

Dallas ISD, Toyota and SMU Collaborate to Support Future STEM-Focused School in West Dallas

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DALLAS (Sept.7, 2018) – Dallas Independent School District (Dallas ISD), Toyota USA Foundation and SMU have joined together to collaborate on the creation of a new and innovative STEM-focused school in west Dallas.

The aim is to inspire and prepare students for the next generation of STEM jobs through curricula that is project-based and business-aligned.

“This is an exciting opportunity for our students and families of west Dallas as this unique public private partnership comes together,” said Dallas ISD Superintendent Michael Hinojosa. “STEM jobs are the wave of the future, and Toyota and SMU’s contribution is a major investment in shaping the next generation. This is a significant shift in education, and we’re grateful to these incredible partners.”

Toyota USA Foundation is granting \$2 million to SMU’s Annette Caldwell Simmons School of Education and Human Development, which will develop curricula, advise on state-of-the-art educational practices, provide professional development for teachers, coordinate nonprofits operating in the area, and monitor and evaluate the program. The future school will be operated and staffed by the Dallas ISD. The Office of Transformation and Innovation will co-facilitate the design of the school in collaboration with School Leadership.

The collaboration will also bring together nonprofits, including groups already working with Dallas ISD through the SMU Simmons School program, The School Zone, as well as Toyota Motor North America and Toyota Financial Services’ partners to address community issues like literacy, nutrition, transportation and after-school care – each vital to creating successful outcomes for the community.

“Collectively, our goal is to create a brighter future for students, help families become more resilient, and create a community and school model that can be replicated,” said Mike Goss, president of Toyota USA Foundation. “We want to help increase access to opportunity, connecting students to the millions of STEM jobs that exist today, and the many more that will be created as industry advances.”

This partnership developed as a result of numerous requests from the community for STEM offerings within the Pinkston High School feeder pattern.

“This partnership advances our efforts currently underway in west Dallas, with a holistic approach that lifts the community and provides opportunity for students,” said SMU President R. Gerald Turner. “Evidence-based education is the foundation for everything we do in the Simmons School, and we look forward to the opportunity to provide resources and research that underscore the success of the school.”

Following an inclusive planning phase, the next two academic years will focus on curriculum and professional development for faculty.

“Everything is still on the table, including decisions about curricula and which wrap-around services will be provided through the school by community partners,” said SMU Simmons School Dean Stephanie L. Knight. “This announcement is meant to let all the stakeholders, parents included, know that we want their input at every level as we move forward.”

The school will begin a phased opening beginning fall 2021.