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WHYY LAUNCHES \$1.7 MILLION PROJECT TO BRING VIDEO LABS TO 27 SCHOOLS

Will bring hands-on video storytelling workshops to students and teachers

PHILADELPHIA, October 21, 2015 – WHYY will bring its media labs to 27 Philadelphia schools over the next three years as part of a \$1.7 million project to help both students and teachers use video storytelling as an effective learning tool. A \$751,000 lead gift from the William Penn Foundation will launch the outreach effort and support 11 of the labs.

The WHYY media labs supply video cameras and editing equipment to schools and provide part-time instructors. While students develop video storytelling and other skills, their teachers learn ways to integrate media production into existing curricula.

WHYY conducted a pilot project in nine Philadelphia schools in the last two years, which was evaluated by Research for Better Schools. The independent organization reported that students learned much more than basic video skills. According to its study, 70 percent of participants indicated increased media literacy skills, 80 percent of the students reported gains in listening skills and 60 percent reported gains in writing effective sentences and paragraphs. One student said about the experience, “It has given me more confidence in myself and made me a more active student.”

“Understanding media and technology is such an important skill today,” said WHYY President and CEO William J. Marrazzo. “WHYY’s media labs offer students new ways of expressing themselves and engaging with core subject matter while they are learning skills to prepare them for an ever-changing and competitive job market.

The WHYY media labs are an outgrowth of the public media organization’s Dorrance Hamilton Public Media Commons. WHYY provides media classes for about 1,000 middle and high school students and adults each year and has outgrown the capacity at its Center City studios and classrooms.





"Based on the success of our school outreach and the feedback WHY Y has received from students, teachers, parents and principals, we ultimately aim to put a media lab into every middle and high school that the School District recommends," said Craig Santoro, WHY Y Director of Educational Programs.

Media Labs will be set up in five schools for the 2015-16 school year:

- Murrell Dobbins Career & Technical High School
- The U School
- Franklin Learning Center
- The Academy at Palumbo
- Austin Meehan Middle School

Ten schools will be added in the 2016/17 school year and 12 more schools will be included the following year.

About 40 teachers and 750 students will be directly involved in projects with a wide range of subject matters. At Dobbins, teachers in film, history, environmental science, math and barbering are each bringing a distinct perspective to student projects. The teachers earn Pennsylvania Act 48 credit while they learn to use media as a way of teaching 21st-century skills.

"We want to thank Philadelphia Schools Superintendent Dr. William Hite and his staff for welcoming WHY Y to partner in this unique educational venture," notes Marrazzo. "And, of course, this would not be possible without generous support from the William Penn Foundation."

While students learn hands-on media skills they can also become more active, critical viewers of media. Their instruction aligns with Common Core standards and the Academic Standards for the Arts and Humanities of Pennsylvania.

"We see arts education as an essential component of a comprehensive education, and introducing students to the arts at an early age can change how they see the world," said Shawn McCaney, Director of Creative Communities and National Initiatives at the William Penn Foundation. "This initiative is so intriguing because it provides students and their teachers with the equipment and knowledge necessary to enable students to share their voices and investigate issues that are impacting their lives and the world."





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