

3.2 Million Awarded to Create Hapeville Charter Career Academy

Gov. Sonny Perdue announced that Hapeville Charter School is receiving \$3.2 million to create a Career Academy as a partnership program with Atlanta Technical College (ATC.). In a ceremony at the Capitol Building on November 13, Lt. Governor Casey Cagle made the formal presentation to Dr. Martin, Director, and school representatives.

Hapeville Charter, a charter middle school which is part of the Fulton County School System, applied for the grant with ATC through the state Department of Technical and Adult Education. The Hapeville Charter Career Academy will open in August 2008.

The Academy will serve as a high school option for Hapeville Charter's eighth grade students but also will enroll interested students from other Fulton County school attendance areas. It will begin with approximately 150 ninth graders but will grow as a new grade is added each year until the school reaches its full 9th -12th grade enrollment.

The Academy will offer educational opportunities that go beyond what is taught in a standard high school or college setting. In addition to a traditional academic curriculum, students will focus on career-building skills and will graduate with the necessary credits to attend college, complete a vocational certificate, or go directly into the workforce as a viable resource for employers. Business partners will provide internship and employment opportunities.

The Career Academy will partner with Atlanta Technical College to offer dual enrollment opportunities. Ninth grade students will concentrate on basic studies. After that, students will choose a technical career curriculum. The initial choices will be from Atlanta Technical College's Avionics, Front End Alignment, Paralegal, Dental Assistance, and Patient Care programs. Upon completion of a dual enrollment track, students will graduate, at a minimum, with a high school diploma and a certificate in a technology area. At a maximum, students could graduate with a high school diploma and a two-year college degree.

The Hapeville Charter School was founded more than four years ago by Dr. Gary Martin. Retired Fulton County principal, Earnest Killum, will serve as the Career Academy's director. The location of the school is still being selected, but will be in south Fulton and in close proximity to Hapeville Charter School.

During the 2007 legislative session, Lt. Gov. Casey Cagle pushed for approval of a "Career Academies Act" to fund development of these kinds of schools. Though the bill failed, awareness was brought to the issue and \$16.5 million in grant funds was set aside by the state Department of Technical and Adult Education.

Similar career academies are under development in Effingham, Floyd, Glynn, Thomas, and Walton counties.