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## **CLASSROOM CENTRAL LAUNCHES NEW STEM SECTION POWERED BY DUKE ENERGY AND PIEDMONT NATURAL GAS**

**--\$15,000 grant allows access to free STEM lessons and materials--**

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (November 8, 2017) – In conjunction with National STEM Day on November 8, Classroom Central launched a new STEM section in their Free Store on Wilkinson Boulevard to allow STEM educators access to ready-to-go STEM lessons and materials.

STEM is an approach to teaching and learning that integrates the content and skills of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. What separates STEM from traditional science and math education is the blended learning environment that shows students how the scientific method can be applied to everyday life. According to Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, the goal of STEM education is to prepare students for post-secondary study and the 21st century workforce.

Made possible by a \$15,000 Duke Energy Foundation grant, the new STEM section celebrates the passion of Piedmont Natural Gas and Duke Energy employees for high-quality STEM education. It will offer lessons and materials which contain STEM activities, and teachers can 'shop' for the lessons they need, free of charge.

"The STEM section will provide educators with activities and supplies to engage their students in activities that fit easily into their curriculum. We share Piedmont and Duke Energy's ultimate goal of creating an environment that encourages more students to delve deeply into math and science subjects," said Classroom Central Executive Director, Karen Calder. "By removing a lack of supplies as a barrier, we anticipate that a greater number of students will achieve success and satisfaction in the study of STEM subjects, and will pursue these disciplines into challenging careers. We are overcoming barriers for teachers as well, by maximizing their instructional time through utilization of well-planned lesson plans that have been developed by their peers, and by providing the supplies needed to execute these plans."

"A strong background in STEM education is an important building block for future career opportunities," said Martha Thompson, government and community relations manager for Duke Energy. "That's why Piedmont Natural Gas and Duke Energy have a longstanding commitment to supporting STEM education in our state. Thanks to partners like Classroom Central, teachers are better equipped to provide students with an enriching classroom experience."

The STEM section will serve all teachers from nearly 200 schools in the six school districts Classroom Central serves.

### About Classroom Central:

Classroom Central equips students living in poverty to effectively learn by collecting and distributing free school supplies. Operating in six school districts and supporting over 200 schools and over 100,000 students, Classroom Central helps level the playing field for our region's students in need. Since its inception in 2002, Classroom Central has distributed over \$50 million in school supplies. For more information, visit <http://www.classroomcentral.org>.

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