



NEWS RELEASE

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Third Randolph County “Pathways to Prosperity” Project Will Focus on Agriculture

ASHEBORO (April 10, 2018) – Asheboro City Schools, Randolph Community College, and the Randolph County School System unveiled a third pathway focusing on agriculture in their partnership project, Pathways to Prosperity, at a joint press conference on Tuesday, April 10 in RCC’s R. Alton Cox Learning Resources Center Auditorium on the Asheboro Campus.

The project will include the development of a new associate degree in Agribusiness Technology at Randolph Community College, said Suzanne Rohrbaugh, vice president for instruction at RCC, during the event. RCC will be working with local employers, high schools, and regional universities to develop associated career pathways to ensure the greatest articulation, according to the plan released today. The goal is to have the curriculum developed by the end of the 2017-18 school year so that an application can be submitted to the North Carolina Community College System for approval. The earliest date for launching the new curriculum would be fall 2019.

Personnel from all three school systems, industry partners, and intermediary agencies have been working on the Agricultural Pathways to Prosperity Plan for months. According to the Pathways to Prosperity Leadership Team, a strong agricultural climate in Randolph County, a demand for skilled workers, partnered with the increased interest in agriculture-related middle and high school classes and clubs helped them to select agriculture as their next pathway.

Dr. Terry Worrell, superintendent of Asheboro City Schools, said the agriculture industry has a \$589 million impact in Randolph County. “We believe this pathway will accomplish three things,” said Worrell, “strengthen the economy, address the goals of the Randolph County Strategic Plan, and provide a seamless route for students interested in agriculture careers to obtain certifications and an associate degree to achieve career and life readiness.”

Dr. Stephen Gainey, superintendent of the Randolph County School System, said this new partnership will address “the ever-changing and very competitive field of agriculture,” and he praised

the ability of the three school systems to work together. “Today is a great day for our community.”

Dr. Julie Pack, director of secondary education for Asheboro City Schools, explained that the new pathway will begin by providing students in middle school with exploratory experiences. But she said there will be on and off ramps, so that students can start at any point during the pathway.

Nancy Cross, director of career and technical education and innovative school design for the Randolph County School System, said, “The goal is to help students have a plan and a dream. And they can’t dream about something they haven’t experienced.”

Dr. Robert S. Shackelford, RCC president, welcomed the more than 50 people in attendance at the press conference, which included state legislators, city and county officials, and members of the Asheboro City Schools Board of Education, the Randolph County School System Board of Education, and the Randolph Community College Board of Trustees.

“If there is anything we have learned through this process,” said Dr. Shackelford, “it is that we can do so much more together than we can do individually.”

The project is based on a report, “Pathways to Prosperity: Meeting the Challenge of Preparing Young Americans for the 21st Century,” released in 2011 by the Harvard Graduate School of Education, in which school systems are “called to align Career & Technical Education (CTE) courses with area and state labor market demands and create a system of career-focused pathways that span the last years of high school and at least one year of postsecondary education or training that leads to an industry-recognized certification or credential.”

The school systems debuted the project in 2015 with four pathways for advanced manufacturing jobs. The second initiative in 2016 focused on creating health care pathways.

To read the April 2018 report, “Central North Carolina Pathways to Prosperity: Agriculture,” and the earlier reports on advanced manufacturing and health sciences careers, go to www.randolph.edu/pathways-to-prosperity.html.

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