

## **District Offers Innovative Opportunity to Students**

In an effort to expose students to STEM opportunities and to better prepare them for successful endeavors beyond high school, Williamsburg County School District's Administration announced on Wednesday, December 5, 2019, at a press conference that interested senior Career and Technology Education students will be able to take the FAA Part 107 exam to become certified remote pilots.

This cutting-edge technological advanced opportunity is available as a result of the Department of Career and Technology Education's partnership with AINautics UAV Academy. According to Mr. Torrance Wilson, Principal of the Hemingway Career and Technology Center, "It is always my intention to advance the Career and Technology Education opportunities for our students. When we expand opportunities in the STEM fields, we increase our students' income potential. The Drone Industry is a fast-growing field that is used in many different industries. When I contacted AINautics and learned about the specifics of their program, I knew that this partnership would be a great advantage to the district. Today, I am excited that our students in Williamsburg County will be able to become certified as remote drone pilots."

Classes for selected students will be offered at their school (C. E. Murray High School, Hemingway Career and Technology Center and Kingstree Senior High School) on Fridays during the spring semester for 90 minutes. Students will be enrolled in two courses, Drone Innovation Technology and Advanced Drone Operations. These classes will be taught by members of an elite team of FAA Certified Flight Instructors and AINautics UAV Academy experts who will work closely with students to prepare them for the FAA exam. Students will also learn about the many career opportunities in the drone industry and the incredible future income opportunities of those interested in pursuing a career.

Dr. Kenneth Burgess brought greetings to press conference attendees and shared that career opportunities for students with drone training are constantly growing. He also thanked Mr. Wilson for spearheading this opportunity for students. "Drones are used in agriculture, construction, forestry, computer science, firefighting and many other fields, therefore, this certification will enhance our students' ability to find employment", Burgess added.

Superintendent Wilder expressed enthusiasm that we are adding more opportunities for our students in Williamsburg County School District. She thanked staff that worked diligently to make it possible for students to learn more about STEM fields, she encourage students to continue to expand their knowledge to become more employable.

Christopher Williams, Director of Partnership Development at AINautics, provided an overview of the program to attendees and encouraged students to work hard and do their best in this program. He also challenged them to imagine the many changes that will occur in the workplaces as it relates to technology. Mr. Williams told the group that AINautics offers opportunities to students in ten counties in South Carolina. He is proud of the number of high school students who are not only certified as drone pilots but also taking advantage of employment in the drone industry.