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Delran STEM Ecosystem Hosts Kick Off Event for Future Innovation and Fabrication Laboratory

Delran, NJ– On Friday, November 30th, the Delran STEM Ecosystem Alliance in partnership with the Delran Township Board of Education, kicked off the establishment of the town’s future Delran Innovation and Fabrication Laboratory (Fabrication Laboratory) with a groundbreaking ceremony at Delran High School in front of a crowd of 150.

Renovations are currently in the works to transform what used to be the school’s automotive shop into the future site of Delran’s Fabrication Laboratory. Construction work is set to begin in December and is expected to be completed by Fall 2019. The refurbished site will feature laser cutters, 3-D printers, woodworking equipment and other tools for hands-on learning that teaches students important technological skills.

“The Delran Innovation and Fabrication Laboratory is all about fostering an environment for cross-curricular learning and discovery with real-world applications. It will encourage students to explore different STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) careers and develop technical skills by engaging in exciting hands-on activities that coincide with what teachers teach in their classrooms,” said Dr. Brian Brotschul, Delran Township’s Superintendent of Schools.

As Delran District’s STEM co-coordinators and co-leads of the Delran STEM Ecosystem Alliance, Erica DeMichele and Mary Jo Hutchinson, launched the event to share their STEM cradle to career vision while introducing the plans for the Fabrication Laboratory to members of the community and state. Among the attendees were Commissioner of Education Dr. Lamont O. Repollet, Senator Troy Singleton (7th District), Assemblywoman Carol Murphy (7th District), Chair of the Assembly Science, Innovation and Technology Committee Assemblyman Andrew Zwicker (16th District), and philanthropist Laura Overdeck.

Intended to become a central hub of STEM learning in Burlington County, the Fabrication Laboratory will provide STEM-rich experiences for Delran students, Kindergarten through High School, and include some of the most state-of-the-art, hands-on digital fabrication learning tools available. “Innovative classrooms like this Fabrication Laboratory provide teachers with the tools to excite students about STEM concepts and support the development of critical STEM skills to prepare today’s students for the jobs of tomorrow,” said Dr. Lamont O. Repollet, New Jersey Commissioner of Education. “I congratulate the

Delran STEM Ecosystem and school district for its success in securing this asset to further the education of Burlington County students.”

The Fabrication Laboratory will also provide opportunities for partnerships with higher education institutions. Currently, the Alliance is working closely with Rowan College at Burlington County to expand and enhance dual-enrollment credit opportunities for students and provide a pathway to enter various engineering programs with advanced standing.

The creation of the Fabrication Laboratory is an initiative led by the Delran STEM Ecosystem Alliance, a cross-sector partnership, launched in 2017 that seeks to provide provides all learners access to high-quality STEM education and work opportunities. The Delran STEM Ecosystem Alliance is one of four designated STEM ecosystems across New Jersey, the others being: Liberty STEM Alliance, Newark STEAM Coalition, and South Jersey STEM & Innovation Partnership. These ecosystems are part of a national community of practice of 58 STEM learning ecosystems selected by the STEM Funders Network. The New Jersey STEM Pathways Network, chaired by philanthropist Laura Overdeck, and managed by the Research & Development Council of New Jersey, supports all of the New Jersey STEM learning ecosystems.

You can learn more about the Delran STEM Ecosystem Alliance, its sister New Jersey STEM learning ecosystems, and the New Jersey STEM Pathways Network by visiting www.njstempathways.org.