



MEDIA RELEASE
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919 N Broad Street • Brooksville, FL 34601

School Board announces the Wilton Simpson Technical Center

Brooksville - At today's special meeting, the Hernando School Board approved and unveiled the new name for the multi-million workforce training center currently under construction in Hernando County. Sophia Watson, Director of Adult and Technical Education for the school district, presented the recommendation to rename the center The Wilton Simpson Technical College (STC), named after Florida Senate President Wilton Simpson. The Hernando legislator saw the need for education and industry to work together to develop the strongest workforce in the state.

"With any complex project that takes a long time to develop, it can be hard for all partners to stay engaged. Senator Simpson has never lost his enthusiasm or his encouragement of the school district's effort to bring a stand-alone technical college to our community," said Watson. "There were times it would have been easy to give up on the vision to bring a workforce center here. But our school board and Senator Simpson never did."

Currently, the school district operates Suncoast Technical Education offering specific training programs on multiple high school campuses. In 2021, the state budget included a \$9.35 million appropriation to build a technical college in Hernando. School board member Jimmy Lodato and Sen. Simpson were driving forces in securing the funding to expand workforce training opportunities for both high school and adult education students.

"My goal has always been to use experience as a farmer, business owner and entrepreneur to be the voice of working, blue collar men and women who are the backbone of our state's workforce," Simpson said at today's event. "The idea that many of those hardworking Floridians will fine tune their life skills with educational skills at this facility is very important to me."

Located across from Brooksville-Tampa Bay Regional Airport, STC will be part of the Dennis Wilfong Center for Success, a complex shared by HCSD, Pasco Hernando State College and Hernando County Government. The school district's college will provide expanded workforce training and apprenticeship programs in high-demand careers for adult and high school students including cybersecurity, manufacturing, diesel service technician, cosmetology lab, and medical programs.

"I encourage our community to watch the video from today's event. To hear Sen. Simpson's personal story as well as heartfelt stories of staff and students from adult education truly drives home the impact of highly skilled workforce training on the lives of students who are looking for a different pathway to good careers," said John Stratton, Superintendent.

The college is currently under construction and is expected to open in August, 2023. Find out more at The Wilton Simpson Technical College website: <https://www.hernandoschools.org/schools/stc>

*Photos attached

