

Campos Foundation Fuels STEM Dreams at Urban Promise Academy with New SmartLab

Campos Foundation donates \$178K to bring hands-on STEM SmartLab to Urban Promise Academy, empowering Oakland students through tech and innovation

OAKLAND, CA, UNITED STATES, April 3, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Momentum is building in Oakland's education landscape as Urban Promise Academy (UPA) prepares to launch a SmartLab powered by a generous grant from the Campos Foundation. This initiative marks a game-changing investment in STEM access for learners who are often overlooked in STEM fields, placing cutting-edge tools and real-world learning at their fingertips.

For the students at UPA, this lab represents more than just a physical space—it symbolizes opportunity. With robotics kits, engineering tools, coding platforms, and project-based curriculum on the horizon, students will soon be stepping into a new world of learning that sparks curiosity and builds real-world skills.

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*Deanna Campos-Miller,
Director of the Campos
Foundation*

“This is our 14th SmartLab implementation,” shared Deanna Campos-Miller, Director of the Campos Foundation. “We believe strongly in supporting underrepresented students in STEM from kindergarten through employment. This gift to Urban Promise is part of a larger initiative to serve thousands of students to show them what is possible in STEM.” Her message speaks to the power of community investment in shaping brighter futures through STEM.



Urban Promise Academy's Student Council — Yordi Rivas, Edson Tirene, Shanel Fernandez, Luz Martin Matias, and Naomi Pablo — proudly accept a \$178,367.27 check from the Campos Foundation to fund their brand-new SmartLab, opening in 2025!

At the center of this moment is a shared vision between community, educators, and industry

partners. “Forming partnerships with mission-aligned organizations like the Campos Foundation allows us to expand access and opportunity for learners from ALL backgrounds,” said Annie Burnett, VP of Strategic Partnerships at SmartLab. “Together, we’re building inclusive pathways that ensure all students see themselves in STEM.”

Tierre Mesa, Principal of Urban Promise Academy, described the importance of this lab for her students: “We are incredibly thankful to the Campos Foundation for making it possible for us to have a top-notch SmartLab at Urban Promise Academy. This will encourage our students to explore hands-on engineering, robotics, and design projects.” She added, “The technology and curriculum in this SmartLab will build our students' excitement and confidence that they have the skills to pursue a future career in engineering.”

With the check handoff now complete, planning is underway for construction and curriculum implementation. The lab is designed not just as a classroom, but as a creative hub—where students are challenged to think critically, collaborate, and innovate through hands-on projects that connect directly to real-world careers.

The broader school district is also celebrating this milestone. John Sasaki, Communications Director for Oakland Unified School District (OUSD), emphasized how vital the partnership is: “OUSD is profoundly grateful to the Campos Foundation for putting Oakland students first with this wonderful grant,” he said. “We are excited to see the SmartLab take shape at Urban Promise Academy and begin to support students and their pursuit of science literacy.”



Teirre Mesa and Reina Cabezas of Urban Promise Academy stand alongside Kelley Fitzsimmons from SmartLab, and Jose Chacon, Connor Burns, Kyle Foy, Ryan Wong, Yesica Cieri, and Herman Hernandez of the Campos Foundation to celebrate the official handoff of a \$178K grant



A striking mural at Urban Promise Academy captures the school's spirit of activism, creativity, and resilience. With students rising as artists, scholars, and warriors, this visual message sets the perfect tone for the transformational impact of the new SmartLab.

He continued, “We have no doubt this lab, with all its STEM features, will provide an exciting environment for students in which they can foster their love of science, technology, engineering, and math—helping propel them into success in high school and in their future careers. This is a perfect example of the importance of public/private partnerships, and we thank the Campos Foundation for their remarkable support.”

As anticipation builds for the 2025 launch, the new SmartLab is already serving as a beacon of what’s possible when communities come together to invest in the next generation of thinkers, makers, and problem-solvers.

SmartLab Learning

SmartLab delivers turnkey, career-centered K–12 STEM programs that equip today’s students for tomorrow’s challenges. Every hands-on PBL learning environment integrates grade-appropriate STEM applications across industry pathways to create real career connections. SmartLab programs include dedicated or flexible learning environments along with standards-aligned curriculum, professional development, and ongoing support. [To learn more, visit www.smartlablearning.com](http://www.smartlablearning.com).

Campos Foundation

The Campos Foundation is committed to empowering underserved communities through education, leadership, and opportunity. With a special focus on providing equitable access to STEM learning, the foundation partners with schools and organizations to create transformational educational experiences that prepare students for college, careers, and life. [Learn more at www.camposfoundation.com](http://www.camposfoundation.com).

Urban Promise Academy

Urban Promise Academy (UPA) is a public middle school in the Oakland Unified School District dedicated to providing a safe, supportive, and academically rigorous environment where all students can thrive. Located in the heart of Oakland, UPA emphasizes equity, community engagement, and real-world learning experiences to prepare students for success in high school, college, and beyond. [Learn more at urbanpromise.ousd.org](http://urbanpromise.ousd.org).

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