

September 2, 2009

NCSS Ready to Submit Career Academy Grant Application

With the full support of the Newton County Board of Education, the Newton County chamber of Commerce, and community and business leaders, the Newton County School System will submit its Career Academy Grant Application to the Technical College System of Georgia on Tuesday, September 8. Up to \$3.1 million in state grant funds are available.

“It is an exciting endeavor to see the community commitment involved in this endeavor,” said James Woodard, Newton County School System’s Director of Career, Technical and Agriculture Education. “More than 50 commitment letters have been received supporting this application. The Newton College and Career Academy has the potential to create the pipeline of our next generation workforce.”

Recently, representatives from DeKalb Technical College, the Newton County Chamber of Commerce, the City of Covington, the Newton County Board of Commissioners, the Newton County Industrial Development Authority, and The Center Facilitating Community Preservation and Planning met with Newton County School Superintendent Dr. Steve Whatley to review and sign a memorandum of understanding outlining their commitment to work together to achieve the mission of the proposed Newton College and Career Academy—“To enhance academic achievement and provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in postsecondary education and the workforce.”



Those in attendance included: (front) Covington Mayor Kim C. Carter; Dr. Steve Whatley, Newton County School Superintendent; Kathy Morgan, Chairperson of the Newton County Board of Commissioners; (back) Hosannah Fletcher, representing Ms. Kay Lee, Director of The Center Facilitating Community Preservation and Planning; Rob Fowler, Chairperson of the Newton County Industrial Development Authority; Dr. Robin Hoffman, President of DeKalb Technical College; Dr. Tanya Gorman, Vice President of Academic Affairs for DeKalb Technical College; and Mr. John Boothby, President of the Newton County Chamber of Commerce.

On July 21, 2009 the Newton County Board of Education unanimously approved the superintendent's recommendation for a Career Academy to provide Newton County students a challenging curriculum based on local workforce needs. In order to fulfill the mission of the Newton College and Career Academy, the following three goals have been established:

1. To provide students in Newton County high schools with requisite skills and knowledge to exceed the majority of U.S. Department of Education performance indicators. These indicators include improving student achievement in Reading/Language Arts and mathematics and graduation rates and increasing the number of students receiving a high school diploma or its equivalent, the percentage of students in postsecondary placement, and non-traditional student participation and completion of CTAE classes.
2. To increase the number of students in Newton County high schools receiving post-secondary credits through local post-secondary partners.
3. To help students become workplace ready in order to be gainfully employed or to continue their education and training in a variety of post-secondary options.

Last month, members of the Newton County Career Academy Steering Committee toured the Rockdale Career Academy to see first-hand the numerous variety of learning opportunities and programs that can be provided for students in Newton County Schools.

"The purpose of the visit was to get people in our community excited about what we can have right here in Newton County and provide a vision of what we could do locally," said Woodard. "It also was a good opportunity to answer questions anyone might have concerning what a career academy really is and how one could benefit our students."

Ms. Irene Munn, from the office of Lt. Governor Casey Cagle met with the group at that time to promote the Georgia Career Academy initiative and lend her support to the district's endeavor. According to Munn, Mr. Cagle is "committed to seeing the charter career academies replicated across the state" and she praised the various members of the Newton County community for coming together in support of the initiative.

"We are pleased to make this application for state grant funds on behalf of the students of the Newton County Schools and in partnership with our educational, governmental and economic development agencies," said Dr. Whatley. "The Academy will offer hands on experiences in the career, technical and agricultural areas which can better prepare our students for the world of work, and at the same time, serve as an economic development tool for our county."
