



OFFICE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS AND MARKETING

MEDIA RELEASE

ONE FRANKLIN STREET · HAMPTON VIRGINIA 23669-3570 · 757-727-2011 · FAX 757-727-2003

DATE: Dec. 18, 2015

CONTACT PERSON: Diana Gulotta

Syms Middle School wins Northrop Grumman Foundation Fab School Lab \$100,000 grant

Northrop Grumman Foundation announced today that Hampton's Benjamin Syms Middle School is one of five middle schools nationwide (and one of only two in Virginia) earning up to \$100,000 in the Fab School Labs science classroom makeover contest. Connor Dunn, technology teacher at Syms, submitted the application for the available grants up to \$100,000 each. A link to Dunn's video regarding the grant application can be found here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4AKFsKQ80cs>

After making it to the semifinals along with 19 other public middle schools, the five winning schools, including Syms Middle School, were chosen based on a final review conducted by the Fab School Labs team to assess how each school's desired dream STEM lab would allow for new teaching methods and lesson plans to be implemented, course objective suitability, overall feasibility, and the expressed public support received by each school during the five-day online voting campaign hosted on the Fab School Labs Facebook page, that generated 45,500 votes.

Michael Blount, principal at Syms, thanked the community for their support.

"I want to thank all of our supporters for voting in the online contest in support of Syms Middle School and Mr. Dunn. We are excited about this opportunity to positively impact classroom learning," Blount said.

In the grant application, Dunn said that, "With a supportive school

administration and central office, Syms is ready for the change, ready to prepare students for 21st century learning experiences, and ready to be a part of the school division that is reinventing itself into career academies. Resources and technologies are needed that help teachers prepare students for the real world environment and to be successful and engaged.”

Dunn added that the “Syms Fab Lab will unleash learning and change the life path for students at Syms. STEM-related (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) curriculum and project-based learning activities available through Fab Lab will give students the basic building blocks for up-to-date career exploration, career goal-setting, and capture the natural curiosity of students through technology and by making connections to careers, college and employment.”

To help meet the education demands of today's fast-paced, technology-driven world, the Northrop Grumman Foundation – through its Fab School Labs program – is helping today's science and STEM labs and classrooms become places of inspiration, imagination and opportunity for students.

Syms will now work with Northrop Grumman Foundation’s Fab School Labs partner, Flinn Scientific – a design and engineering company – to design and create the STEM lab of their dreams.

Nearly 200 schools participated in the contest, submitting videos, photos and sharing their school's vision for a state-of-the-art science lab. The contest, which was announced earlier this year, invited teachers, principals and school administrators to share their vision for a dream science lab and to tell their school's story through video, photos, and a brief essay. All submissions were reviewed by a team comprised of Flinn Scientific and an independent consultant. The top 20 semifinalist schools were chosen based on a scoring system that included existing classroom/lab resources, level of need, students impacted, feasibility of upgrades and plans proposed, and meeting the contest eligibility requirements and entry criteria.

Northrop Grumman and the Northrop Grumman Foundation www.northropgrumman.com/foundation, are committed to expanding and enhancing the pipeline of diverse, talented STEM students globally. They provide funding to sustainable STEM programs that span from preschool to high school and through collegiate levels, with a major emphasis on middle school students and teachers. In 2014, Northrop Grumman and the Northrop Grumman Foundation continued outreach efforts by contributing \$15.9 million to diverse STEM-related groups such as the Air Force Association (CyberPatriot), Conservation International (ECO Classroom), the REC Foundation (VEX Robotics), National Science Teachers Association and the National Action Council for Minorities in Engineering.