

# New Education Partnership to Fast-Track Fulton County Students into Film Industry Training Program

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Partnership is the First of its Kind to Address the Growing Film and Media Employment Needs in Georgia

Atlanta Metro Studios, the Fulton County School System and Union City today announce a pilot-program collaboration that will start by funding tuition for as many as six 2015 Fulton County high school graduates and enroll them in Clayton State University's Digital Film Crew Training Program. The applicant search will target Fulton County schools surrounding the Atlanta Metro Studios site at the old Shannon Mall in Union City.

Ed Richardson and Brian Livesay, founders and co-CEOs of Atlanta-based 404 Studio Partners, along with their development partner Rooker created, designed and are currently in construction of Atlanta Metro Studios.

"We are committed to engage Fulton County's youth and to provide opportunities for them to learn the skills necessary to be a part of Georgia's thriving film business," says Richardson.

"There are a number of programs that claim to give students an insider track into the film business, but most of these programs fall far short of the actual boots on the ground training that is given in the Clayton State University program. This business is, after all, a 'tradecraft' industry and nothing beats the hands-on training for entry level crew that the Digital Film Technician Certificate Program delivers," says Livesay.

"At Clayton State University, we are in the forefront of film training in Georgia higher education," according to President Dr. Thomas Hynes. "This project will be our first to fast-track high school students into one of the state's fastest growing industries. And we couldn't have more supportive and enthusiastic partners."

"Union City is proud to be the home of Atlanta Metro Studios and we couldn't be more excited about the opportunities that this groundbreaking collaboration will bring to our Fulton County school students," says Union City's Mayor Vince Williams. "Our collective team is focused on positively impacting the future of our youth, and being a part of this program will put these students on the path to joining Georgia's booming film industry."

According to Fulton County Schools Superintendent Robert Avossa, this partnership is directly aligned to the school system's strategic plan of preparing 100% of students to be career ready.

"We are excited and enthused to be a part of the dynamic partnership with our community and business organizations," says Superintendent Avossa. "This project presents a tremendous opportunity for recent high school graduates to receive free training to be able to qualify for very high-paying jobs and long-term careers in the film industry. We look forward to this continued partnership within the programs at Career and Technical Education school opening 2016 near Banneker High School."

“Production companies are picking Georgia because we have the entire package – a business-friendly environment, statewide accessibility, diverse locations and a skilled crew base,” Gov. Nathan Deal recently said. “Georgia is one of the fastest growing entertainment production centers in the nation and facilities such as this one [Atlanta Metro Studios] will play a vital role in long-term infrastructure growth.”

Barton Bond, director of the Film and Digital Media Center at Clayton State, sees this project as not only unique in Georgia, but in the nation.

“The program trains students on professional equipment, orients them to all the jobs and procedures on film sets and then, most critical to the students’ potential success, places them on the crews of independent productions in the Atlanta area during the two-semester course schedule,” says Bond. “In just our first year of offering the program, we have placed 10 students in the local film union, which is also one of our training partners. Another two-dozen students are currently working in film-related jobs.”

“Clayton State University’s Digital Film Technician Certificate Program is a significant step forward for Georgia and the state’s ability to develop a local, highly skilled, and well-trained workforce to support the ever-growing film and television business,” says Livesay. “The Clayton State program is a game-changing training curriculum that honestly puts the rubber on the road for students looking to have a real career in the film business. Our entire studio team has spent our careers in the trenches of the film and television business and we see this as a tremendous opportunity for all Georgians.”

“By creating and continuing to support the film production incentives in Georgia, our state leadership has empowered Atlantans like us to develop and build studio infrastructure critical to the industry’s continued growth in our state,” Richardson says. “Because of the exponential growth the industry is now experiencing in Georgia, there is a very real need for local workers. With this new workforce development program, we are very excited to unlock the door to the great potential that the film business holds for the next generation of Georgians.”

The Fulton County area schools and Clayton State University are currently disseminating film career training information and application procedures to area high schools in time for 2015 graduates to apply for the scholarships that will apply to the next training session that starts in June.

Clayton State will be conducting information sessions about its training program starting May 6. For information call (678) 466-5112 or visit [www.clayton.edu/film-and-digital-media](http://www.clayton.edu/film-and-digital-media).