



DF95 Radio-Controlled Model Sailboat STEM Program



Last year, this “project-based”, STEM program introduced 50-8th graders, in five Charleston middle schools, to the life sport of sailing. Private, public, Montessori, and Title-1 schools were included to represent the demographic diversity and type of schools involved during national expansion. Students meet once per week in a classroom to build their own boats then subsequently learn to race them after school and on Saturdays with the Charleston Model Yacht Club... engaging with and learning from adults vs. a school-only program.



The idea for such a curriculum had its origins in school “shop” programs and then with elderly, senior sailors on a 150'x250' pond on the Bishop Gadsden CCRC campus. during the 2020 Pandemic... proving that age, gender, weight, or being in a wheelchair didn't matter... nor did a large expanse of deep-water. Every town in America must have a small pond!

With a lucky wind shift, a 14-year-old can beat an Olympic Gold Medalist in a race. It's not a toy... US Sailing's 2023 *Championship of Champions* was sailed in DF95. It's the world's fastest-growing sailboat class of any size, with 15,000+ in the US and now 100+ in Charleston.

The Project-Based STEM Curriculum is aligned with SC Educational Standards and goes beyond US Sailing's REACH program as students build their own boats, while learning the Science and Math of Sailing, Weather Forecasting, Aerodynamics, Electronic Controls, Water Quality, Tidal Currents, Compass Navigation, and Measurements... plus they are instilled with soft skills of patience, determination, decision-making, teamwork, leadership and sportsmanship. Each school forms its own Sailing Club to elect officers who arrange regattas and assist teachers in the following semester ... acquiring mastery and self-confidence.



Logistics Projected for the 2025-6 school year, LMS will provide teacher training/back-up, DF95 boat kits & supplies in return for a \$250/semester fee. Seasonal fees for other sports can run \$150-\$200/season. For a 3-sport athlete that's \$1000+ for several yeas in middle-school vs. \$500 in 2 semesters and getting a boat worth \$600 for a lifetime sport \$600 is a bargain.



Pilot Year Funding LMS (501c3) has received \$77,500 from 8 generous donors, needing only a few more at the \$5-\$10,000 level to reach the first year's budget of \$110,000. As with the successful LMS skiff-building program, schools will be asked to join donors by contributing to LMS regional administrative expense and teacher training/backup.

Going National A rollout with USSailing sdvacy has begun. Other 501c3s, that can manage 5+ Schools, were invited at USSailing's Leadership Forum in Coronado CA, (Feb 5-8) by program founders, Bob Johnstone (US Youth Champs & J Boats) and Sam Gervais of LMS.

With the potential to reach any town in America having a 150'x220' pond, doubling the sport of sailboat racing... and improving USA performance at the Olympic/World level: This program should have great appeal to major corporate and foundation sponsors.

