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### Albany Early College introduces seventh-graders to university life

For 60 Dougherty County seventh-graders, back to school will take on new meaning this school year.

These young scholars will be the initial class of Albany Early College (AEC) and will attend class on the campus at Albany State University. The new program is the result of a cooperative effort of the Dougherty County School System and university leadership provided by a state allocation of funds from the University System of Georgia.

The purpose of the program is to open a new world of education to students from families that have no past college experience. Students are chosen based on academic performance, behavior record, two recommendations and family history of college graduation. The number of students admitted each year is limited to 60, so a lottery system will be the final determinant of who is selected. Students will take the required middle school curriculum in grades seven and eight and high school courses in grades nine and ten. These classes will be held in a new classroom area at Albany State University once construction for the classroom area is complete. The program is in the initial year of a three-year start-up plan. When students reach 11th grade, they will begin taking college-level course work. Upon graduation from high school, they will also have earned two years of college credit that is transferable throughout the University System of Georgia. This represents an opportunity for students who have little means or direction toward continuing an educational path beyond high school.

The intent of this class setting is to allow young students interaction with university student and staff role models and an understanding of a post-secondary educational environment.

AEC students will be required to wear uniforms so they won't get lost in the university activities.

The uniforms will consist of green polo-style shirts and black pants or skirts. School leaders ask ASU students and faculty to lend a hand of hospitality as these students are encountered on campus. They will be looking up to ASU for direction and support in their new school setting.

Barbara Harvey is the director/principal of the Albany Early College. She was employed by the Dougherty County School System in late spring and has worked throughout the summer to equip and supply the new school setting, hire teachers and implement program plans.

Dr. Wilburn Campbell, ASU dean of the College of Education, has been the university principal facilitator to assure program success.

"The cooperation of secondary and postsecondary educators will prove to be



beneficial to our youth," said Dr. Sally Whatley, Superintendent of the Dough County School System. "New opportunities for our students who enroll in this are very exciting for us. We see great potential for improving educational achievement and secondary graduation success in the Early College program. Student orientation for AEC participants will be held in the ACAD auditorium on 28 and 29 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Classes start Aug. 6. Anyone with interest in learning more about Albany Early College may contact at [barbara.harvey@docoschools.org](mailto:barbara.harvey@docoschools.org) or call 483-6300 ext. 5350.

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