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## LEVELUP AFTERSCHOOL IS COOL YOUTH EXPO GIVES STUDENTS HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE

**GAME ON!** The Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids (CASE for Kids) debuted the LevelUp Afterschool is Cool Youth Expo on March 2, giving middle and high school students opportunities to develop 21st century skills, ignite passion and gain insight to growing industries in the Houston area.

In total, 113 students representing 11 school districts and charter schools participated in the video game themed event, traveling to the University of Houston-Downtown for a day of learning and networking.

The Afterschool is Cool Youth Expo focused on career opportunities in the field of technology, including digital innovation, energy entrepreneurship and life sciences, and incorporated the gamification of learning. The Expo is part of LevelUp Houston, Harris County's newest student badging

platform, developed by CASE for Kids and MyVoluntier and funded by the Houston Endowment through the Education Foundation of Harris County.

Houston Poet Laureate Emmanulee "Outspoken" Bean from Writers in the Schools served as the keynote speaker. He spoke on having an open mind and valuing different life experiences. Students then rotated between workshop sessions. Middle school topics ranged from making a great first impression to artificial intelligence versus humanity. High school topics included resume building and interviewing, conflict resolution and personal finance.

Each group also visited a career test drive and vendor fair, which included post-secondary institutions, small businesses and professional organizations. ★