

Toyota Mississippi Puts High School Students to Work

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BLUE SPRINGS, Miss. (Nov. 1, 2023) – Juniors and seniors at New Albany and Union County Schools will soon have a unique opportunity to learn and earn. Toyota announced Wednesday—in collaboration with local partners—the investment and launch of its 4T Academy, a hands-on training program designed to place students directly into Toyota production jobs right out of high school.

Toyota’s commitment of \$1.9 million to implement this game-changing program is match funding following a grant awarded to New Albany School District and the 4T Academy from the [Appalachian Regional Commission](#).

The announcement was made Wednesday at the automaker’s Workforce Readiness Forum where lawmakers, community leaders, and educators convened to address common issues and goals surrounding talent development, retention and educational support.

“The 4T Academy will provide our students the skills, experience and confidence they need to move into high-wage careers in manufacturing right here in their backyard,” said Erik Skaggs, president of Toyota Mississippi. “Imbedding innovative programs like 4T in our schools changes the landscape of workforce readiness and put students in the driver’s seat for their careers.”

Students enrolled in 4T will follow a state-approved curriculum pathway in traditional high school classes while learning and training in a mock factory environment to gain essential skills needed for production jobs at Toyota. This state-of-the-art classroom will be housed at New Albany School District’s (NASD) future “New Albany Center for Innovation”—an enhanced version of its current School of Career & Technical Education.

The 4T Academy will house a collaborative classroom space, electric and pneumatic tool-training stations, a simulated vehicle production line, virtual reality simulators, cobots, and many other high-tech components—all integral to developing talent while still in high school. Seniors enrolled in 4T will earn an hourly wage while on the production floor getting certified and working alongside industry experts to build the world’s best-selling vehicle, the Toyota Corolla.

“We are excited to work with Toyota Mississippi to implement the first 4T Academy in the Mississippi,” said Lance Evans, superintendent for New Albany School District. “As a result of this partnership, our students will be afforded opportunities that are very unique to our region. When schools and industry partner together, the results are meaningful to not only students and schools but families and our community.”

Toyota also made an additional announcement to gift \$100,000 which will support the Center for Innovation as it undergoes renovation.

Toyota’s 4T Academy started at Toyota Indiana in 2020 while partnering with Purdue IN-MaC—a partnership that’s continued through its expansion to Toyota West Virginia in 2022, and plans to launch at other Toyota manufacturing facilities in the U.S. are under way. For more information on 4T, visit www.4TAcademy.com