

NEWS RELEASE



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CPS' Hughes STEM High School Benefits From Prestigious Grant

Students at Cincinnati Public Schools' new STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) high school program are benefiting from a \$731,641 grant from the National Science Foundation.

The three-year grant is funding the CincySTEM Urban Initiative and will be integrated into ninth- and tenth-grade science and STEM-foundation courses offered at CPS' new Hughes STEM High School in University Heights. The Innovative Technology Experiences for Students and Teachers (ITEST) Strategies Project Grant also will provide professional development for Hughes' teachers.

CPS' Superintendent Mary Ronan said the grant provides Hughes STEM High School a strong boost for creating a rigorous, stand-out academic program.

"The STEM critical-thinking skills are so vital for our students to master and will serve them well as they move into the workforce," Ronan said. "We greatly appreciate all the effort that went into securing this grant for our students' benefit."

Dr. Annette Hemmings, a professor in the University of Cincinnati's Educational Studies Program, is the grant's facilitator and will work closely with Hughes STEM's faculty and other UC partners.

"Among the best and most inspirational aspects of this ITEST National Science Foundation grant are the remarkable opportunities it offers CPS, UC and partnering STEM organizations to collaborate on an initiative that is, simply put, great for kids," Hemmings said. "Working as a team absolutely does make a difference."

Dr. Virginia Rhodes, Hughes STEM High School's principal, said the grant "will enable us to deepen our daily science content and develop students' practices as young and aspiring scientists."

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The grant provides opportunities for students to engage in innovative science projects that are Web-based and feature learning through experiments, such as the yearlong Energy Kaizenator project. Drawn from the Japanese business philosophy of Kaizen, which is a process of continuous improvement of working practices and personal efficiency, the Energy Kaizenator project will facilitate the creation of an energy audit team at the Hughes STEM High School. This team will assess energy consumption, then make and implement recommendations for conservation. The intent is for this project to serve as a template for other schools within Cincinnati Public Schools.

In addition, students will develop a Web site and a Web map of regional partners featuring virtual tours, interactive activities and education modules, and they will participate in mini-internships with STEM professionals. Students also will use equipment such as graphing calculators, digital video equipment, laptops and digital microscopes. The in-the-field science investigative projects that students will conduct were designed by teachers in collaboration with STEM partners.

Hughes STEM High School opened August 18, 2009, with ninth-graders only. It will grow into a grade 9-12 high school over the next three years.

Hughes STEM is one of five public high schools in Ohio to work closely with the Ohio STEM Learning Network (OSLN). The OSLN facilitates research and development of STEM programs, and it is the state's main vehicle for providing innovative projects such as the CincySTEM Urban Initiative.

Also helping implement this NSF grant are Dr. Kelly Obarski, the University of Cincinnati/OSLN's assistant academic director of Hughes STEM High School; Kathy Wright, Hughes' program facilitator and a science teacher; Melissa Sherman, Hughes' technology coordinator; and Sharon Bachman, a Hughes STEM-foundation course teacher.



Cincinnati Public Schools (CPS) – a district of 58 schools serving a diverse population of more than 34,000 students in grades preschool to 12 – prepares students for life through rigorous academic programs, numerous enrichment opportunities and strong community partnerships. The district has maintained the Continuous Improvement ranking, the third-highest available, from the Ohio Department of Education for the last four years. In addition, its graduation rate has increased from just over 60 percent to 82 percent since 2002. Three of its high schools — Walnut Hills High School, Withrow University High School and Clark Montessori High School — are ranked among the top 1,000 public high schools in the United States, according to national magazines. CPS is in year seven of a 10-year, \$1-billion Facilities Master Plan that will provide new or fully renovated buildings for all CPS students.

To learn more about Cincinnati Public Schools, visit www.cps-k12.org.