



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Boeing Awards \$50,000 Grant for Expanding STEM Education within Decatur City Schools**

DECATUR, Alabama (October 20, 2020)— Boeing awarded a \$50,000 grant to the Decatur City Schools Foundation that provides funds for expanding Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) education throughout Decatur City Schools. This initiative includes the expansion of the Greenpower USA electric race car program into the 4th through 6th grades, a 3-D printer for grades 7th through 8th and a Composite Lab to be utilized by the Engineering Academy (composed of students from both Austin and Decatur High School).

“DCS is committed to improving STEM Education with a focus on increasing the number of graduates with 21st Century skills ready for local engineering and advanced manufacturing jobs,” said DCS Superintendent, Dr. Michael Douglas.

“Expanding the Greenpower program into 4th–6th grades includes the Formula Goblin project which aims to inspire children ages 9 to 11 years old to take an interest in engineering in a fun and innovative way,” said DCSF Executive Director, Stevi Price.

The project is for 4th–6th grade students to build their very own functioning and drivable electric car. Boeing funding will assist Decatur City Schools in purchasing kits for their elementary schools to launch this new advanced STEM education program. The kit comes packed with step-by-step instructions guiding the team through the build in an easy to understand manner. The build introduces children to basic mechanics, tools and engineering concepts. The build will also be integrated into the curriculum to highlight key areas such as friction, electricity,

materials, math and design technology—while being a fun and hands-on activity for students. The project also encourages parental/volunteer participation.

“At Boeing, we’re focused on inspiring and preparing the next generation to gain fundamental, 21st Century skills through hands-on, experiential learning opportunities,” said Tina Watts, Community Investor, Boeing Global Engagement. “We’re proud to partner with Decatur City Schools Foundation to expand these STEM opportunities for students in our community and prepare them for careers of the future.”

At the 7th and 8th grade level, the Expanding STEM Education initiative will further develop the district’s STEM courses with 21st century skills such as design, testing and production through 3D printing. Students will have the opportunity to design, test and print projects for their Learning Blade Curriculum and Greenpower race car projects in these STEM courses. This will increase the skills gained by more than 750 students each year at the 7th and 8th grade level districtwide at Austin Junior High School (8th), Austin Middle School (7th) and Decatur Middle School (7th and 8th).

The initiative will add a Composite Development Lab to the current curriculum in the drafting, engineering, and advanced manufacturing courses. The lab experiences will give students 21st Century skills. Adding the lab to the current curriculum will provide an introduction to the use of composite materials in design, processing, testing, and manufacturing. Students will learn to fabricate, repair, and fasten composite structures to meet blueprint specifications and design and build molds and to lay up composite materials for production. Students will also learn about carbon fiber, fiberglass and other composites. The lab equipment includes supplies, an oven, vacuum seals and downdraft tables.

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