



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Contacts:**

Erica DeMichele  
(609) 828-2944  
edemichele@delranschools.org

Mary Jo Hutchinson  
(609) 500-0895  
mhutchin@delranschools.org

## **Delran STEM Ecosystem Celebrates Grand Opening of Digital Fabrication Laboratory**

**Delran, NJ**– On the evening of Thursday, November 21st, over 150 community members gathered at Delran High School for the grand opening of the Delran Innovation and Fabrication Laboratory (Fabrication Laboratory). The Delran STEM Ecosystem Alliance hosted the event which featured a keynote address from New Jersey Congressman Andy Kim (NJ-3), as well as a panel of notable guests from the New Jersey Department of Education and the Research & Development Council of New Jersey.

After a year of renovations to transform what used to be the school's 1969 3,000+ square foot automotive shop into the site of their Fabrication Laboratory, the doors finally opened to students this fall. The refurbished site features laser cutters, 3-D printers, woodworking equipment and other tools for hands-on learning that teaches students important technological skills. Delran's STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) Ambassadors were present at the event engaging guests with live demonstrations of the Fabrication Laboratory tools. A video showcasing the Fabrication Laboratory can be viewed [here](#).

“Our three main objectives for the Innovation and Fabrication Laboratory are to provide early hands-on STEM experiences to Delran's youngest learners as well as to provide our high school students with dual credit courses that include the opportunity to earn digital badges,” said Erica DeMichele. “Without a doubt, the Fabrication Laboratory will be an incredible learning platform that will support the development of 21st century skills across our district.”

The evening began with a short introduction and overview flash talk on the Fabrication Laboratory led by Dr. Brian Brotschul, Superintendent of Delran Schools, and Erica DeMichele & Mary Jo Hutchinson, Delran Schools Coordinators of STEM and co-leads of the Delran STEM Ecosystem Alliance. Next, Kim Case, Executive Director of the Research & Development Council of NJ and Manager of the New Jersey STEM Pathways Network moderated a panel on the state of STEM education in New Jersey which included: Dr. Linda Eno, New Jersey Department of Education Assistant Commissioner of Education; Anna Payanzo Cotton, Vice President of Workforce Development & Lifelong Learning at Rowan College at Burlington County; Carolyn Mattern, Pharmacy Supervisor and Informatics Pharmacist at Grand View

Health; and Kya Jones, a sophomore and Student STEM Ambassador for Delran High School. Congressman Andy Kim then gave the keynote address focusing on STEM education and career needs in the State. The remainder of the evening guests were given the opportunity to tour the state-of-the-art facility.

“All of us here remember why it is that we showed up today, why it is that we’re taking time out of our day,” said Congressman Kim. “It’s about the kids. It’s about our future. It’s about giving them every opportunity we wish we had.”

The creation of the Fabrication Laboratory is an initiative led by the Delran STEM Ecosystem Alliance, a cross-sector partnership, launched in 2016 that seeks to provide provides all learners access to high-quality STEM education and work opportunities. The Delran STEM Ecosystem Alliance is one of five designated STEM ecosystems across New Jersey, the others being: Hunterdon, Somerset, and Mercer Tri-County STEM Ecosystem, Liberty STEM Alliance, Newark STEAM Coalition, and South Jersey STEM & Innovation Partnership. These ecosystems are part of an international community of practice of 84 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](http://www.njstempathways.org).