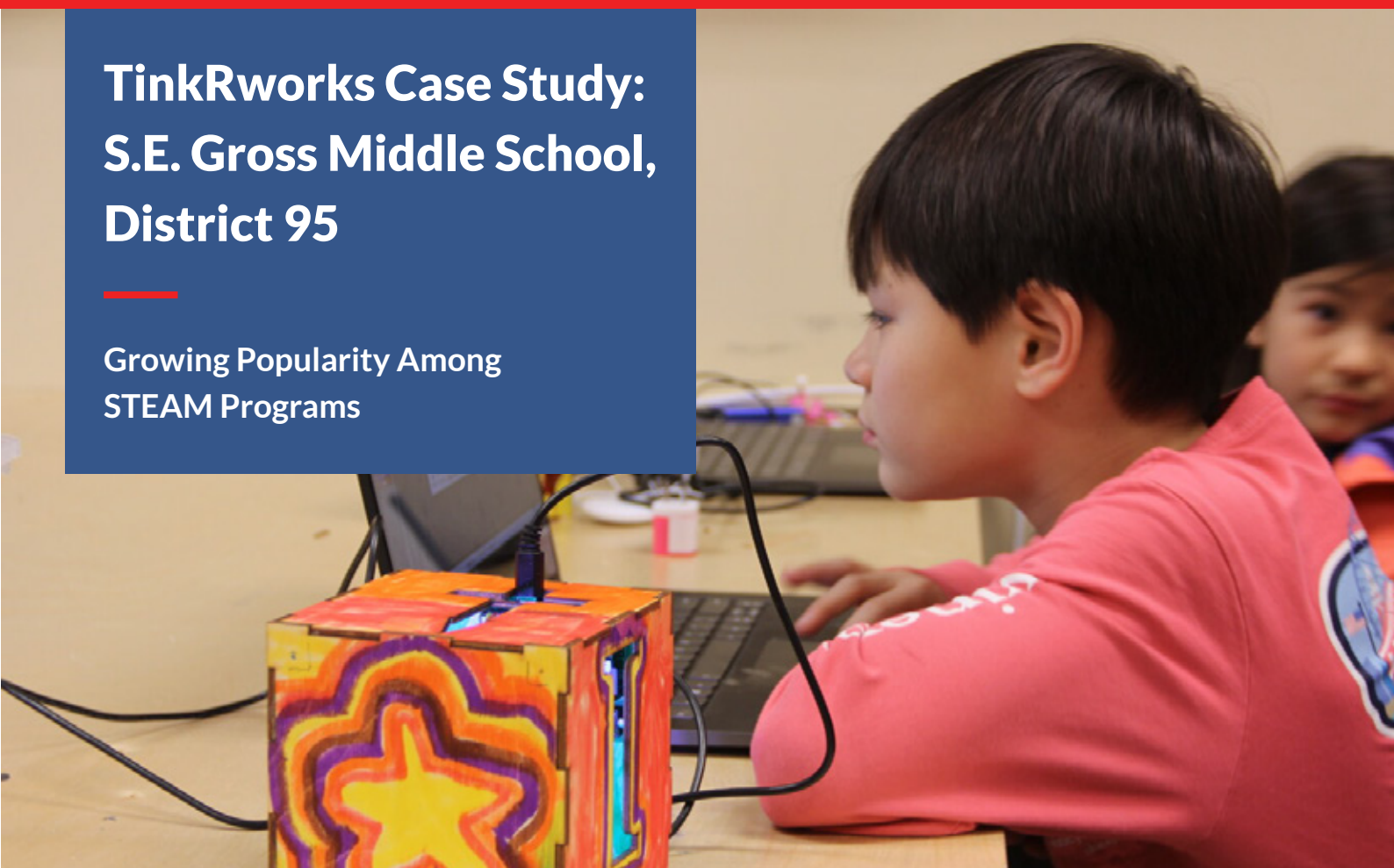# TinkRworks Case Study: S.E. Gross Middle School, District 95

Growing Popularity Among STEAM Programs

Background:

S.E. Gross Middle School is part of District 95, located in Brookfield, IL. It currently has over 400 students from sixth to eighth grade. S.E. Gross initially approached TinkRworks seeking a partner to design and create their STEM lab (makerspace) and an integrated STEAM curriculum to go along with it.

Challenge:

> Brookfield LaGrange Park School District 95 decided to expand facilities to support growing enrollment and 21st-century education.

A state-of-the-art STEM lab was a part of the vision of a 15,000 sq. ft. renovation plan to incorporate STEAM programs at S.E. Gross to ensure the school and its students were well positioned for the future.

Ryan Evans, principal of S.E. Gross Middle School, was looking for a perfect STEAM partner and was in the process of meeting several STEAM providers, when he heard about TinkRworks during an interview process with a candidate.
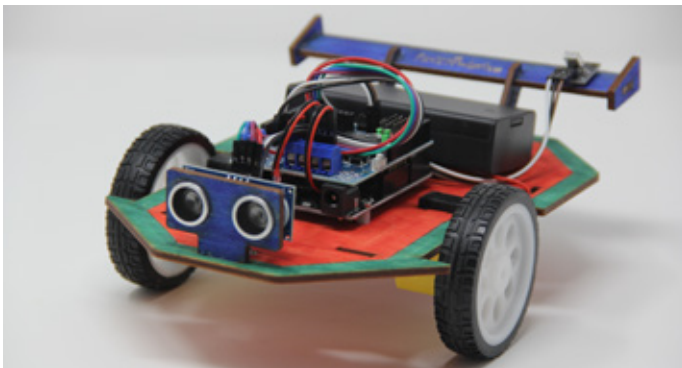
"We wanted to make sure our school was engaging in technology. We also wanted to make sure the program was not about grades but about producing something," said Evans.

Solution:

"When it came down to who's allowing students to create, we went with TinkRworks." Evans said.

He emphasized that TinkRworks added value by creating a customized STEAM curriculum, recommending and maintaining toolsets, and training their facilitators on using and integrating toolsets effectively in their curriculum.

"TinkRworks can keep up with basic needs, as opposed to other companies, which just wouldn't be able to do it," he emphasized.

He gave the example of STEM labs at other schools, which had broken 3D printers and machines laying around for months because they couldn't get someone there to fix them on time.

"If we need help with something, it's not going to take forever. It will get taken care of swiftly, whether that be fixing a 3D printer or taking care of the curriculum side of things," said Evans.

Evans said that TinkRworks programing has exceeded his expectations to the point where S.E. Gross is looking to increase STEAM projects and staff members to teach these courses.

Collaboration between TinkRworks and S.E. Gross:

TinkRworks and S.E. Gross have had a three-year relationship, with the STEM lab opening in the fall of 2019. Students were able to complete a full semester in the lab as a chosen elective.

Once the elective enrollment opened it was the most requested elective with about 180 students out of about 400 choosing it as an elective course. Students participated in two specific TinkRworks signature projects: Art Electric and TinkRbot.

Response from parents and the community on student achievements:

The response from the parents and the community has been fantastic. Parents want the program expanded so that every student can participate in it.

Evans recalled a story of an encounter with a father of a current student. "In conversation with one of our student's parents, he was telling me why he was so eager to have school start up again. And, given the dangers associated with COVID-19, I asked him why he was so eager. The first reason he gave me was that his daughter was taking the elective course in STEM Lab, and she was doing so well that she just had to get back to it!"

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transforming learners to innovators

Future:

Evans described the relationship between TinkRworks and S.E. Gross Middle School as "multifaceted," one that incorporates integrated curriculum, staffing, STEM Lab, and the support services.

Looking towards the future, Evans said that the growing relationship with TinkRworks would be a collaboration, in which TinkRworks STEAM-X courses would be fully incorporated into the curriculum.

Furthermore, the mandated stay-at-home measures due to the COVID-19 pandemic have taken learning into the virtual classroom. Evans continues to remain in good spirits during these uncertain times.

"There is a path forward. We have a solution to create meaningful opportunities at home." If schools don't re-open in the coming year, S.E. Gross plans to partner with TinkRworks to ship STEAM-X kits and TinkRworks programming materials to students, so that they can complete the projects through a virtual learning environment.

Ryan emphasized, "We are looking forward to redefining what education looks like by bringing STEAM into the classroom. He continued, "We are preparing students for what the future will be. And, with TinkRworks we are engaging in increasingly meaningful learning."