



**children's  
defense fund**  
Leave No Child Behind®



**Media Contact:**

Emily Gardner, Communications Director

202-662-3554

[egardner@childrensdefense.org](mailto:egardner@childrensdefense.org)

**THE BOEING COMPANY PARTNERS WITH THE CHILDREN'S DEFENSE FUND FREEDOM SCHOOLS PROGRAM TO BOOST EQUITY IN STEM EDUCATION**

***Boeing's Investment Will Promote Learning in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math for CDF Freedom Schools Scholars across the Country***

**Washington, D.C. February 10, 2021** - Thanks to a \$1 million grant from The Boeing Company, the Children's Defense Fund Freedom Schools® program will now offer culturally responsive STEM education to students under the banner of a new initiative entitled "CDF Freedom to STEM."

Over the next few years, this investment will allow *CDF Freedom Schools* to build its STEM capacity more robustly and intentionally expose Black students to STEM, addressing the racial inequalities that persist in access to high-quality STEM education. "With support from the Boeing Company, we've taken steps to fully integrate STEM into our *CDF Freedom Schools* pedagogy, curriculum, and enrichment activities. Through this hallmark partnership, we will deliver high-quality STEM education to students of color in under-resourced communities where there's a dearth of out-of-school time STEM programming available to them. 'CDF Freedom to STEM' will catalyze their interest in STEM, as well as increase their aptitude in STEM subjects," said Kia Croom, Director of Strategic Partnerships, Children's Defense Fund.

*CDF Freedom Schools'* Servant Leader Interns (SLIs)--classroom teachers who implement the *CDF Freedom Schools* curriculum--will be educated on STEM inequality and its consequences, and trained on the new "CDF Freedom to STEM" pedagogy in conjunction with The Boeing Company's Future U content, learning best practices for successfully engaging Black students with STEM. Additionally, the "CDF Freedom to STEM" initiative will be incorporated into the program's Integrated Reading Curriculum (IRC), featuring culturally relevant books which illustrate diverse characters and their experiences with STEM, as well as influential Black leaders in the field. Finally, parents of *CDF Freedom Schools* scholars will be oriented to the "CDF Freedom to STEM" program and ways they can cultivate STEM literacy at home and within their children's out-of-school activities.

"For over 25 years, the *CDF Freedom Schools* program has reminded children they can and must make a difference in their respective communities through our culturally relevant Integrated Reading Curriculum," said Dr. Kristal Moore Clemons, National Director of *CDF Freedom Schools*, Children's Defense Fund. "As a result of the Boeing partnership, we now have the opportunity to expand this work. The 'CDF Freedom to STEM' initiative will allow *CDF Freedom Schools* sites all over the country to implement a culturally responsive STEM curriculum. We have an opportunity to spark scholars' interests in STEM fields and create a

pipeline of equity-minded STEM professionals. I am excited for what's to come and deeply appreciative of Boeing's investment in our nation's children through *CDF Freedom Schools*."

"We believe every child deserves access to high-quality STEM education, and that a child's culture, background or zip code should not be a barrier to education and future success," said Cheri Carter, Vice President of Boeing Global Engagement. "That is why Boeing is excited to partner with *CDF Freedom Schools* to expand its Freedom to STEM initiative to help even more students gain the 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills they'll need to be successful in the workforce of tomorrow. Boeing is committed to advancing racial equity and social justice in our communities—a commitment we're honored to share with *CDF Freedom Schools*."

### **About CDF Freedom Schools**

Rooted in the Mississippi Freedom Summer project of 1964, the *CDF Freedom Schools* program provides summer and after-school enrichment through a research-based and multicultural program model that supports K-12 scholars and their families through five essential components: high quality academic and character-building enrichment; parent and family involvement; civic engagement and social action; intergenerational servant leadership development; and nutrition, health and mental health. The *CDF Freedom Schools* program incorporates the totality of CDF's mission by fostering environments that support children and young adults (known as "scholars" in the *CDF Freedom Schools* program) to excel and believe in their ability to make a difference in themselves and in their families, schools, communities, country, and world with hope, education and action.

By providing K-12 scholars with rich, culturally relevant pedagogy and high quality books that deepen scholars' understanding of themselves and all they have in common with others in a multiracial, multicultural democratic society, *CDF Freedom Schools* programs further empower scholars to believe in their ability and responsibility to make a difference while instilling in them a love of reading to help them avoid summer learning loss.