

DAS newsrelease

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For immediate release

J.M. WRIGHT TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL RE-OPENS

Classes Resume for First Time Since 2009

(AUGUST 27, 2014 - STAMFORD, CT) – Governor Dannel P. Malloy, joined by business, trade, education and community leaders as well as other state and local officials, celebrated the grand re-opening of J.M. Wright Technical High School in Stamford.

Planning for the revival of J.M. Wright Technical High School began shortly after the school suspended operations in 2009. Just four years later, the school reopened its doors as a model for technology-driven education and welcomed 145 incoming freshmen students.

"This ribbon cutting is a big step for the City of Stamford that will allow us to advance the important work of training the next generation of workers that will be globally competitive," said Governor Malloy. "Working with community partners, this school has developed a strategy of vision to ensure that the 145 students enrolled today are meeting the workforce demands in Connecticut. I am proud to support this project and will continue to support investments that improve and transform our K-12 and higher education systems so that Connecticut is poised to fulfill the demands of a 21st Century workforce."



Thanks to the support of Southwestern Connecticut's business, trade, labor and educational communities, J.M. Wright Tech is now the first technical high school in the country to offer a facilities management program. Its classrooms have been designed to facilitate digital and mobile instruction in courses including health technology, e-plumbing, e-electrical and culinary arts and sciences.

"Our technical high school system enables our students to hone their craft and sharpen their minds. Our students graduate prepared to succeed either in college or in 21st Century careers," said Connecticut Commissioner of Education Stefan Pryor. "In important ways, Wright Tech now serves as a model school within the technical high school system. From its employer partnerships to its educational approach, the school represents the future of the

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system. We are grateful to the educators, business leaders, and community members who have created the vision for this school – and who are working in collaboration to implement it.”

The new school building covers approximately 200,000 square feet on two floors. In addition to new exterior and entrances, the school interior features new technical shop areas and simulated work environments. The cost of the project totaled \$90.2 million dollars, with \$54.6 million representing construction costs.



Governor Malloy cuts the ribbon at JM Wright THS.

“DAS’ Division of Construction Services (DCS) is proud of its continuing work with the Technical High School system,” said state Department of Administrative Services Commissioner Donald DeFronzo. “With the completion of Wright Tech, DCS has completed total renovations of five high schools and has four others under construction. We were able to complete this project in the very aggressive ten month schedule due in part to the tremendous efforts of our staff and our contractor KBE Building Services. It also helped that the school was not active so we were able to work more aggressively without concern for disruption of educational programs.”

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DCS Deputy Commissioner Pasquale "Bud" Salemi addresses the crowd.

Employers in Southwestern Connecticut's travel/tourism/hospitality, information sciences and technology, food service, automotive and healthcare sectors are actively supporting how J.M. Wright Tech educates students for careers that require communications, teamwork, critical thinking and digital prowess.

"Today is a good day for the Stamford business community," Stamford Chamber of Commerce President Jack Condlin said. "J.M. Wright Tech is now the flagship of what our technical high schools should be. The Stamford business community is extremely happy to welcome J.M. Wright Tech back into our community."

Strong partnerships with area employers is a hallmark of the state's technical high school system and is key in ensuring that students graduate ready to succeed in college and careers.

"We have carefully designed J.M. Wright Tech and our program offerings to prepare students for the careers of the future and teach them the skills that employers today and

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tomorrow require," said Connecticut Technical High School System Superintendent of Schools Dr. Nivea L. Torres. "The new Wright Tech reflects our collaboration with Connecticut policymakers, schools and employers to make technical and STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) education a priority. It will serve as a model school that the Connecticut Technical High School System hopes can be replicated across the state to address workforce needs."

Teachers also welcomed the re-opening of the school today.

"Today is a banner day for students and their families, not just in the greater Stamford area, but across the state. We applaud the Malloy-Wyman Administration for bucking the trend of previous governors and committing the resources to sustain and grow Connecticut's Technical High School system," American Federation of Teachers CT (AFT-CT) President Melodie Peters said. "The reality is that 'one size does not fit all' when it comes to student learning, and there is no better example of how to assure an effective alternative education than our technical high schools. We applaud the Malloy-Wyman Administration for their support of this forward-thinking and highly effective approach."

"As a former JM Wright Tech teacher, I respect what the school once was. But I am more excited about what the school will be," said Jan Hochadel, President, CT State Vocational Federation of Teachers, AFT Local 4200-A. "I applaud the Malloy-Wyman Administration for their investment in providing quality technical education in Fairfield County. JM Wright will play an important role in fulfilling the Connecticut Technical High School system's mission of preparing a skilled workforce."

About the new J.M. Wright Technical High School

In order to succeed in today's job market; students need a solid foundation of academic and technical skills. The new J.M. Wright Tech prepares students for the high-level problem-solving required by today's employees. The school's ten rigorous programs – e-carpentry; e-electrical; e-plumbing and heating; culinary arts and science; automotive engineering; health technology; tourism/hotel/hospitality; digital media; information systems technology; and the nation's first high school facilities management program – were designed to help students master these trades, the technologies they utilize and the skills employers desire. Visit somethingdifferent2014.com.

About The Connecticut Technical High School System

The Connecticut Technical High School System (CTHSS) currently operates 17 diploma-granting technical high schools, one technical education center and two aviation maintenance programs located throughout the state. The system serves approximately 11,200 full-time high school and adult day students, with comprehensive education and training in 31 occupational areas and 2,000 apprenticeship students. CTHSS is the largest high school system in Connecticut, serving all geographic regions and all demographic and diverse populations. For more information, visit cttech.org.

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