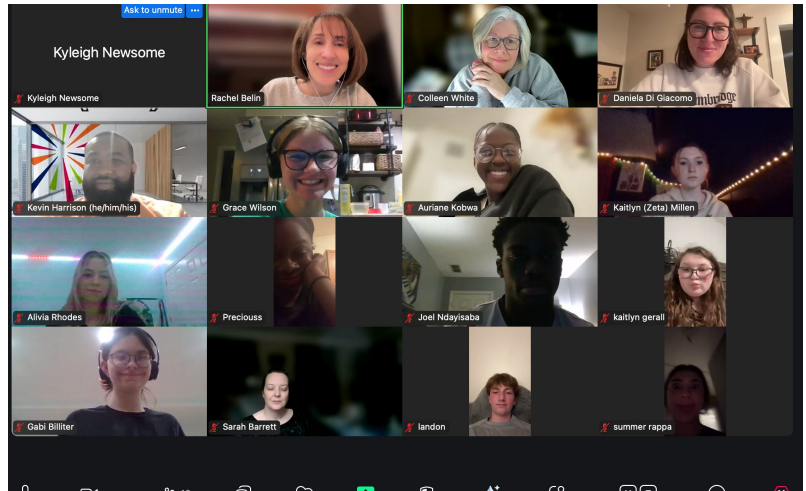
~**Joel Ndayisaba, STEAM Student**

"I am so grateful for the opportunity to work with KSVT. Through my experience, I have been able to express my opinions and ideas with my peers and work with new and familiar people. I have made friends and connections through this and learned more about STEAM Academy and how other kids my age feel about STEAM Academy. Knowing this information about how students feel, STEAM now knows what they're doing well and what they could consider changing or fixing."

~**Kyleigh Newsome, STEAM Student**

"I think the data was really good. I think it really represents what we are. It's not very surprising to me at all. You have the few outliers, but as far as how I perceive STEAM, it seems pretty accurate. I see STEAM as probably one of the best schools in Fayette County and in Central Kentucky. [I know this from] just being in another school district before. You know it's perfect for me. It's small and very community like. And I think we all have a very close connection to each other. So that's how I perceive it. And I think that's what this data reflects."

~**Addyson Smith, STEAM Student**



"I am so glad I was given the chance to be part of this amazing team. It gave me the opportunity to learn more about the community we have in my school as well as find ways to improve the connection between the students and their learning. I have high hopes for the outcome of this project and can't wait to see the changes we will implement."

~**Kaitlyn Millen, STEAM Student**

"The guy I interviewed, we have a lot of mutual friends, but we don't really talk to each other because he's always goofing off and trying to make everyone laugh. And so I kind of wanted to see, I wanted to ask him these questions. And what he said was very surprising. I've never seen him be serious before, but I could tell that he cares a lot about his academics, which I didn't really exactly get that vibe from him at first. And then I did another interview with someone who is also kind of just goofing around all the time, but she also takes her academics very seriously. I found that really interesting because they both kind of said the same thing, that they really enjoy how STEAM works and they feel much more successful at STEAM than they did in middle school."

~**Gabi Billiter, STEAM Student**

More Researcher Reflections



"A couple of things stuck out to me. This isn't my only school district that I've taught in. These kids are so lucky to be in an environment where they have supportive teachers. And that's the main thing that I got out of this, that the teachers are supportive, that the kids have choices in how they are showing their learning. I think it is an incredible statement to the kind of support that we're giving to those kiddos that are going over to BCTC and offering that scaffolding of support for that transition because it is a big jump."

~Colleen White, STEAM Teacher

"While I was taking the survey, you just hear people shout what they think. So I'm like, 'Hold on, wait, I'm done with the survey. Let me go in my notes and put what people were saying.' The class I was in, they were very talkative. They said what was on their mind. So when they were asking questions, I explained to them, to try to make them understand."

~Precious Bello, STEAM Student



PICTURED: STEAM Student Success Research Team: Kaitlyn Gerall, Joel Ndayisaba, Alivia Rhodes, Gabi Billiter, Kaitlyn Millen, Addyson Smith, Precious Bello, Landon Moore, Kyleigh Newsome, Asten Martinez Diaz, Grace Wilson, Summer Rappa teacher partner, Colleen White, parent partner Sarah Barrett, and administrative partner, Principal Christopher Flores.

"Being part of the STEAM Dream Team was truly an amazing experience. I had such a good time working with my team, learning new things, and being creative in ways I hadn't imagined before. Whether we were building, designing, or just brainstorming ideas, it always felt exciting and fun. Everyone brought something special to the table, and it made me feel like I was part of something bigger. Looking back, I think everything went well. We supported each other, stayed positive, and got the job done. There were challenges, of course, but we faced them together—and that made all the difference. I'm proud of what we accomplished and grateful for the memories we made."

~Kaitlyn Gerall, STEAM Student

"I really appreciated the opportunity to make change here at STEAM through the Kentucky Student Voice Team. I loved working as a team and being involved. It has been so much fun, and I really hope that change is made for the better here at STEAM for everyone."

~Landon Moore, STEAM Student

"I think that there are a lot of different students who have a lot of different experiences when it comes to STEAM. I think that is something that needs to be touched on: the fact that there was a lot of positivity, but there were also some who said, 'I have problems with the atmosphere' or 'I have problems with some encounters that I've had with people or situations at the school.' If you read some of the open responses, there were some people who said, 'I have not had a great experience so far,' 'I've been struggling.' And I think that is something that you can't ignore."

~Grace Wilson, STEAM Student

The amount of positivity I think was really important to me, just the overwhelming feeling that everybody seems to feel like they fit in a way. They feel comfortable at school. I think it reinforces a lot of what I think and say to my kids and what I'm telling other parents as well when I'm speaking about school is how great the kids feel at [this] place.

~Sarah Barrett, STEAM Parent



Kentucky Student Voice Team

The Kentucky Student Voice Team is an independent youth-led, intergenerationally-sustained organization that supports students to co-create more just, democratic schools and communities. For more information, visit our website at ksvt.org.



The Kentucky Student Voice Team (KSVT) unites young people from across the state as partners in research, policy, and storytelling to build more just and democratic schools and communities. Since its inception in 2012, the team has engaged thousands of Kentuckians in efforts to elevate student perspectives in education decision making at the school, district, and state levels.

Learn More at
ksvt.org/research