



Midlands Education and Business Alliance For Immediate Release

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September 17, 2008

Midlands Middle College's Ribbon Cutting Marks Start of Third Successful Year

The **Midlands Education and Business Alliance's Midlands Middle College** held a ribbon cutting ceremony on Tuesday, September 16, 2008, to celebrate the start of its third successful year. Coordinated by the Midlands Education and Business Alliance (MEBA) and located on the Airport Campus of Midlands Technical College, the Middle College is a unique, three-county initiative designed to help students who are academically capable, but at risk of dropping out of high school. Check out and download photos from the event at www.mebasc.com/photos/

"We are here today because we are making a real difference in people's lives," said **Dr. Sonny White**, President of Midlands Technical College and Chair of MEBA's Board of Directors. "The Midlands Middle College offers school districts and students another choice for academic excellence and future success."

Joining Dr. White to celebrate the success of the Midlands Middle College were several featured speakers including **Dr. Karen Woodward**, Superintendent of Lexington School District One; **Mrs. Sandy Roberts**, parent of a current student; **Kimberly Letton** current student from Airport High School; **Matthew Newton**, current student from Lexington High School; and **Dr. John Hudgens**, Field Representative for the Midlands Middle College.

"I am very grateful to my high school guidance counselor and to the faculty of the Midlands Middle College for giving me another chance for success," said student **Matthew Newton**. "The small class sizes and one-on-one attention I receive at the Midlands Middle College is what I needed to stay focused and to excel. I know the people here truly care about my future and that gives me the confidence and drive to know that I can succeed."

Midlands Middle College works with nine Midlands school districts to provide students with another option for academic excellence and encouragement to graduate from high school. Under the leadership and direction of **Jim Taylor** and **Carole Fearington**, Midlands Middle College works to reduce the high school dropout rate in the Midlands, create a seamless transition to college programs, afford students real-world experiences and encourage collaboration between K-12 and higher education.

The Midlands Middle College was established in 2005 through a Tech Prep Demonstration Grant from the U.S. Department of Education for \$410,540 along with funds from the Nord Family Foundation, Time Warner Cable, Women in Philanthropy and the State Department of Education. Since then other donations and in-kind support have helped the Midlands Middle College to thrive, now serving 105 students, nearly triple the number of students enrolled during its first year. Lexington School District One was instrumental in securing the initial federal grant and continues to ensure the success of the Midlands Middle College by serving as its fiscal agent.

Midlands Education and Business Alliance (MEBA) is a non-profit organization that works to connect students, parents, educators and employers to education and career opportunities in Richland, Lexington and Fairfield Counties through programs and partnerships of business, school, college, faith and other community leaders. MEBA is proud to be a model for building partnerships between education and businesses to create pathways for students from school to work. For more information, please visit our Web site at www.mebasc.com.

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