



Q&A: Ignite Institute at Roebling Innovation Center

WHAT IS IGNITE INSTITUTE AT ROEBLING INNOVATION CENTER?

Toyota is donating its Quality and Production Engineering Laboratory on the campus of its Erlanger-based North American manufacturing headquarters to create a world-class education center to serve Northern Kentucky/Greater Cincinnati. This gift will launch the **Ignite Institute at Roebling Innovation Center**, a STEAM (science, technology, education, arts, and math)-based school and education center envisioned also to be a collaborative space for educators, a potential national hub for STEAM teacher training, and an early childhood education facility, among other possibilities.



WHY WAS IGNITE INSTITUTE CREATED?

The vision is world-class STEAM education and a high-tech innovation center that engages business. The goal is threefold: to open a new world of possibilities for students through science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics; to fill the workforce pipeline with creative and educated workers for the future; and to make the region a magnet for high-value industries, enabling it to compete globally.

WHO WILL OWN AND OPERATE THE INSTITUTE?

Boone County Schools will operate the school to meet the regional need. Ignite Institute will operate as a Boone County District of Innovation School of Choice. Boone County Schools will own and operate Ignite Institute at Roebling Innovation Center and manage all budgeting, staffing, curriculum, and facilities. The goal is also to assemble a board of advisors of business and other leaders and to create a foundation to support the center.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO ATTEND?

Ignite Institute will be an inclusive public school, offered free-of-charge to interested students throughout Northern Kentucky and, if private support and funding is provided, the Tri-State. Admission will not be based on GPA, but on the student's desire to learn the unique skills required for the 21st century. There will be an application process on a first come, first served basis. With a capacity of 1,000 students, it is anticipated that any student who expresses the desire and demonstrates an aptitude for one of the programs will be able to attend. The goal is to reduce barriers to make attendance possible.

WHAT SORT OF STUDENT SHOULD APPLY?

This school will appeal to students who prefer project-based, hands-on, collaborative education. Programs will focus on problem solving, teamwork, and non-traditional approaches to learning. The school will use a performance-based model in which students can move through high school and college level work at their own pace and path. The entire school will be based on a project-based learning, real industry-case methodology, honing passion and direction for careers.

WHAT IS THE FACILITY LIKE?

Located at 37 Atlantic Avenue in Erlanger, Ky., the building's current configuration lends itself to use as a technical institute. It features: open spaces for flexible seating; high ceilings for equipment-such as robotics/ automation; natural lighting; prime location with access to industry; 22 acres with outdoor green space; and plenty of square footage for both classroom and project space.

WHAT ARE THE BUILDING'S SPECIFICATIONS?

- Built by Toyota in 1996; expanded in 2004
- 183,000 sq. ft., two-story steel frame on 22 acres that straddle Boone and Kenton counties
- Equipped with multiple elevators, several light steel mezzanines, lab and engineering workspaces, overhead crane systems, a large array of air compressors, commercial electrical switching equipment, high bay equipment areas, and office spaces
- Approximately 580 parking spaces

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO CONVERT THE FACILITY, AND HOW IS IT FUNDED?

A \$6.8 million Work Ready Skills initiative grant will help convert the Toyota office and engineering lab into a space for student learning. The conversion will create open classrooms; project spaces with flexible seating; collaborative spaces; glass-walled small meeting areas and study rooms; an open cafeteria; art and video production areas; robotic and automation labs; makerspaces; fabrication and arts labs; a health sciences area; manufacturing and logistics education areas; a black box theatre; a teacher-training center; and other areas for the study of science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics. Boone County Schools will manage the renovation and fund all equipment and furnishings required.

WHAT ARE THE ASSOCIATED ONGOING COSTS?

Boone County Schools is financially responsible for annual operations, which are an estimated \$6.5 million for 1,000 students. Organizers hope to establish a private foundation to support scholarships and transportation for out-of-district students, robotics labs and other facility enhancements. SEEK funds (Support Education Excellence in Kentucky state funds provided to local school districts) will be used to pay expenses incurred by students from Boone County who attend the school. Kentucky state funding follows students across district lines.

WHAT IS THE IMPACT TO TAXPAYERS?

Superintendent Randy Poe has said that Boone County will have to build one new school every five years over the next quarter century to keep up with growth. In that light, this donation has saved the taxpayers the cost of building one of those schools.

WHAT ABOUT THE GREATER ECONOMIC IMPACT?

The 21st century demands STEM-educated workers who can think creatively, solve problems and embrace new challenges. Regions that can respond to that demand will be the communities that prosper. Ignite Institute at Roebling Innovation Center will help grow that kind of workforce for our region, not only by inspiring its own students but also by impacting students at schools throughout the region through STEAM teacher training and collaborations.

WHAT IS THE PROJECT'S TIMETABLE?

Toyota expects to completely vacate the building by the end of 2017, and the deed is expected to be transferred by that time also. Building conversion will then take 12-18 months. The Ignite Institute is on pace to welcome students in grades 9-12 beginning in the 2019-2020 school year.

WHAT SUPPORT HAS THE IGNITE INSTITUTE AT ROEBLING CENTER GARNERED?

More than 40 civic leaders, elected officials, educators, and members of the business community have been actively engaged in planning the institute over the past three years. In addition to the thoughtful involvement of regional leaders, the project has been endorsed by Kentucky Governor Matt Bevin; Hal Heiner, Kentucky Secretary for Education and Workforce Development; and Dr. Stephen Pruitt, Commissioner of Education.

Follow the progress of the Ignite Institute at Roebling Innovation Center

www.boone.k12.ky.us/igniteinstitute or on Twitter @IgniteAtRIC

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