SUPERCHARGING EDUCATION: Toyota Invests $2 Million In North Carolina Schools?

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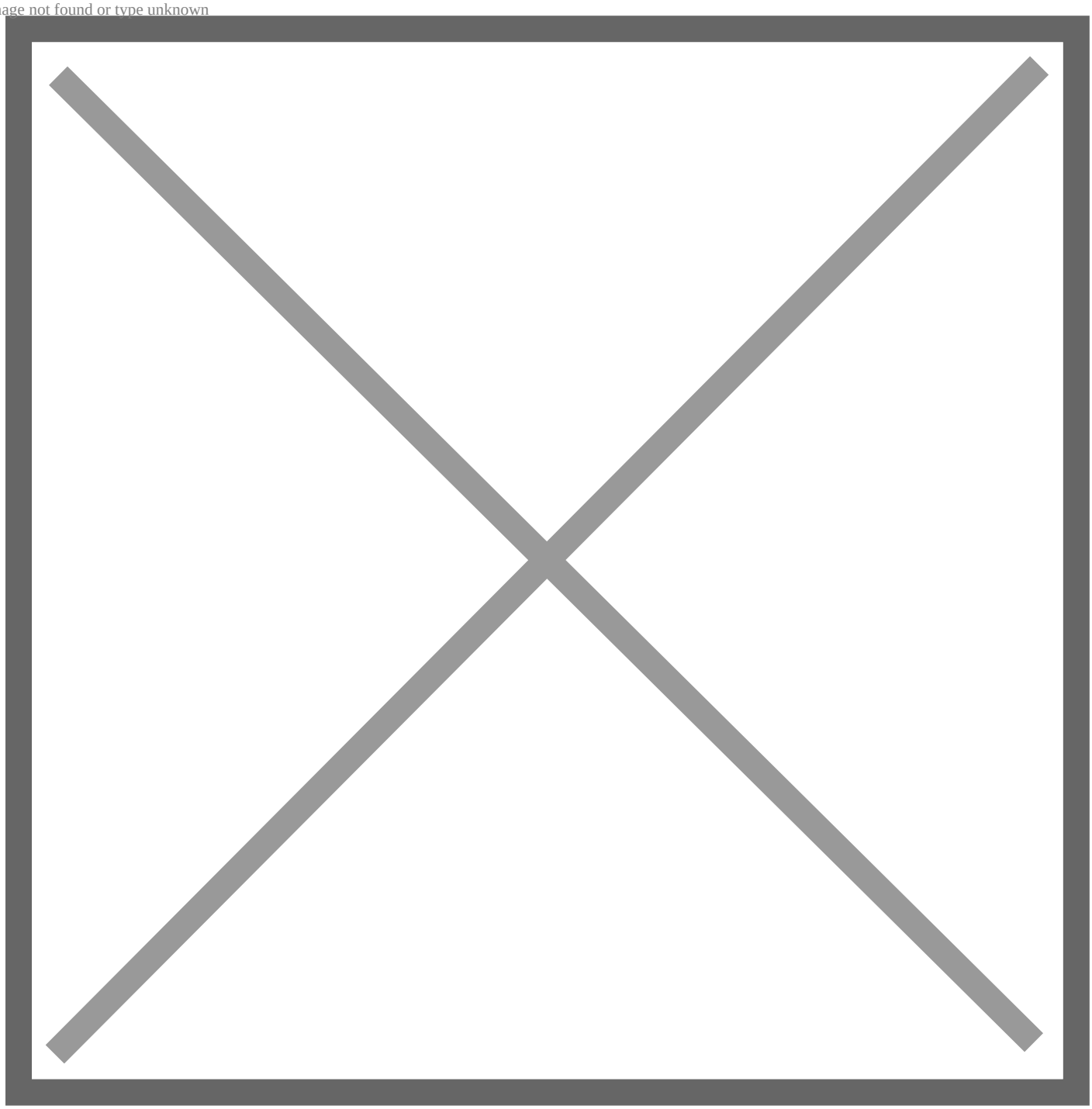

GREENSBORO, NC (April 2, 2024) – Toyota USA Foundation today announced grants totaling $2 million for programs to help prepare students in Randolph and Guilford Counties for future science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) careers. The grants and collaboration are part of the Driving Possibilities initiative and represent a five-year phased rollout of programming in select schools.?? ?

Driving Possibilities focuses on PreK-12 education to provide?students with access to rewarding careers, including opportunities in the auto industry. The long-term initiative aims to close educational gaps for students through innovative, hands-on STEM programming while addressing the essential needs of students and families.? ?

“Our goal is to increase awareness of future STEM careers while helping build sustainable programs in the communities where our team members live and work,” said Tellis Bethel, group vice president of social innovation at Toyota. “With $2 million in the first year, we are excited to expand Driving Possibilities here in North Carolina, home to our first battery plant in North America.”?

Driving Possibilities in North Carolina?centers on working with Randolph and Guilford County schools to identify?school feeder patterns and provide project-based, hands-on STEM learning programs. In addition, the program will include professional and leadership development for educators, community engagement and family support like afterschool programming – all core components of the Driving Possibilities model. ? ??

“The Driving Possibilities framework provides a holistic approach to ensure all children have equal access to opportunities and a pathway to high-growth careers,” said Sean Suggs, president of Toyota North Carolina. “In collaboration with community partners and businesses, we are focusing resources inside and outside the classroom to help students overcome barriers.”??

?“We are excited for Toyota’s partnership and investment in communities across North Carolina,” said North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper. “These grants will help enhance the STEM education of students in Randolph and Guilford counties and prepare them to lead successful careers in a variety fields, including our state’s thriving auto industry.”

In 2022, the Toyota USA Foundation announced Driving Possibilities, a national, career readiness and community engagement initiative, launched to prepare youth for the careers of tomorrow. It is a unique approach that brings together educators, local and national nonprofits, and communities to create limitless possibilities for all. With efforts across the PreK-12 education continuum, the program is the largest and most comprehensive in Toyota’s history. The initiative is funded by the Toyota USA Foundation, Toyota Motor North America (TMNA), and Toyota Financial Services (TFS).???

North Carolina is the sixth site to launch programming based on more than 60 years of active support in communities across the U.S. and builds off the successful model in West Dallas.?

ADDITIONAL QUOTES?

Senator Phil Berger
“Driving Possibilities is an incredible opportunity for students in Guilford and Randolph counties to enter the STEM fields. Initiatives like this will help establish a homegrown talent pipeline and ensure our students are ready to pursue the high-tech jobs Toyota is creating in North Carolina.”

Representative Tim Moore
“Thanks to a rapidly evolving job market and the increasing number of businesses flocking to North Carolina, it has become imperative to equip our youth with the skills and mindset necessary to thrive in the careers of tomorrow. I applaud Toyota’s vision of empowering young individuals to navigate the complexities of the

modern workplace. The best investment we can make is in the potential of our youth. Toyota's Driving Possibilities program will equip young North Carolinians with the skills, knowledge, and values they need to shape a brighter tomorrow for themselves and society as a whole."

Stephen Gainey, Randolph County Schools Superintendent
"The Randolph County School System is excited about the opportunity to enter into a partnership with Toyota focused on 'Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) Education.' Without a doubt, this opportunity will be great for our students through its provision of hands-on and problem-based learning experiences. I look forward to the future as this partnership between the Randolph County School System and Toyota grows and creates special educational opportunities for our students. Our school system continues to receive a high level of support from numerous community partners. Thus, I am very excited to add Toyota to our group of community partners."

Whitney Oakley, Superintendent, Guilford County Schools
"We are thrilled to join Toyota in building career pathways for our students. Toyota's Driving Possibilities program will build our students' capacity to thrive in STEM-related careers and, by growing a qualified workforce locally, will help boost our economy. I hope this partnership inspires other businesses and government officials to make the necessary investments to make North Carolina the number one state for education so all North Carolinians can participate and reap the benefits of a global economy."

Updated January 10, 2025.