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Colorado's First NextGen Agriculture High School Tops Out



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The 10-acre site will feature multiple pre-engineered buildings, that look and feel like barns.

The first building on the [STEAD School L.C. Fulenwider Campus](#), officially topped out on Thursday, April 29. The school, located in the Reunion neighborhood of Commerce City, offers a new Science, Technology, Environment, Agriculture and Design learning environment that uses a blended education model to inspire the next generation of entrepreneurially driven problem solvers. The public charter high school, which is a part of the School District 27J, broke ground in January 2021 and is expected to be complete just in time for the inaugural freshman class in fall 2021.

The STEAD School Board of Directors, including Co-Founders Kelly Leid, [Oakwood Homes](#) community operations and Amy Schwartz, [BuildStrong Education](#) executive director, Cal Fulenwider, representatives from [DLR Group](#) and [Saunders Construction](#), along with some STEAD students and founding family members, were on site to celebrate the topping out. The land was donated by the Fulenwider family, for whom the high school campus is named after. Once completed this fall, STEAD will provide education for 175 new freshmen, with a total capacity of 700 for all high school grades at full buildout.

“The STEAD School sits at a nexus of rural, suburban and urban space. That means we can bring students together from all these geographic environments to collaborate and learn from their surroundings and each other,” said Kelly Leid, executive vice president at Oakwood Homes and STEAD School co-founder. “This exploration-type learning will result in problem-solving and innovations that drive solutions on how to keep our planet sustainable.”

As the first building on the nearly 10-acre site, which will be built out in phases, will feature an open space learning environment across multiple pre-engineered buildings, that look and feel like barns, along with auxiliary specialty workshops and labs in support of “learning made real” experiences — representing nearly 3,000 possible career options for exploration.

“Climate change, water stewardship, conservation, responsible agriculture and technology are critical as we move forward,” said Cal Fulenwider, chairman/CEO, L.C. Fulenwider Inc., whose family donated the land for STEAD. “That’s what this school is all about. This school is a prototype — we have goals to expand this nationally, because we think that’s the responsibility that this generation has to future generations.”

[Photos courtesy of STEAD School](#)