

Press Release: The Whetstone Group Announces LEAD Engagement with the North East Florida Education Consortium

Whetstone is pleased to announce a recent engagement with the North East Florida Education Consortium (NEFEC). Utilizing Whetstone's LEAD concept, the engagement provided three of the consortium's 13 member school districts, Gilchrist, Levy and Dixie Counties, with a defined Road Map to creating a collaborative effort in linking Workforce Development, Economic Development and Education through a targeted Career & Technical Academy model.

LEAD (Linking Economic and Academic Development) thru Workforce Innovations is a unique concept that brings a community's economic and workforce developers, educational system, and local industry together in a partnership creating a synergistic approach and innovative solution to the skilled workforce needs specific to that community.

The academic programs implemented as a result of this collaborative effort allow students to graduate high school with nationally recognized industry certifications, college credits, and their high school diploma...making them immediate contributors to the local economy and skilled workforce pool.

The work that Whetstone and NEFEC are doing with the Tri-County partnership between Gilchrist, Levy, and Dixie Counties is a tailored approach focused on the distinctive workforce needs of a rural community. Rural school districts make up nearly half of the school districts within the state of Florida. Hence, this undertaking should not only benefit the tri-county and its communities, but will also lay the foundation to impact a much greater area in and around the state and around the country. "We are very excited to be a part of this initiative. Collaboration among multiple school districts, though necessary due to the intrinsic nature of these communities, is rare and Whetstone commends both NEFEC and the Tri-County partnership on their outstanding efforts and desire to lead the way," states Melissa Bumpers, President Whetstone Consulting Group.

Dr. James A. Surrency, Executive Director of the North East Florida Educational Consortium, stated, "NEFEC is very pleased to be a part of the Tri-County partnership with the Whetstone Consulting Group and our three member districts of Gilchrist, Levy and Dixie Counties. In today's economy, the importance of creating and retaining a highly skilled workforce will have a major impact on the economic growth of each community. We are hoping this tri-county partnership for career and technical education programs will become a model for other districts throughout the state and nation."

The mission of the North East Florida Educational Consortium is to help member districts cooperatively meet their educational goals and objectives by providing programs and services that individual districts would not be able to provide as effectively or as economically when acting alone. The Consortium is a regional, non-profit, educational service agency.

The Whetstone Group is an Atlanta-based company that utilizes seasoned professionals with extensive experience and background in both the education and business sectors allowing them to bring a unique look and all-around knowledge of how best to combine the education of today with the workforce of tomorrow.

For more information about Whetstone's LEAD concept and how it can greatly benefit your community, please contact Joy McKenzie at 850.212.1183.



www.experienceTWG.com