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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**ENGINE of Central PA Selected to Join Global STEM Learning Ecosystems Community of Practice;  
Central Pennsylvania Wins Support to Build Connections Among Local Schools,  
Businesses, Higher Education and many Community Partners**

The ENGINE of Central PA, Empowering the Next Generation of Innovators and Entrepreneurs, a project of The Foundation for Enhancing Communities (TFEC), fiscal sponsor, has just been selected to join the STEM Learning Ecosystems Community of Practice, SLECoP. In a highly competitive process, ENGINE of Central PA was named one of 15 new ecosystems selected to join the global movement devoted to dramatic improvement in how students learn.

STEM Learning Ecosystems build meaningful regional connections among educators, business and industry partners, afterschool and summer programs, to prepare students for the opportunities and challenges of the future. Each ecosystem connects to counterparts from across the country and world, enabling the exchange of best practices, information and resource-sharing.

"In Pennsylvania the STEM Ecosystem approach has been a key strategy for aligning resources, connecting organizations, and building supports for all learners across the commonwealth to have access to high quality STEM experiences. We are excited to collaborate with the ENGINE of Central PA STEM Ecosystem to build a strong network for learners to build the skills for the STEM workforce" stated Judd R. Pittman, Special Consultant to the Secretary of Education for STEM.

The 15 ecosystems joining the SLECoP today bring the number to 85 total, with most in the United States but also extending to Canada, Mexico, Israel and Kenya. New ecosystems to join the SLECoP range from the entire states of Iowa, Texas, South Carolina and West Virginia to regions like Biloxi, Miss., Broward County, Fla., Central Massachusetts and Lincoln, Neb.

"This was an incredibly competitive process, and we were only able to admit ecosystems who would be capable of making immediate contributions to our thriving community of practice," said Jan Morrison, president and founding partner of TIES, the organization that operates the SLECoP. "The ecosystems that we selected now have pulled together diverse partners who no longer accept the status quo in education; they want to see all students access high quality STEM education that will prepare them for life and work in the next century."

Forming STEM ecosystems was listed as the No. 1 priority for STEM education in a December 2018 report by the Federal Office of Science and Technology Policy. "Fifteen federal agencies collaborated in creating this report, and they now emphasize uniting a broad range of cross-sector partners to expand impact and broaden participation in STEM education and workforce development. Penn State Center for Science and the Schools (CSATS) is taking a leading role in ENGINE of Central PA as we serve to bridge science and engineering research faculty with preK-12 education," said Dr. Kathy Hill, Broader Impacts



Director of ENGINE of Central PA, and Director of Penn State CSATS. “ENGINE of Central PA will connect organizations across 12 counties to spark innovation, share best practices, and leverage existing resources aimed at supporting equitable STEM learning that is relevant to the work and life of the region.”

“Central Pennsylvania is making great strides to offer the recommended rich, meaningful STEM education and experiences to our youth,” said Amanda Smith, Executive Director of ENGINE of Central PA, and STEM Outreach Liaison with Penn State Center for Science and the Schools. “As a recognized STEM Learning Ecosystem, we can tailor quality STEM learning opportunities to our specific needs in central Pennsylvania while leveraging the experiences of similar alliances across the world.”

ENGINE covers a 12-county region including Centre, Clearfield, Clinton, Cumberland, Dauphin, Fulton, Huntingdon, Juniata, Lebanon, Mifflin, Perry, and Schuylkill. Therefore, it was critical to establish an executive leadership team that could represent regional territories as we develop equitable opportunities for preK-12. In addition to Smith and Hill of CSATS, the executive leadership team of ENGINE of Central PA includes outreach officers Jessica Rice, Director of Education at Whitaker Center for Science and the Arts, and Michele Crowl, Executive Director of Discovery Space; and regional directors Michael Baker, Curriculum Consultant of Central Intermediate Unit 10; Lauren Beal, STEM Supervisor of Lebanon/Lancaster Intermediate Unit 13; Annie Milewski, Director of Curriculum and District Support Specialist of Schuylkill Intermediate Unit 29; Susan Voigt, Educational Services Supervisor of Capital Area Intermediate Unit 15; and Peney Wright, STEM/STEAM Curriculum and Instruction Specialist at Tuscarora Intermediate Unit 11.

Early plans for central Pennsylvania are to provide regional town hall events to map assets and influences contributing to STEM-centric pathways for preK-12. ENGINE has held six meet-ups to date to start the process of asset mapping, and they will continue in order to help connect the region.

"Our goal is to provide support for cross-sector partnership programs and activities that will address identified needs and gaps while providing further opportunities for our youth," Smith said.

Further ENGINE priorities include a teacher externship program bridging STEM research and industry to education, and a Chief Science Officers (CSO) program to develop high school student leaders to learn about and subsequently promote STEM careers and pathways within central Pennsylvania. Support will be sought to make ENGINE a lasting success, with TFEC as the fiscal sponsor. This relationship allows ENGINE of Central PA to secure corporate donations, offer tax benefits to their donors, and apply for grants in addition to many other benefits. TFEC is responsible of all contributions and prepares and sends acknowledgment letters to all donors.

The STEM Learning Ecosystems Community of Practice, SLECoP, is a global initiative of innovators who know that thriving communities are built through collaboration and a willingness to reimagine education and provide opportunities to those commonly neglected.

The SLECoP was built on the fundamental belief that learning happens everywhere, not just in traditional classrooms. Consequently, ecosystems are made up of partners representing K-12 public and



private education, business and industry, after-school providers, non-profits, STEM-rich institutions, government and philanthropy.

Learn more about ENGINE of Central PA at [enginecentralpa.org](http://enginecentralpa.org) and to address specific questions please contact CAIU's Educational Services Supervisor Susan Voigt at 717-732-8400 ext. 8073 or email [svoigt@caiu.org](mailto:svoigt@caiu.org), or contact IU13's Supervisor of STEM Lauren Beal at 717-947-1417 or email [lauren\\_beal@iu13.org](mailto:lauren_beal@iu13.org). Join online conversations on Twitter @[@enginecentralpa](https://twitter.com/enginecentralpa).

The official registration and financial information of The Foundation for Enhancing Communities may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

The Foundation for Enhancing Communities is registered in each state requiring such registration for charitable solicitation.

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#### **About CAIU**

*The Capital Area Intermediate Unit (CAIU) is a progressive educational service agency serving families, schools and communities across Cumberland, Dauphin, Perry and northern York counties in South-Central Pennsylvania. Located in Enola with classrooms and program locations throughout the region, the CAIU achieves educational excellence through leadership, partnership and innovation. Visit [www.caiu.org](http://www.caiu.org) for more information.*

#### **About IU13**

*Lancaster-Lebanon Intermediate Unit 13 (IU13) strives to improve student learning by providing both direct educational services and educational support services for Lancaster and Lebanon counties' 22 school districts, as well as for adult education students, nonpublic schools, and preschools and their families.*