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Contact: Mary Helen Montgomery
maryhelen@theenterprisectr.org, 423-802-4294

4K microscope to expand from Hamilton County Schools to other gigabit communities

A high-powered 4K microscope, that Hamilton County Schools students use for environmental and biomedical studies, will now be accessible to students in two other communities: Jackson, TN, and Lafayette, LA. Thanks to gigabit technology, students at five Hamilton County Schools have remote access to the microscope, which is housed at STEM School Chattanooga. Soon, students in the gigabit communities of Jackson and Lafayette will also be able to use the powerful tool, usually only found in scientific labs like the Centers for Disease Control.

The expansion of the 4K Microscope program will be possible because of a \$30,000 grant that US Ignite recently awarded to Chattanooga through its National Science Foundation-funded [Smart Gigabit Communities](#) program. Chattanooga was one of four communities selected from across the country.

"We are working to scale up our innovative practices in Hamilton County Schools so that more students will benefit," said Jill Levine, chief of Innovation and Choice for Hamilton County Schools. "We are excited to partner with additional communities to share this incredible opportunity to explore science through the 4K microscope."

The expanded program will provide immersive experiences to students that would not be possible without a gigabit connection, and it will include real-time collaboration across these schools.

"We're excited by this opportunity to partner with Chattanooga around the 4K Microscope, it demonstrates the kind of innovative STEM leadership which sets Tennessee apart," said Ben Lovins, Senior Vice President of Telecommunications at Jackson Energy Authority.

For the last three years, the Smart Gigabit Communities project has supported the development of new technologies in different communities, including the 4K Microscope in Hamilton County Schools.

"I advocated for this project because I thought it perfectly captures what the smart city movement is in Chattanooga," says Scott Turnbull, the Director of Technology at US Ignite. "Now they're amplifying the effects with this grant to guarantee broad access to STEM education for potentially any community in the region."

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