

December 3, 2009

\$3 Million Grant Awarded for Newton College and Career Academy

Newton County School System in conjunction with DeKalb Technical College has been awarded \$3.050 million in state grant funds from the Technical College System of Georgia for the school district's proposed Newton College and Career Academy. Lt. Governor Casey Cagle made the announcement today after the award was approved by the State Board of the Technical College System of Georgia. These funds will be matched with local funding commitments. The Career Academy initiative was spearheaded by Cagle in 2007.

"We are extremely excited about the possibilities for support of the learning of our students which this grant provides for high school career/technical education," said Dr. Steve Whatley, Newton County School Superintendent (NCSS). "The cooperation of the collegiate, business, governmental and private entities working together to make this a reality is a positive step taken for the educational and economic development for this community. My thanks are extended to Mr. James Woodard (Newton County School System Director of Career, Technical and Agricultural Education) and Dr. Kathy Garber (NCSS Grants Coordinator) for their extensive work on the grant."

DeKalb Technical College joined the Newton County School system in celebrating the decision from the Technical College System of Georgia's Board of Directors in approving the career academy grant.

"Today's decision paves the way for a phenomenal educational opportunity in Newton County. It will allow students to actually graduate from high school with a college level Associates Degree from DeKalb Technical College," said Dr. Robin Hoffman, president of DeKalb Technical College.

Throughout the grant application process, 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 have fully supported the proposed academy and worked together with school district administrators to outline their commitment to work together to achieve the mission of the Newton College and Career Academy, which is, "to enhance academic achievement and provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in postsecondary education and the workforce."

"The success of our application was due directly to the collaborative efforts of our community," said Woodard. "Governmental agencies, community, and business/industry provided the impetus for us to make an application, but more importantly the support of the community greatly strengthened the Career Academy application."

Woodard added, "Great opportunities will abound for students in Newton County as a result of this grant. Students will have the chance to connect more directly with their career paths and earn industry credentials in addition to their high school diploma. This will increase the chance for our students to be gainfully employed in a very competitive work environment. We will focus programs at the career academy in areas that are high skill, high wage and high demand occupations."

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.

"Today we are one step closer to providing access to a Career Academy to every student in Georgia. During these tough economic times, it is now more important than ever before to give our students the promise of a path to successful career," said Lt. Governor Casey Cagle. "I look forward to success that will come from the Newton College and Career Academy as more students are prepared for a 21st century workforce. The partnerships of local school systems, Technical Colleges and area businesses provide an unbelievable launching pad for Georgia students. Career academies provide a relevant learning environment, a proven record of high graduation rates and 100% job placement or post secondary opportunities."

For more information on the Newton County College and Career Academy, call Mr. James Woodard at 770-787-1330 ext. 1280.
