



Dr. Brian Otott
Superintendent

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PCSD Breaks Ground for Construction of New College & Career Academy

Paulding County School District officials and a host of public officials and community representatives broke ground on the new Paulding College & Career Academy (PCCA). Located at 4555 Dallas Acworth Highway in Dallas, Ga., on the campus of the New Hope Education Center, the renovated facility will serve students from all PCSD high schools and help them develop job skills to meet the future needs of employers in Paulding County.



School district officials and board members, public officials, technical education officials, and representatives of the construction and architectural firms, all participated in the ceremony to break ground for the new Paulding College & Career Academy on October 2, 2018.

“The Paulding County School District’s mission is Engage, Inspire and Prepare,” Superintendent Dr. Brian Otott told the gathering of community leaders. “I can’t think of anything that is more the epitome of those three words than this new facility that will engage students, inspire them to do their best, and prepare them for successful futures.”

The Technical College System of Georgia has awarded the Paulding County School District \$3.15 million to help construct the new College

and Career Academy. The PCCA will open for the 2019-2020 school year with four career clusters including: Patient Care Tech; Advanced Manufacturing; Energy; and Cybersecurity programs.

The ceremony was attended by a wide range of community leaders, including members of the Paulding Board of Education: Chairman Nick Chester, Vice Chair Kim Cobb, and Jeff Fuller. Speakers included Marores Perry, the CEO of the PCCA who has spearheaded the effort to bring the facility to Paulding County, and who emceed the event. Mrs. Perry, who also serves as the school district's Director of CTAE, introduced Dr. Otott, Mr. Chester, Mr. Mark Peevy, Assistant Commissioner of the Technical College System of Georgia, Mrs. Rita Harris of Greystone Power Corporation who is Chair of PCCA Board of Directors, and Dr. Ron Newcomb, President of Chattahoochee Technical College.

"Students from throughout Paulding County will have new opportunities for learning," said Chester, "and this facility represents a new opportunity for our school district and our community to keep moving forward."

Representatives from RKR Construction and Breaux & Associates Architects also were on hand to kick off the renovation and construction project they will be responsible for completing in time for the 2019-2020 school year.

Following the groundbreaking, Paulding County High School Culinary Arts students provided refreshments for all.

Currently, 86 percent of Paulding County residents who are employed commute out of the county to work, while 60 percent of those who work in Paulding do not reside in the county. The Paulding County College and Career Academy will feature programs specifically tailored to develop work skills needed by employers in Paulding County.

"The Paulding College and Career Academy will ensure that students are given the opportunity to develop the skills essential to meeting the needs of business and industry in our community, as well as prepare them for education opportunities and careers they will begin after graduation," said Mrs. Perry. "PCCA will have goals in place to address increasing high school graduation rates and closing the skills gaps that have been identified. I am really excited about the future of the Academy and the variety of options that will be available to students that would not have been available at their home high schools."

PCCA's aim will be to graduate students with more than a high school diploma. Students will graduate with credentials to ensure success, including: college credit (core, CTAE and elective credit); technical college certificates; and hands-on work experience



Superintendent Dr. Brian Otott



School Board Chairman Nick Chester



Marores Perry, PCCA CEO & Dir. of CTAE



Rita Harris, PCCA Board Chair

provided through internships and

apprenticeships. The Academy's mission will be to **Engage** the community, to **Inspire** greatness in students, and **Prepare** them for the future needs of the workforce.

Meanwhile, the School District will work with local business and industry, post-secondary schools, the Paulding County Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development for Paulding County, students and other stakeholders to identify new programs for the PCCA to meet the needs of a growing community.

Dr. Otott emphasized that the Paulding County College & Career Academy will be somewhat distinct from other CCAs with its location being at the site of what is currently the Paulding Virtual Academy. After the PCCA opens, the Paulding Virtual Academy will continue to operate out of the renovated facility, serving students across the school district by providing them an opportunity to learn in an online "virtual" setting, as opposed to the traditional classroom setting. Its features and offerings will harmonize very well with the PCCA, Dr. Otott said.

The Paulding County School District is continually looking for ways to increase graduation rates. Making the courses more relevant to a student's future career plans can help them understand the need to finish their high school education and even move on to post-secondary opportunities. For the Class of 2015, the latest year for which data is available, only 48 percent of Paulding County students went on to post-secondary institutions. By 2020, it is projected that more than 60 percent of jobs in Georgia will require some form of degree: Technical Certificate; Associate Degree, Bachelor's Degree, etc. There is a significant gap between the jobs available and the number of students who are obtaining the appropriate credentials.

The PCCA will give students the skills and exposure to college courses that they need to have the confidence and ability to fill these positions.



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