

Early college high school application moves ahead

BY CHERYL BURKE
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BEAUFORT — Carteret Community College Board of Trustees unanimously approved Thursday applying for a state grant to help fund an early college high school on its campus.

The vote came during an emergency meeting in the boardroom of the McGee Building.

The action was originally set to take place during the board's regularly scheduled meeting that would be Tuesday. But because the grant application must be turned in to the state by Friday, Sept. 15, the board decided to call the emergency meeting in case the regular meeting was canceled because of Hurricane Irma, expected to affect the county the first of the week.

The trustees' move comes on the heels of a 5-1 vote taken Tuesday by the County Board of Education to apply for the grant.

The Marine Science & Technologies Early College

High School, a partnership between the school system and CCC, would offer a pathway for students at risk of dropping out of high school to earn associate's degrees in marine science and maritime trades.

During the school board meeting, board member Travis Day cast the dissenting vote over concerns about the cost to operate the school as grant funds gradually diminish and that the program targets at-risk students. He favored offering the program to all students without restrictions.

CCC President Dr. John Hauser, during the trustees' meeting, said if there are still available slots once students meeting the at-risk criteria are accepted, he would open them up to all students, including academically gifted.

"All students are welcome to apply," he said.

The early college high school initiative has guidelines that were set by the N.C. General

Assembly several years ago. Part of the goal is to target at-risk students.

All eligible middle- and high-school students in the county may apply for admission. The eligibility requirements are: students at risk of dropping out of high school, students with parents who did not continue education beyond high school and high school students who would benefit from accelerated academic instruction.

Now that both boards have approved applying for the Cooperative Innovative High School grant, it will be submitted to a state joint advisory committee for review and final approval. That committee is comprised of members of the State Board of Education, State Board of Community Colleges, UNC Board of Governors and N.C. Independent Colleges and Universities.

In the meantime, however, joint information sessions by personnel from the public

school system and CCC will be held this fall with students and their families to proceed with the application process. Interested students will apply by Sunday, Oct. 15.

If final approval is given by the state, the five-year grant will provide \$500,000 the first year, \$350,000 the second year and \$250,000 each of the last three years.

Estimated cost for the first year of the high school's operation is \$936,750, with \$500,000 coming from the grant, \$138,150 in local appropriations and \$298,600 in state funds.

Estimated operations cost by the fifth year is \$2.4 million, with \$250,000 coming in state grant funds, \$1.49 million in state general funds and \$690,750 in local funds.

The school system and college would have to totally fund the program after the fifth year.

CCC vice president Traci

Mancini said the school system will fund personnel for the school, which include a principal, guidance counselor and four teachers to teach core high school academic subjects. The students would be merged into college classes for other courses.

CCC's part in funding comes through offering space, equipment and other activities on campus.

CCC and school officials want to open the high school for the 2018 fall semester. It would start with 50 freshmen the first year, 100 freshmen and sophomores the second year, 150 freshmen through juniors the third year, 200 freshmen through seniors the fourth year. A fifth year would be provided for students needing an additional year to graduate.

High school students could pursue diplomas or certificates in composite boat manufacturing, marine services, marine propulsion systems and Yamaha

and ABYC industry certifications.

They could also pursue associate's degrees in aquaculture technology and other marine-related programs.

Dr. Hauser said the program would offer two tracks: those wanting to pursue an associate's degree and transfer to a four-year university; and those wanting to get an associate's in applied science degree or certifications to immediately enter the workforce.

The college's campus has facilities and equipment for the early college program. The college is also part of a consortium of two-year colleges designated as federal Maritime Centers of Excellence, which recognizes them as a top school for maritime trades education.

Contact Cheryl Burke at 252-726-7081, ext. 255; email Cheryl@thenewstimes.com; or follow on Twitter @cherylcct.