

Press Release

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Golden LEAF Grant Boosts Pathways to Prosperity Program

ASHEBORO (July 13, 2017) – Educational partners Randolph Community College, Randolph County School System, and Asheboro City Schools were recently awarded a \$960,000 grant from the Golden LEAF Foundation to further advance the Pathways to Prosperity program.

Mark Sorrells, executive vice president of the Golden LEAF Foundation, was at RCC's Martha Luck Comer Conference Center on Thursday, July 13, to present a check to Dr. Robert Shackelford, RCC president; Dr. Stephen Gainey, Randolph County School System superintendent; and Dr. Terry Worrell, Asheboro City Schools superintendent.

"This community has its act together," said Sorrells of Randolph County and the three school systems, explaining why Golden LEAF had decided to fund the grant request. "This community has a plan...and they are mobilizing the resources to make it happen."

Hal Johnson, Randolph County manager, commented about including the project in the county's new Strategic Plan completed and approved last year. "Pathways to Prosperity is dealing with a crucial issue," he said, which is preparing young people for the work force. The project, which will require a 20% match (\$240,000) from the county, will help fund advanced manufacturing training at area high schools and the community college. The matching funds would come from revenue generated by the leasing of the regional landfill space.

This Golden LEAF Community Based Grant specifically addresses Golden LEAF's funding priority of workforce preparedness in economically distressed and rural communities in the areas of advanced manufacturing. It also continues the Pathways to Prosperity partnership between the three school systems that was first unveiled in April 2015 to create seamless educational pathways for students to go from local high schools to community college into

lucrative advanced manufacturing jobs.

Representatives of each of the school systems also spoke about their parts in the project.

Funding from the Golden LEAF Foundation will be used to purchase equipment to open two new high school advanced manufacturing programs: a metals manufacturing program at the Randolph County Schools System's Eastern Randolph High School; and an advanced manufacturing program at Asheboro City Schools' Asheboro High School. Equipment will also be updated at the existing metals manufacturing program at Randolph County School System's Randleman High School and at the Computer-Integrated Machining program at Randolph Community College. Students will benefit as these new and improved facilities will allow the partners to double high school enrollment (from 250 to 500+) students in advanced manufacturing programs, and student access to community college classes, industry-recognized credentials, and work-based learning will increase.

Randolph Community College will serve as the fiscal agent for the grant, and all three school systems will work together through the existing Pathways structure and collaboration to implement the project to achieve its desired outcomes.

Each educational organization will designate a project manager as part of the in-kind contribution, with RCC designating the lead project manager and providing overall oversight of the project, as well as collecting and reporting data on behalf of all partners.

Dr. Shackelford emphasized the partnership between the three school systems. "We know we can do together a lot more than we can do individually," he said. "When we talk, it's about what's best for our students."

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The Golden LEAF Foundation presented a check for \$960,000 to Randolph Community College, Randolph County School System, and Asheboro City Schools for the Pathways to Prosperity project. The money will be supplemented by a 20% match from Randolph County for a total of \$1.2 million. Pictured at the check presentation are (left to right) Suzanne Rohrbaugh, RCC vice president for instructional services, Dr. Terry Worrell, superintendent of

Asheboro City Schools, Dr. Robert Shackelford, RCC president; Mark Sorrells, executive vice president of the Golden LEAF Foundation; Hal Johnson, Randolph County manager; Dr. Stephen Gainey, superintendent of Randolph County School System; Dr. Julie Pack, director of secondary education for ACS; and Nancy Cross, career and technical education administrator, RCSS.