

EDUCATION

# Triumph Gulf Coast OKs \$7.6M for FSU PC's Collegiate Laboratory High School

**Jan Waddy** Special to The News Herald

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PANAMA CITY — Florida State University Panama City has been approved for a \$7.6 million grant to provide partial funding for its highly anticipated Collegiate Laboratory High School.

The award comes from Triumph Gulf Coast Inc., a nonprofit corporation that oversees the expenditure of 75% of all funds recovered by the Florida attorney general for economic damages to the state from the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

The start-up grant will be funded over a six-year period. The Collegiate Laboratory High School, expected to open as early as fall 2023, will be the eighth lab school in the state and the first of its kind in Bay County.

**FSU PC graduation:** ABC News President Kim Godwin, a Panama City native, to speak at ceremony

**Peek inside the exhibit:** Kinsey African American Art & History Collection opens at FSU PC

**Relive the 1920s:** Museum features FSU PC students' exhibit on first woman to vote in St. Andrews

“We are grateful for our partnership with Triumph Gulf Coast and the investment in our area students,” said Randy Hanna, dean of FSU Panama City. “The Collegiate Laboratory High School will provide students from Bay and Gulf counties the opportunity to engage in experiential learning with experts in a chosen field.”

“This new laboratory school will extend the benefits of having a local, top 20 public university to families of high school-aged children and enhance educational opportunities in Northwest Florida,” Hanna added.

Collegiate Laboratory High School is expected to serve grades 9-12, with an estimated enrollment of 125 students per grade and admission preference given to dependent children of active-duty military personnel.

Students who attend the school will have unique opportunities to earn industry certifications, complete dual enrollment coursework aligned with their intended majors, and conduct age-appropriate research under the mentorship of FSU faculty.

Students in grades 9 and 10 will complete a traditional high school curriculum including career courses leading to industry certifications in high-wage, high-demand fields such as engineering, computer science, information technology and health sciences. Eligible students in grades 11 and 12 will have the opportunity to earn college credits through dual enrollment, thus accelerating their degree attainment and saving their families thousands of dollars.

Dean Damon Andrew of the FSU College of Education emphasized the role the school will play in strengthening research and implementing the best teaching methods region-wide.

“We plan to be a strong partner with all of the schools across Northwest Florida,” he said.

Triumph Gulf Coast is required to administer the distribution of funds for the recovery, diversification and enhancement of the eight Northwest Florida counties disproportionately affected by the 2010 oil spill: Bay, Escambia, Franklin, Gulf, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, Walton and Wakulla.

Triumph Gulf Coast’s board appointees are Chairman Don Gaetz, Allan Bense, Reynolds Henderson, Ben Lee, Collier Merrill, Matt Terry and David Bear.