



# Polaris Tech

## CHARTER SCHOOL

### News Release

Thursday, Jan. 9, 2020

**Contact:** Dr. Melissa Crosby, executive director, 843-645-0605 or [melissacrosby@polaristech.org](mailto:melissacrosby@polaristech.org)

## **Polaris Tech to expand to fifth grade in upcoming school year, become 5-12 school**

In a major move for Polaris Tech Charter School, fifth graders will be accepted for the upcoming school year following approval Jan. 9 by the S.C. Public Charter School Board in Columbia.

For the upcoming 2020-21 school year, Polaris Tech will teach students in grades 5-12 – with the first graduates earning diplomas in June 2021.

“Starting the year before we actually opened, we heard from dozens of families that they wished Polaris Tech would teach the younger students,” said retired four star Air Force Gen. Lloyd “Fig” Newton, chair of the Polaris Tech board of directors and one of the pioneering school’s founders.

“With this positive vote by the State Charter School Board, we will expand to include fifth grade next school year,” Newton said. “This is a major step for Polaris Tech and for Lowcountry families.”

Polaris Tech is a state-approved charter school serving students from Jasper, Hampton, Colleton and Beaufort counties. It is a free school (no tuition), that focuses on preparing young people for successful work and college.

“In our two years of working with our learners and their families, we have seen strong academic and personal growth. By enrolling younger students at Polaris Tech, we will reach more students and provide them with a fuller exposure to our unique way of teaching and learning,” said Dr. Melissa Crosby, executive director of the school.

Polaris Tech encourages teachers to become “navigators,” helping students discover learning through hands-on and project-based work, through online coursework and through more traditional direct instruction.

Students have improved academically, including many boosting their reading scores dramatically after joining Polaris Tech from traditional public and private schools in the Lowcountry.

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 in grades 6-11, and for the 2020-21 year for grades 5-12.

Student applications are available online at [www.polaristech.org](http://www.polaristech.org) and are open through February.

The school, open to all residents of South Carolina, also offers sports, robotics teams, Project Lead the Way and technology is immersed throughout the learning.

The Polaris Tech Board of Directors voted in December to submit the required documentation to the S.C. Charter School Board to amend the school charter to allow fifth graders to attend.

It is anticipated the school will have room for about 60 fifth graders. State law provides for “sibling preference,” meaning families with children already enrolled at Polaris Tech will have a stronger chance of having younger children accepted. A random lottery is used when applications exceed the number of available openings in a grade level.

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](http://www.polaristech.org). For specific questions, email [info@polaristech.org](mailto:info@polaristech.org) or call 843-645-0605.

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