

West Dallas STEM School News

En Español



"As you are all aware, the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted our lives as well as the normal operations of our university, school district, industry, and community partners. Despite the challenges, I am so pleased and proud that our critically important partnership has not only survived, but thrived, during these difficult times. The productivity and creativity of our design teams has been amazing and our partner relationships have expanded and deepened. I look forward with great excitement to Year Three! Thank you to our participants and supporters for helping us make our vision come alive."

-Stephanie Knight, Dean of Simmons School of Education and Human Development

Entering into the Year Three Planning Phase

The month of July kicked off the final year of our Phase I Toyota Planning Grant for the West Dallas STEM School (WDSS) and it's bound to be an exciting one! In order to remain focused on our project aims of 1) supporting student academic achievement such that students graduate college and become career ready and 2) establishing a replicable model for the school as well as for the partnership, we will continue to approach the work organized by six design teams.

These include the Instructional Innovation and Equity Design Team, Professional Learning and Distributed Leadership Design Team, Community Development Design Team, Research and Evaluation Design Team, 9-12 Bridge Team and the Sustainability and Finance Design Team. Each design team is dedicated to producing a variety of key resources, plans and practices in this milestone year. Project Manager for the West Dallas STEM School, Katrina Martinez, recently provided an update about the WDSS and its "Year 3" endeavors in the [Simmons Alumni update video](#). We invite you to listen to get informed and learn about ways in which you can get involved. For more information or to get involved, send inquiries to sehd@smu.edu.

-Katrina Martinez, WDSS Project Manager

Pinkston High School Teacher and Students Speak on STEM Learning

As curricular and building plans get formulated for the new West Dallas STEM School, L.G. Pinkston High School students and teacher Elizabeth Blue-Allen talk about the excitement of a STEM school in their community. Dallas ISD's new Pre-Kindergarten through 8th grade school is created in partnership with Toyota USA Foundation, Southern Methodist University and the West Dallas community.



Principal Named to Lead WDSS

Marion Jackson Named Principal of the West Dallas STEM School

Dallas Independent School District has selected Marion Jackson to serve as master principal of the West Dallas STEM School. Since assuming her role in June 2020, she has been collaboratively working with project partners and stakeholders to cultivate a STEM school model that will prepare students for 22nd century learning.

"For nearly 15 years, I have served the families of Dallas ISD as a teacher, assistant principal and principal. Much of that time was spent supporting students and leading instruction as campus administrator at Martha Turner Reilly Elementary School.

The positive experiences I've received in Dallas ISD and the communities we get to connect with each day are, in part, what makes this opportunity special. As we build a foundation for our students to explore all elements of STEM, I have no doubt that with the support of Toyota USA Foundation, SMU and the West Dallas community, our one-of-a-kind campus will fuel the



-Marion Jackson

To read more about Principal Jackson and the West Dallas STEM School, visit [Dallas ISD Hub](#).

Educators State-Wide Engage to Create STEM, Project-Based Learning Curriculum

The West Dallas STEM School affords a unique curriculum specifically designed with the community in mind. Curriculum units are being developed to ensure relevancy and engagement from multiple stakeholders while keeping Science, Technology, Engineering and Math content standards and professional skills at the core of the designs. Developing such curriculum units requires a unique set of skills and knowledge in curriculum design, STEM and Project-Based Learning. We are lucky to have found them in our cohort of West Dallas STEM School curriculum designers. Twelve designers from across Texas have been collaboratively engaged in designing curriculum units since July, ensuring each unit is aligned with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills, and possesses a community, local or national real-world context for learning. In addition, the units must promote a supportive and responsive culture, and are rich with assessment practices to gauge on-target achievement. We are excited to showcase these unique and invaluable individuals in our newsletter. Get to know them [here!](#)



West Dallas STEM School Building Design Sub-Committees

The WDSS building design team collaborates with IN2 and VAI architects to ensure the physical space embodies the school's vision for strong community involvement and real-world application of STEM and life skills. Through design discussions, four subcommittees

evolved, providing opportunities for members to share specific proposals and focused feedback.

- The Community Space team is tasked with designing dedicated spaces for collaboration and counseling, as well as a parent center, food pantry, offices and workstations. The plans will also include an interactive community wall which will feature the history of West Dallas and green energy usage.
- The Green Energy subcommittee explores opportunities for energy storage and production, water conservation, and sustainability.
- The STEM Labs and Makerspace team provides proposals that ensure functionality and safety, such as flexible layouts, overhead power reels, retractable walls, sinks, and exhaust removal.
- The Classroom Design subcommittee makes recommendations for furniture and collaborative space configurations, as well as technology.

