

## **S.T.E.E.L. Academy**

STEEL Academy is the school of Sustainability, Technology, Ecology, Entrepreneurship and Language. Our mission is to build a strong foundation for students to become change agents. We want to advance the right of every person to live in a socially, economically and environmentally healthy community. STEEL Academy will transform Durham Central Park into a unique interactive learning hub and an inviting recreational community space. The school is 100% sustainable, it has a Multi-purpose educational center, it incorporates Urban Farming, Mobile Farmer's Markets and Healthy Cafes.

### **Our Community:**

We live in Durham, North Carolina. We love the Bull City and we know that our city has a lot to offer! We are close to many prestigious universities like Duke, UNC Chapel Hill and NC State. We are also in the heart of Research Triangle Park, which is the largest research park in the country with over 250 businesses.

Although we are from an amazing city, we attend a "failing" school. Our school received an "F" because of our low test scores. We know that we are not F students, and we also know that not everyone in Durham has the same opportunities. We did our research and talked to community members to come up with some solutions to help our community.

### **Our Research:**

We talked to community members and did some interviews and learned that our community needs access to healthy fresh food, access to better jobs and access to community space. Along with doing interviews, we also took lots of fieldtrips to universities and companies in Research Triangle Park. After doing research, we participated in community programs that taught us about urban gardens. We attended the Seeds program weekly and took a trip to Bayer Crop where we learned more about hydroponics and bees. We also started a garden at our school and worked on a local farm on Saturdays.

### **Our Solutions:**

After doing our research our solution to the problems in our community were:

1. Focus on Ecology: Students will learn about ecology, teach the community about ecology, and create innovative ways to farm and give our community access to healthy fresh food. We will have mobile farmers markets, food trucks and urban gardens that will go into communities. STEEL Academy will also have a partnership with the Durham Farmers Market.
2. Focus on Entrepreneurship: Students will learn about entrepreneurship through running small businesses at the farmers market and with mobile gardens and food trucks.
3. Create a public community space: STEEL Academy will create a space where community members can come together for recreation and learning. There will be a community garden, classes, outdoor community events, and space for community recreation and relaxation.

**Location:**

We would like our school to be located at Durham Central Park where our weekly Farmer's Markets take place. We want to redesign the farmers market area to include an updated pavilion and learning pods. Check out our video to learn more about the location we chose for our school.

**Our Design:**

We designed our school to be a modern space that incorporates nature. Our building is made from a strong steel structure with shipping containers used as our learning pods. All of our classrooms incorporate plants or water into the design and have a modern rustic feel. We have a waterfall that comes down along our building. The waterfall can be seen from outside and inside our learning pods.

**Sustainability:**

Our school is 100% sustainable and energy efficient with the use of shipping containers, hydro power, solar panels, rain harvesting, roof top gardens and turbines. We also grow our own food and use bees to pollinate our crops. We use bikes and electric vans for transportation and our mobile gardens and food trucks are solar powered. We want to be on the cutting edge of green technology and want to help our community become sustainable. We want to try innovative techniques with our community like creative ways to recycle and burning trash for energy.