

Principal Media Contact: DT Townsend  
Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, LLC  
803.952.7566  
[dt-lawrence.townsend@srs.gov](mailto:dt-lawrence.townsend@srs.gov)

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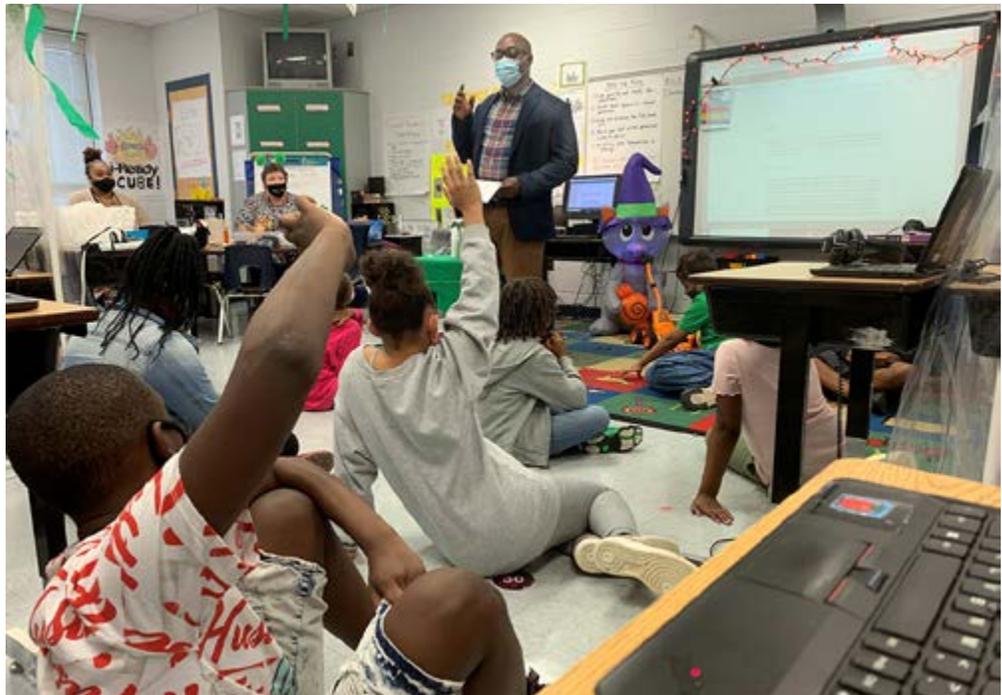
## Students, SRS Experts Engage in ‘STEMulating’ Conversations

AIKEN, S.C., November 19, 2020 – Students are becoming pen pals with Savannah River Site (SRS) employees whose degrees and careers involve science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) in a new program called “STEMulating Conversations with SRS Experts.”

To date, 74 teachers and academic officials from local schools have enrolled in the pilot program in which K-12 grade students send letters via email to the SRS experts to learn about a range of STEM careers.

Managed by Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS), STEMulating Conversations offers students the opportunity to develop career aspirations and interests in STEM by communicating with scientists, engineers, IT, and other STEM professionals from SRS. Through this program, they can ask SRS experts questions about STEM and their careers.

Students in the STEM Lab at Diamond Lakes Elementary in Hephzibah, Georgia have been exchanging information with chemical engineer Joel Maul and electrical engineer Pamela Finklin at SRS. Their different engineering focuses give students a variety of perspectives on careers.



*Savannah River Operations Office Engineer Joel Maul talks with students at Diamond Lakes Elementary School in Hephzibah, Ga., during a special visit after several weeks of correspondence with the students.*

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“There’s little doubt that the ongoing correspondence is already creating a mentoring relationship between the students at Diamond Lakes and our SRS engineers,” said STEMulating Conversations Program Coordinator Taylor Rice, who works with the SRNS education outreach division. “It’s been exciting for me to read the letters as well and see the enthusiasm they are generating. Each message from Pamela and Joel benefits 160 students from Diamond Lakes and exposes them to two different engineering fields.”

Diamond Lakes Principal Lashantel Pinckney expressed her appreciation for the partnership between SRS engineers and the Richmond County School System.

“Our district is truly appreciative of the efforts made by SRNS Education Outreach to think outside the box during the pandemic and to remain engaged in the business of educating and preparing students for their future,” Pinckney said.

Rice uses a database of more than 90 SRS volunteers to determine the best match for questions that come in from students.

“This program is already proving to be a great way for students to begin thinking about what engineers, scientists, or other STEM professionals do within their chosen profession,” Rice said. “One of our beliefs is that you can’t wait until college to reach students with this type of information. You have to reach them early, at the elementary grade level and then continue the dialogue as they advance into middle and high school.”

STEMulating Conversations with SRS Experts will soon move from a pilot program to an annual one offered by SRNS.

“Students need this kind of connection and the acknowledgement that people care about them and their career goals,” Rice said. “We have so much talent and knowledge in different areas to share throughout the Savannah River Site.”

*Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, a Fluor-led company with Newport News Nuclear and Honeywell, is responsible for the management and operations of the Department of Energy’s Savannah River Site, including the Savannah River National Laboratory, located near Aiken, South Carolina.*

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