



TPSD Receives Four Toyota Grants To Implement PLTW

TUPELO, Miss. — In an effort to continue offering alternative academic opportunities to enhance student’s educational experience, the Tupelo Public School District has joined forces with Project Lead The Way (PLTW) and Toyota USA.

This partnership has led to the implementation of the PLTW Launch program, which targets PreK-5 students and takes an exploratory approach to learning that encourages a discovery mindset. The curriculum focuses on engineering, biomedical science and computer science, and the TPSD team plans to focus on engineering and biomedical science as the current priority.

The district plans to implement PLTW Launch modules during the 2019-2020 school year in the four 3-5 grade elementary schools. Students will be introduced to various modules throughout the initial launch, which will start with gifted classes this August and move to a full school implementation in a specials class during the spring semester.

“Each PLTW Launch module engages students in cross-disciplinary activities that spark a lifelong love of learning and build knowledge and skills in areas including computer science, engineering, and biomedical science,” the program promotes. “In addition, each module empowers students to develop essential skills such as problem solving, critical and creative thinking, communication, collaboration and perseverance.”

The overarching goal of the module curriculum is hands-on problem solving while learning to collaborate with classmates. The TPSD team worked to identify the modules that would supplement the 3-5 grade science curriculum while focusing on the soft skill development.

For Tupelo, this student-focused initiative received a major boost with four \$10,000 grants from the Toyota USA Foundation. Receiving these grants are Lawhon, Lawndale, Pierce Street and Rankin. Additionally, the local Toyota Wellspring Education Fund is providing funding for professional development that will be utilized related to PLTW implementation.

“We believe in the transformative learning experiences that Project Lead the Way will bring to our 3-5 grade students through the engaging, hands-on classroom experiences where students are empowered to work together to develop their soft skills,” TPSD superintendent Dr. Rob Picou said. “I am excited to see this work in action starting in the fall of 2019. We are very thankful for our local Toyota team, led by Sean Suggs. And of course, the work by Sherry Worsham of Project Lead the Way and Dr. Dana Bullard at MDE have been instrumental in making sure that students in Northeast Mississippi are equipped to move into the work force.”

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