



Polaris Tech

CHARTER SCHOOL

News Release

Wednesday, July 31, 2019

Contact: Dr. Melissa Crosby, executive director, 843-645-0605 or melissacrosby@polaristech.org

Retired Gen. ‘Fig’ Newton elected board chair at Polaris Tech Charter School

Polaris Tech enters its second year with retired four-star Air Force Gen. Lloyd “Fig” Newton leading the no-tuition Ridgeland charter school as chair of the Board of Directors.

Joining Newton as officers are Kim Statler, vice-chair; Bob Norwood, treasurer; and Scott Hanna, secretary. Newton, Statler and Norwood were among the school’s founders, with Hanna being elected to the board in 2018.

“The first thing I want to do is thank Sandra Chavez for her years of leadership, on the Planning Committee and the Board of Directors,” Newton said. “She has been a tireless force that helped push this school to open on time, at capacity, and to be able to succeed. She set the course for Polaris Tech’s mission and got us started in clearly the right direction.”

Polaris Tech will open August 19 for its second year, serving students in grades 6-11. There are still limited openings for students in grades 6, 9 and 10 and families may apply online at www.polaristech.org.

When classes open again in August, some of Polaris Tech high school students will be part of the school’s first-ever classes in the foundations of aerospace engineering. The Polaris Tech Board of Directors approved the new curriculum last winter, ahead of the planned schedule, due to the school’s growth and student interest.

The new school year also features the kick-off of Principles of Biomedical Science and Computer Programming at Polaris Tech.

In October 2018, Newton was inducted to the International Air & Space Hall of Fame in San Diego, CA. The National Business Aviation Association honored Newton with selection to the

prestigious Hall of Fame, recognizing more than 200 of the most significant pilots, crew members, innovators and aviation organizations since 1963.

In December that same year, Newton accepted the 2018 Wright Brothers Memorial Trophy for “extraordinary achievements as a history-making military aviator and his continuing contributions to the advancement of aviation education and advocacy.”

“Polaris Tech is in exceptional hands with Gen. Newton,” Chavez said. “He has helped lead us from the start, he understands our challenges and the Lowcountry community, and he has business connections that may help us move our school forward. I have every confidence he will take the baton and carry Polaris Tech to achieve its mission.”

Newton retired in 2000 from the U.S. Air Force. He flew combat missions in Vietnam, performed with the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds aerial demonstration team, led the Air Education and Training Command and flew the F-117 stealth fighter.

After leaving the military, Newton worked at Pratt & Whitney as executive vice president of international military programs and business development until 2006. He serves on the boards of L3 Technologies, the National Defense University and Torchmark Corp.

“We have a tremendous team here at Polaris Tech. The Executive Director, Dr. Melissa Crosby, and our extraordinary instructors and staff did a superb job during the 2018-2019 school term. This is exactly what we need because we have such a tremendous opportunity to help our students continue to grow and learn,” Newton said.

Statler works for the S.C. Commerce Department in workforce development; Norwood is a retired executive; and Hanna is a church pastor in Colleton County.

Polaris Tech is a state-approved charter school serving middle and high school students from Jasper County and the Lowcountry. It is a free school (no tuition), that focuses on preparing young people for successful work and college.

The Polaris Tech academic emphasis is on six career areas, starting with: Aerospace, Health Sciences and Business Management. Polaris Tech continues to accept student applications for the 2019-2020 school year for students who will be in grades 6-11. Applications are available online at www.polaristech.org.

The newly-constructed school is located on Grays Highway across from the Ridgeland Airport.

To keep updated about Polaris Tech Charter School, follow them on Facebook and at www.polaristech.org. For specific questions, email info@polaristech.org or call 843-645-0605.

END