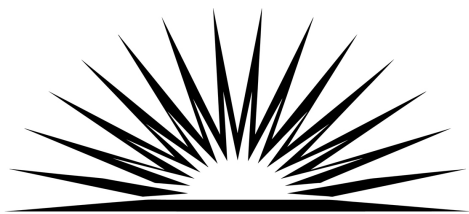


NEWS RELEASE



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DAVIE STEM PROJECT KICKS OFF SEPT. 28

Community Invited to Join in Designing Education for the Future

The Davie community has a unique opportunity to plan the educational program for our students for the future.

Davie County is one of three communities in North Carolina selected to develop STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) programs in public schools. Davie was chosen by the NC STEM Community Collaborative, a partnership between the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and MCNC, an independent, non-profit organization that improves learning and collaboration in education.

The community is invited to attend the kickoff of the Davie STEM project at 6 p.m. Monday, September 28 at Cornerstone Christian Church on Hwy 801 North. The Cornerstone Church men's group will provide supper beginning at 5:15 p.m. and a laptop computer will be given away.

"It is a true honor for Davie County to have been chosen as one of the first three communities in North Carolina to participate in this important initiative," said Beth Dirks, county manager.

"The kickoff is an opportunity for residents of Davie County to share their hopes and dreams for the future—for our students, for our economy and for our community," said Terry Renegar, chairman of the school board.

John McConnell, MD, the Chief Executive Officer of Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center, and Anthony Atala, MD, a nationally-acclaimed leader in regenerative medicine from Wake Forest Baptist, will speak at the event.

After their remarks, the audience will divide into three groups to discuss needs for science, technology, engineering and math education in Davie County schools.

"This is the beginning of a major effort to involve the community in designing the educational program our students need for a successful future," said Larry Colbourne, president of the Mebane Foundation, which is leading the planning effort. "By working together, we will achieve the best results for the education of our

children," he added.

Local partners are Davie County, Davie County Schools, Davie County Economic Development Commission and Davidson County Community College.

The kickoff and the meal are free and everyone is welcome. "We believe that the involvement of parents, educators and businesses is essential for our success," Colbourne said.

The planning is scheduled to be completed by the end of the year. Davie's plan could be considered by several funding partners of the NC STEM Collaborative, and there is the possibility for support from external partners to help with the implementation of the plan.

"One of the key factors is participation by the community, so we encourage parents and educators to attend the kickoff and stay involved in helping our program to prepare students for their future," added Colbourne.

"It is essential to educate our children for the jobs of tomorrow," said Terry Bralley, president of the Davie County Economic Development Commission. "We must connect education to the economy. A strong education will ensure a strong economy for the residents of Davie County."

Davie County was chosen because of the innovation and local partnerships in education, said Karl Rectanus, executive director of the NS STEM Community Collaborative. The Mebane Foundation has awarded grants of more than \$4 million in the past five years to fund programs in Davie County Schools.

Davie County offers innovative programs in technology and teacher staff development, the citizens and local government raised more than \$1.5 million during the Mebane Challenge and then an additional \$1 million was contributed by the County Commissioners.

Lenoir County in eastern North Carolina and the Fayetteville region are the other areas chosen to participate in the STEM program. "We are starting with these three communities and will build our program until we impact all 100 counties in the State," Rectanus added.

For more information about the Davie kickoff, call the Mebane Foundation at 936-0041.

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