

Dear Mayor Holt and Members of the City Council,

We are juniors at Mount St. Mary High School near downtown Oklahoma City. We believe strongly in the value of education in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM), and that if Oklahoma City students are given the opportunity to develop strong STEM skills, our city can become a center of technological development. This will create great opportunities for new jobs and exciting businesses. That said, there is a need to develop the infrastructure to help us reach this goal and give students the opportunities and resources that are needed to achieve individual success and advance the success of our city.

We envision a community STEM Center and Makerspace where students can work alongside adult mentors to innovate, design and create. The OKC STEM Center would include facilities to host things like elementary and high school robotics teams, software development labs, Computer Aided Design and Virtual Reality labs, a machine shop, a wood shop, laser cutters, 3D printers, electronics, and other 21st century skill-building opportunities. The facility would also have an arena space (possibly the size of a large high school gym) for hosting robotics competitions (such as FIRST Robotics Competition, Vex Robotics, Botball, or FIRST Lego League), drone racing, and other technology-based contests that typically draw 500-1000 people. There would also be conference rooms and classrooms for classes and workshops and summer camps.

There are several examples of similar centers popping up all over the country. For instance the Katy ISD Shaw Center (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tKoU6t0gS4w>) is one example.

Mount Saint Mary has run summer robotics camps for children and we have benefited from these types of camps. We have also been fortunate enough to participate in life changing programs like FIRST Robotics (<https://www.firstinspires.org/about/vision-and-mission>). Only a few schools in the Oklahoma City area offer competitive robotics, for instance, and our friends at other schools are missing out. By comparison, nearly every school in Michigan has a robotics program. We cannot get to that level of participation overnight, but we can get started by creating a place that can be a center for STEM training and activities that support our whole city and even our state.

We would be happy to meet with you to share additional details of our ideas and answer any questions.

Thank you for considering this proposal for MAPS 4.

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