

## **REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS**

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The objective of the regional high school task force has been to develop, pursue and advocate the development and establishment of a career preparatory high school for Tuscaloosa County and West Alabama that will expand and enhance workforce and skills capacity and increase graduation rates in the region.

Among the key objectives and principles that should be achieved are:

Expanded accessibility to world class career preparation and enrichment that provides the foundation for lifelong mobility, advancement and successful employment.

Technical preparation supported by rigorous academics and employability skills.

Dual and integrated academic and technical preparation among all secondary and post-secondary educational institutions, that will enable students to complete a high school diploma, earn appropriate college level credits or an associate degree, and/or be prepared to enter a career and employment upon graduation.

The regional high school should be performance-driven, career-focused, student-centered, business-led and market-driven.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The regional high school task force of The Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama makes the following recommendations and encourages aggressive, timely leadership by the public, education and private sectors of Tuscaloosa County in order to meet our objectives:

- 1 It is recommended that the West Alabama Regional Collegiate High School be designed, developed and constructed by Fall, 2012, on the campus of Shelton State Community College to serve the needs of youth and families throughout Tuscaloosa County and the surrounding West Alabama region.
- 2 The new school should be accessible to all students and families in Tuscaloosa County and West Alabama, with expanded opportunities for career-readiness and technical training and improved graduation rates.
- 3 Governance, responsibility for management and accountability of the regional high school should be vested in and under the Tuscaloosa County Board of Education.

- 4 It is highly recommended that an ongoing corporate, business-led management advisory board be established now to provide counsel and accountability for policy, leadership, management support, curriculum design and guidance for both the regional high school and the Tuscaloosa Center for Technology.
- 5 Funding for the West Alabama Regional Collegiate High School will require a creative approach that includes federal, local, and state funding along with investment from the corporate and private sectors.

It is recommended that an aggressive effort be made to obtain a significant level of funding through a Congressional appropriation for capital investment and construction.

Development of the necessary capital along with sustainable operational funding should be established that does not penalize existing funding mechanisms for area high schools.

Development of funding should be aggressively pursued in partnership with Alabama's Congressional delegation, the State Board of Education, the Tuscaloosa County Commission and the Tuscaloosa County Board of Education.

It is recommended that a portion of the temporary sales tax enacted by the Tuscaloosa County Commission be utilized for the regional high school; and that the temporary sales tax be extended to a minimum of ten years or enactment of some form of long-term funding solution, with a defined level of capital and operational funding designated for the regional high school

- 6 Construction and enhancement of the Tuscaloosa Center for Technology (TCT) by the Tuscaloosa City Board of Education is recommended. Plans for TCT are encouraged to be in accordance with the adopted guiding principles outlined.

Coordination and cooperation for both TCT and the West Alabama Regional Collegiate High School along with alignment of strategies, is encouraged in order to provide world class educational and training opportunities for any and all students in the Tuscaloosa County – West Alabama region.

- 7 Curriculum design, instruction and teaching resources should be designed and provided at the highest level for the new regional collegiate high school, providing challenging, rigorous academics; world-class technical and career-path opportunities as a core; and with leadership development and community service components.

In addition, the schools physical, instructional and training resources should be made available and accessible for corporate and industrial training.

- 8 It is recommended that the plan include opportunities and creative methods of shared resources for teaching, instruction, physical facilities and leadership capacity among and between the regional high school, Tuscaloosa Center for Technology and Shelton State Community College.

Through a synergistic consortium of business, education and the public sector, the regional high school will be a world-class model that enhances educational delivery and accessibility, expands workforce capacity, improves graduation rates, and promotes economic development for the region.

Adopted and recommended by the Regional High School Task Force of The Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama on Tuesday, December 1, 2009

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Adopted by the board of directors of The Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama on Tuesday, December 1, 2009.

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Johnnie R. Aycock  
Secretary

