



ACIT Expansion Will Increase Capacity and Programs

A new \$40 million state education grant will allow the Atlantic County Institute of Technology to expand its capacity and its programming to meet the increasing demand of students who wish to attend the highly prestigious high school.

The grant will be used for the construction of a three-story, 123,000 square foot multi-purpose building to accommodate an additional 450 students, a 25% increase over its current capacity of 1,705 students. The school consistently receives more than twice as many applications as it is able to accept. This past year, more than 1,200 students applied for 500 openings.

“The ACIT is doing a tremendous job and because of its success, it is very much in demand,” stated County Executive Dennis Levinson. “Students want to go to the ACIT because of the quality and variety of programs it offers.”

Some districts have voiced concerns about students leaving their districts to attend ACIT. A better question may be why students prefer to attend ACIT rather than their local high school.

The ACIT is a Blue Ribbon School, the highest award bestowed upon a school by the U.S. Department of Education. It is also recognized in the National Rankings of Best High Schools and boasts a 99% graduation rate.

“Don’t blame us for our success,” he added. “Don’t blame us because students from all over the county wish to attend ACIT even when it means traveling a distance. Don’t blame us for truancy that is virtually nonexistent. Instead of finding fault with the ACIT, it should be applauded for attaining the highest graduation rate in the county and preparing our youth for life beyond high school with a choice of college preparatory programs or high level training and real employment opportunities for those who may not want to attend college.”

The new building will allow the school to introduce three new Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs: Aviation Maintenance, Welding and Advanced Fabrication, and Exercise Science, and expand four existing programs: Dental Assisting, Medical Assisting, Health Sciences, and Culinary Arts.

Additionally, three new CTE programs not covered by the grant will be accommodated in the existing facility: Diesel/Mechanical and Commercial Vehicle Technology; Auto Body and Collision Repair; and Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration.

“As a former history teacher, I’ve always shared the educational philosophy of R. Buckminster Fuller, a world renowned genius who popularized the geodesic dome, to ‘Teach to the Need,’ said Levinson, “and that’s

exactly what the ACIT is doing. It's not surprising that students and their parents gravitate towards ACIT," he said. "This expansion will allow more residents to benefit from the ACIT experience."