

Indian Prairie School District 204 Sees Promising Results with SAM Labs STEAM Solutions

In a move that's sparking creativity and collaboration across classrooms, [Indian Prairie School District 204](#)'s recent integration of [SAM Labs STEAM solutions](#) is receiving accolades from **students, parents, teachers, and board members alike**. This innovative approach to education combines science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics, fostering an environment where learning is both fun and impactful.

In an educational landscape craving innovation and tangible results, Indian Prairie School District 204 stands out, thanks in no small part to the visionary leadership of Superintendent Dr. Adrian Talley. Under his guidance, the district has embraced SAM Labs STEAM solutions, pioneering an approach to learning that is as engaging as it is educational. Dr. Talley's commitment to advancing STEAM education has not only transformed classrooms but has also captured the attention of thought leaders and media alike, including a feature in the [Chicago Tribune](#) celebrating the district's successes.

The Student, Parent, and Teacher Perspective

At the heart of this transformation is the district's commitment to hands-on, student-centered learning. "I liked SAM Labs because I got to choose how to make my system. I liked working with partners and helping other people to make their systems better," shared one enthusiastic student at a recent board meeting, highlighting the program's focus on creativity and teamwork. The student's parent even pointed out he wanted to participate in STEM camp after utilizing SAM Labs which wasn't something he previously had interest in.

The classroom dynamic is evolving, according to Dee Batchelder, a leading educator in the district. "This can change a classroom," she observed. "We hold so much power in our hands and when we are making decisions based on what is best for students, this experience has given them real-world experience that is so very powerful. It also connects with computational thinking."

Ms. Batchelder further emphasized the program's inclusivity and ability to cater to diverse learning needs. From simple interactions like pressing a button to turning on a light, to delving deep into the mechanics of the systems, SAM Labs meets students where they are, enriching their learning experiences.



IPSD 204 students programming their SAM Labs hardware.

The enthusiasm is not limited to the students. Teachers are finding joy and renewed passion in their instructional practices. The program's personalized, open-ended nature invites educators to explore a multitude of teaching strategies. "They are engaged. They are deeply engaged, and it is so fun to participate in learning," Ms. Batchelder added.

The District STEM Team's Perspective

At the center of the SAM Labs initiative within Indian Prairie School District 204 stands the district's STEAM team, affectionately known as the SAM Sisters. Under the leadership of Laura Nylen, Liz Kaleta, and Latia Johnson, this dynamic trio has been pivotal in weaving the fabric of innovation across the district's 21 elementary sites. Their philosophy is simple yet profound: "What's helped us the most is we try to meet teachers where they are at. "What is it that we can do to help you with this?" As we were considering building capacity with our teachers. Community, collaboration, and communication are most important."

Understanding the diverse needs and starting points of educators, Kaleta and Johnson initiated a [SAM Labs themed podcast](#) and [IPSD 204 SAM Labs website](#). These practices serve as a bridge, connecting teachers to a wealth of ideas, experiences, and strategies for integrating SAM Labs into their classrooms. It's a testament to the team's dedication not just to technological implementation, but to **fostering a supportive community where educators feel equipped and inspired**.

The School Board's Perspective

School board members, witnessing the transformation firsthand, are captivated by the levels of engagement and problem-solving skills on display. Supna Jain, a board member, reflected on a classroom visit, saying, "What was so interesting was to see how everyone was engaged. The different levels of trial and error. And how the students were reacting to that. I saw the wheels turning for the students on "what do I need to do next?"

Susan Demming, another board member, highlighted the program's broader implications for future success. "So many times you hear businesses say students are coming out of college and they don't have the soft skills needed to thrive in the business arena. It's just so important to have the thought process and understand how to work together so well."

The Superintendent's Perspective

Dr. Adrian Talley is optimistic about the future, praising the energy and excitement around the SAM Labs program. "It's a great collaboration and a great partnership," he said, hinting at more innovative endeavors on the horizon.

As [Indian Prairie School District 204](#) continues to explore and expand its SAM Labs STEAM solutions, the community watches eagerly, anticipating further success stories of engaged learners, empowered educators, and enriched educational experiences.

Want to try SAM Labs in your classroom or district? [Schedule a free trial](#) to get started.