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New program helps adults further education

(Bradenton, FL—September 13, 2010) It's autumn, the traditional time most people think of going back to school. For adults who did not graduate from high school, there is a new program at Manatee Technical Institute to help them with the entrance process and prepare them for success in post-secondary education (education beyond high school).

The program is known as the Transitions program, as it helps to transition students from adult education classes, such as GED, adult basic education and English as a second language, to technical school or college.

Paid for from grant funding, two instructors and one counselor at MTI will provide eligible students with coaching, counseling, mentoring, tutoring, guidance and support to enroll at MTI or State College of Florida.

“This program will afford adult students who may not have had the opportunity until now to realize their potential,” said Linda Agresta, assistant director at MTI. “Transitions will be that bridge that will help them cross from earning a GED to getting an education that will prepare them for a career.”

Transitions counselor, Thomas Bellantonio, will personally walk students through the steps. “More opportunities lie ahead for someone with a post-secondary education,” said Bellantonio. According to the U.S. Department of Labor Statistics, by 2016, 85 percent of all jobs will require some type of postsecondary education.

Across the state, on average only about five percent of adult education graduates enroll in postsecondary education immediately upon completion of their adult education programs. The

Florida Department of Education is seeking to change those statistics with these funds. Manatee was one of only seven school districts and four colleges throughout the state to be awarded this competitive grant.

“No matter what age, background or experience someone has, there is always room for higher education and self growth,” Bellantonio said. He has already begun working with about 15 students. He hopes to serve 50 or more.

An orientation session is held every week for new students. For more information, contact Thomas Bellantonio at 751-7900, ext. 2191, or email him at bellantoniot@manateeschools.net.

The mission of Manatee Technical Institute is to meet and exceed our community’s training and educational expectations. MTI is a 2007 Tampa Bay Business of the Year and has won more SkillsUSA medals than any other school in the nation for the past seven years.

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