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DR. KANDACE BETHEA
Superintendent

MARION, S.C. – The Marion County School District is launching a scholarship program to help fund up to 160 dual enrollment scholarships for its students to take classes at Florence-Darlington Technical College (FDTC) through a partnership with SOPAKCO, Inc.

“SOPAKCO is proud to have been able to assist Marion County Schools with this program,” SOPAKCO, Inc. President Lonnie Thompson said. “SOPAKCO is committed to continuing to work with the school districts in its various communities to further enhance student opportunities.”

The scholarships will be provided through Unaka Foundation, a non-profit affiliate of SOPAKCO, which seeks to enhance educational opportunities throughout the communities in which its operating affiliates have facilities. SOPAKCO has been a member of the Marion County community and operated a production facility in Mullins for over 50 years. This scholarship program will provide MCSD students with greater access to dual-enrollment opportunities.

“This is a great opportunity to advance our K-12, college, career and industry pipeline,” MCSD Superintendent Dr. Kandace Bethea said. “I’m especially excited as this transformative initiative can reach a population of students that traditionally may not have participated in a dual education course.”

A Dual Enrollment or Dual Credit course is any course taken that gives high school students the opportunity to earn both high school and college credit at the same time.

Educate • Prepare • Inspire

This pilot program will fund 40 students per semester to enroll in a single class, initially. Students who successfully complete this class will be eligible to enroll in the South Carolina funded dual enrollment program, two (2) classes per semester.

“We are so excited to partner with both the Marion County School District and SOPAKCO to make this opportunity a reality,” FDTC President Dr. Jermaine Ford said.

“Giving students access to college courses through our Dual Enrollment and Early College Academy programs is so vitally important. These students will gain valuable college experience while still in high school that will help them be more prepared for their college experience and also show first generation college students that college isn’t as scary as it sounds.”

With this partnership, Marion County will be able to fill a funding gap for students to participate in the Dual Enrollment Program at FDTC. The grant from SOPAKCO recognizes the importance of expanding accessibility to FDTC Dual Enrollment Program and will assist with workforce development in Marion County.

Dr. Bethea added that Marion County Schools celebrates this important grant through this generous gift from the SOPAKCO Inc., President - Lonnie Thompson and our partnership with Florence-Darlington Technical College, President – Dr. Jermaine Ford.

Susanne Elvington
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