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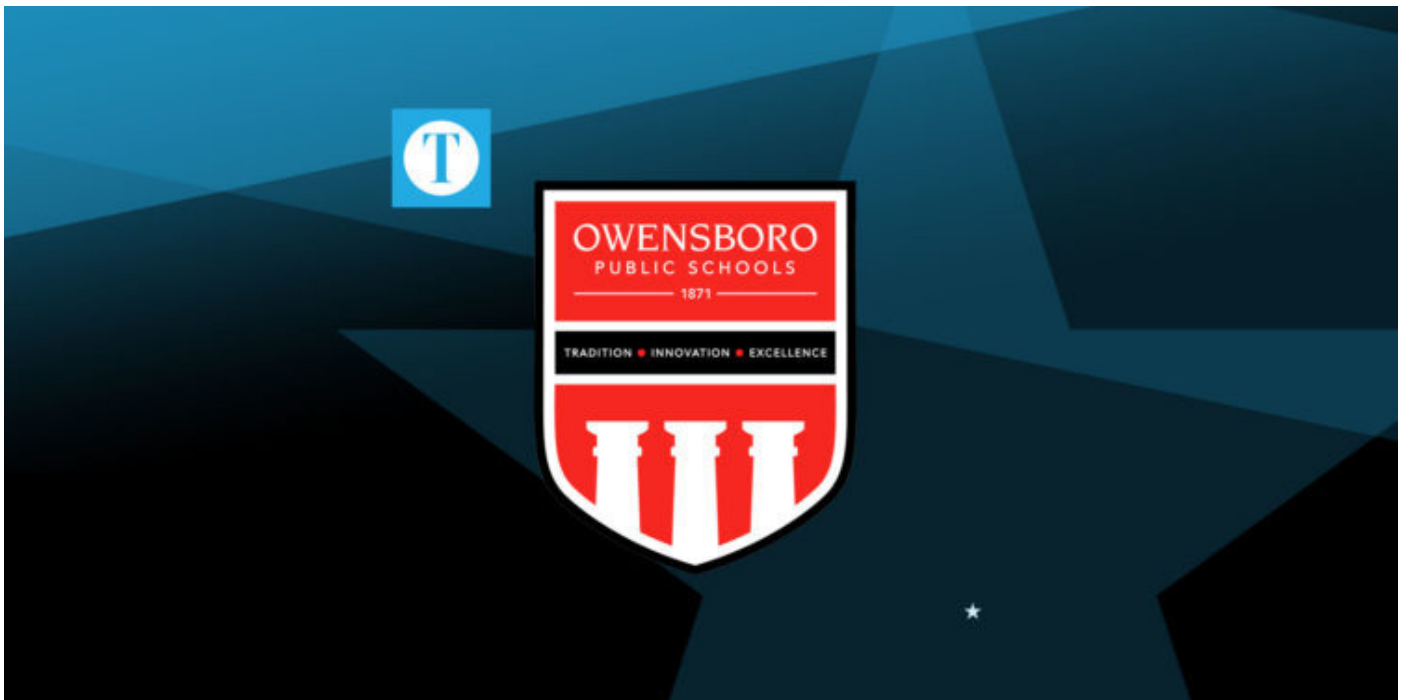
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EDUCATION

Community partners fully fund \$75K project to enhance learning program for young OPS students

By Ryan Richardson

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Graphic by Owensboro Times

Owensboro Public Schools is striving to close the early learning gap for children, making the Footsteps2Brilliance program available for free to families with students in all Pre-kindergarten through 1st-grade classrooms.

Since the inception of the implementation, Footsteps2Brilliance has added a pair of robust, early learning-centered apps called Clever Kids University focusing on the essential foundational skills that 3- to 4-year-olds need to be successful in Kindergarten and for Kindergarten children to strengthen early reading skills.

The total cost of this project is \$75,000, but it will be fully funded thanks to matching contributions of \$25,000 each from The Public Life Foundation of Owensboro, the Marilyn and William Young Foundation, and the Lawrence and Augusta Hager Educational Foundation.

According to Emily Baur, OPS District Grant Writer, children can put the app on any mobile device or computer. No internet access is needed after downloading the app.

“We really wanted to do this because it can really enhance all of the literacy apps that the kids have access to,” she said. “They can play games, but they’re actually working on literacy skills and pre-reading and reading skills. Our goal is to have all our students reading well by 3rd grade because that makes a really good foundation for all learning. This is part of that literacy effort that we’re making.”

The app also provides additional professional development for teachers and administrators, helping maximize the effectiveness of educators.

“I think this program is very important this year especially because with all the change that has happened because of learning virtually, this can be an important component that kind of ties it all together,” Baur said. “The consistency has been up and down, and that’s not the fault of anyone. This program can help. They can work on it at school or at home. It’s something that kind of ties everything together and advances the kids little by little to our goal of having everyone be able to read very well.”