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UC a Partner in New Vision for Taft Elementary and STEM High School

The partnership with the University of Cincinnati aims to build excellence in the science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) disciplines at an early age, increasing student chances of earning a college degree and moving into high-demand, high-success careers.

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A Cincinnati strategy for building student interest, talent and excellence in the STEM subjects gained momentum this week as the University of Cincinnati took part in an announcement to redesign Taft Elementary School, as well as transform Hughes Center into a STEM high school. UC, Cincinnati Public Schools and the Strive regional partnership are seeking state funding to support both efforts.

Lawrence J. Johnson, dean of the College of Education, Criminal Justice, and Human Services (CECH), as well as UC Professor Annette Hemmings (CECH) and Pamela Williamson, assistant professor of teacher education (CECH), joined the announcement that called for Taft Elementary to be redesigned into a specialty STEM school by next fall, along with the establishment of a new STEM high school.

Johnson says the partners are seeking more than \$880,000 in state and in-kind donations to support the transformation of Taft Elementary into a STEM magnet program. The partners have applied for \$750,000 of that funding from the Ohio Partnership for Continued Learning. Chaired by Ohio Governor Ted Strickland, the Ohio Partnership for Continued Learning is a statewide coalition of leaders across government, education, business and communities that works to improve education across Ohio, from preschool through college.

The grant proposal calls for state-of-the-art science and technology labs, professional development for teachers and field trips to business and community "learning labs," as well as business and community mentors for teachers, as they work together to address the educational background needed for today's challenges in the global workplace.

Planning is also underway to phase in Hughes Center as a STEM high school, with the development starting next fall. The Strive partnership has submitted a grant proposal to the Ohio Partnership for Continued Learning totaling nearly two million dollars in state funding over two years, with goals to provide more than \$900,000 in additional in-kind/fiscal support over that two-year period. Strive is a partnership of education, business, non-profit, civic and philanthropic organizations that is working to ensure that every child in the Cincinnati USA region is prepared for college, successful careers and productive citizenship. UC President Nancy L. Zimpher is a co-founder of Strive and serves as co-chair of its executive committee.

The STEM high school proposal calls for the creation of the new high school to include seamless pathways that connect the new school to university and other post-secondary educational and career opportunities such as dual enrollment/college-credit programs, co-op opportunities, job shadowing, internships and pre-university admissions advising. The curriculum would be modeled around other successful STEM schools nationally and developed by partners that include Cincinnati Public Schools, the Cincinnati Federation of Teachers, UC, Cincinnati State, the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden, the Cincinnati Museum Center and other area business and community partners.

During the first year of planning for the new high school, the proposal calls for designing a solid STEM-based program for ninth graders as well as recruiting lead teachers. The newly designed ninth-grade curriculum would be implemented during the second year of the grant proposal, with plans for grades 10, 11 and 12 phased in during the following years.



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