

Position of Huntsville City Schools

First, with regard to the name of the school, no decision has been made. What we have decided is to discuss the name as part of the merger of New Century Technology High School and Lee High School. Our intention is that the community plays a leading role in this process and in creating the identity for the school going forward.

Q: What changes are underway?

A: Because we are combining Lee and New Century Technology High Schools we expect the two school communities to help us find ways to preserve and honor the history of both schools within the new structure. One outcome of this process of bringing these two schools together on the new campus may be a new name for the combined schools. This is a unique situation since we have not previously combined two high schools into one.

Q: Where are we in the process and how will Huntsville City School obtain input from the community?

A: We are at the beginning of the process. As has been our practice with recent capital and technology initiatives, we are convening a committee to benefit from the input of stakeholders and community groups. Our plan is to guide our transition through the combination of the two high schools based upon the input of this committee. In addition to other issues, this committee will address the school name and how to honor the history of Lee and New Century Technology High Schools.

Q: Who's going to be on this committee?

A: The committee will be comprised of PTA, school staff, alumni, and the community from both schools. We expect this to convene this committee by the end of November 2011. In addition to addressing the name, the group will be to help chart the future of programs within the facility to establish a world class educational environment.

Q: Why are you moving New Century to Lee?

A: The Columbia Campus, which houses New Century, is currently over capacity. Additionally, demographic studies project significant future growth at Columbia that will make this overcrowding progressively worse. The current Lee High Student enrollment is well below the capacity of the new school and demographic studies indicate that Lee enrollment will continue to decline. Absent change, this situation will leave the new school significantly underused and the Columbia school without capacity for expected growth.

Q: Why is this combination high school a good idea?

A: New Century Technology High School, which draws students from across Huntsville, has been identified in national publications as one of the nation's Top-500 high schools. It is recognized for its innovative programs in computer science and related fields. Lee High School has award-winning magnet programs in the arts, dance, and engineering. The combination of the two schools on one campus will allow the New Century and Lee Magnet programs to grow within Huntsville most state-of-the-art campus while eliminating overcrowding at the Columbia campus. This new school has capacity for added enrollments and presents the community with a unique opportunity to spur student achievement and community growth by harnessing what will be the district's most modern school as an engine for positive change.

Q: What is the timeline?

A: The timeline will include the following: Complete construction the new high school facility with all technology and security upgrades by the middle of second semester of 2011-2012 school year. Begin orientation visits with PTA, staff, and students from Lee and New Century before the end of May 2012. Open the new school in August 2012.