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Virginia Tech expands STEMbots into Roanoke City Public Schools

BLACKSBURG, Va., October 19, 2022 – Virginia Tech's School of Education is teaming up with Roanoke City Public Schools to bring the technologically immersive STEMbot to middle school classrooms by January 2023.

"Given the initial success we have had with Montgomery County Public Schools, we are excited to be able to take our work with the STEMbot program to add as a curricular component of technology education and agriscience education classes to even more middle school students," said John Wells, Virginia Tech professor and program leader of Integrated STEM Education. Wells will collaborate with colleagues from Hampton University and Old Dominion University as well as graduate assistants to place STEMbots in the schools.

Currently placed in four local Blacksburg middle schools, the STEMbot approaches science, technology, engineering and mathematics through hands-on learning. Operated by students, the STEMbot teaches problem solving and conceptual thinking by allowing students to simulate agriscience techniques. Students complete modules to advance through the simulation while seeing their ideas come to life in a raised plant bed in their classroom.

The five middle schools receiving the STEMbots include: James Breckinridge Middle School, James Madison Middle School, John P. Fishwick Middle School, Lucy Addison Middle School and Woodrow Wilson Middle School.

"The program provides sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students with additional explorations into various technological challenges and career opportunities that will develop

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their general technology and agriscience literacy,” Wells said. “The STEMbot program exposes younger students to key technology-oriented concepts which we hope encourages them to become scientists and engineers in the future.”

Dedicated to its motto, *Ut Prosim* (That I May Serve), Virginia Tech pushes the boundaries of knowledge by taking a hands-on, transdisciplinary approach to preparing scholars to be leaders and problem solvers. A comprehensive land-grant institution that enhances the quality of life in Virginia and throughout the world, Virginia Tech is an inclusive community dedicated to knowledge, discovery, and creativity. The university offers more than 280 degree programs to a diverse enrollment of more than 37,000 undergraduate, graduate, and professional students in eight undergraduate colleges, a school of medicine, a veterinary medicine college, Graduate School, and Honors College. The university has a significant presence internationally and across Virginia, including the Innovation Campus in Northern Virginia; the Health Sciences and Technology Campus in Roanoke; sites in Newport News and Richmond; and numerous Extension offices and research centers. A leading global research institution, Virginia Tech conducts more than \$550 million in research annually.

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