

Governor DeSantis, Tom Glavine Join New High School and College Ribbon Cutting

Seacoast Collegiate High School and Northwest Florida State College celebrate the opening of expanded South Walton Center with local and state officials.

SANTA ROSA BEACH, FL, UNITED STATES, August 28, 2025

/EINPresswire.com/ -- [Seacoast Collegiate High School](#) (SCHS), the high school under the SEASIDE SCHOOL™, and [Northwest Florida State College](#) (NWFSC) held a celebratory ribbon cutting with the [Walton Area Chamber of Commerce](#) to mark the grand opening of the newly expanded Northwest Florida State College South Walton Center – home to brand new College facilities and Seacoast Collegiate High School.



Seacoast Collegiate High School and Northwest Florida State College South Walton Center Ribbon Cutting

The event brought together key state and local leaders including Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, Congressman Jimmy Patronis, Senator Jay Trumbull, Representative Shane Abbott, Florida Department of Education Commissioner Anastasios Kamoutsas, Major League Baseball Hall of Famer Tom Glavine, and many other local and state officials. Their presence underscored the importance of this groundbreaking project that expands the high school's capacity but also ensures all students of Walton County have personal access to a Northwest Florida State College education where they live.

“

The South Walton Center is a model for how collaboration between K-12 and higher education can change lives. We're opening doors to opportunity for every student in Walton County.”

Mel Ponder, NWFSC President

and beyond.

The project is designed to expand access to high-quality high school and post-secondary education and prepare the next generation of leaders in STEM, business, healthcare,

"This center is more than a building—it's a bold investment in the future of Walton County," said Dr. Tom Miller, Executive Director of SEASIDE SCHOOL™. "Together with Northwest Florida State College, we're creating a center that expands access, inspires achievement, and prepares our students to lead in a rapidly changing world."

The expansion comes during a historic milestone year for the SEASIDE SCHOOL™—celebrating its 30th year in operation as one of Florida's first and most successful public charter schools. The project also highlights the ongoing impact of the SEASIDE SCHOOL FOUNDATION™, which has partnered with the SEASIDE SCHOOL™ since 2008.

The new, state-of-the-art facility represents a dynamic partnership between Seacoast Collegiate High School and NWFSC. The College's South Walton Center houses both the Seacoast Collegiate High School facility and Northwest Florida State College facilities. The College will use its buildings on-site to provide opportunities for both dual enrollment students from any Walton County high school and traditional college students with direct access to college-level instruction, labs, workforce training, and advanced academic pathways.

"The South Walton Center is a model for how collaboration between K-12 and higher education can change lives," said Mel Ponder, President of Northwest Florida State College. "We're not just opening doors to classrooms – we're opening doors to opportunity for every student in Walton County. Critically, this landmark expansion of the South Walton Center will welcome students to the College from all walks of life, whether they are a traditional college student seeking their college education or a dual enrollment from SCHS, any Walton County school, or a home



Speakers for the Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting Celebration of the Seacoast Collegiate High School and Northwest Florida State College South Walton Center including Governor Ron DeSantis.



Florida Governor Ron DeSantis speaking at the Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting Celebration of the Seacoast Collegiate High School and Northwest Florida State College South Walton Center.

educated student.”

The center will serve more than 500 students across the high school and College this fall, with the capacity for more significant growth in the coming years. But the impact reaches far beyond enrollment. With the College offering dual enrollment, workforce certifications, and student-focused resources on a local center, families across South Walton now have affordable, high-quality college education within reach.

This milestone was made possible through significant state and local investment. Triumph Gulf Coast awarded a \$9.5 million grant to expand STEM and workforce programs, and Governor Ron DeSantis approved \$9 million in state appropriations in 2023, \$500,000 in 2024, with an additional \$750,000 granted in 2025. An investment of over ten million dollars in South Walton's education and workforce development.

“We are proud to invest in educational infrastructure that meets the needs of Florida’s future workforce,” said Governor Ron DeSantis. “This center is an example of how public dollars, strategic vision, and local leadership can come together to make a real, lasting impact.”

In addition, the Glavine Family Foundation contributed a \$1 million leadership gift, securing lifetime naming rights and helping launch the project from vision to reality.

“As a longtime advocate for education and youth development, I’m proud to support this incredible initiative,” said Tom Glavine. “This center gives students the chance to dream big, work hard, and succeed in ways that impact their entire community.”

From ninth graders beginning their high school careers to high school graduates and adult learners pursuing college credentials, this expanded center is designed to serve a diverse range of students. Whether preparing students for college, career, or both, the expanded NWFSC South Walton Center is set to strengthen the local talent pipeline and fuel regional economic growth.

“Students in Walton County now have a homegrown path to higher education, career advancement, and personal growth,” said A. Russell Hughes, Walton County School District Superintendent. “This is what it means to invest in people, not just buildings.”

With this expansion, Northwest Florida State College and Seacoast Collegiate High School continue to lead the way in educational innovation, workforce development, and community impact. This collaborative project stands as a beacon of what’s possible when public education, higher education, government, and philanthropy work hand-in-hand.

Bobby Parker
Parker Gene Creative
+1 850-797-1987

bobby@parkergenecreative.com

Visit us on social media:

[LinkedIn](#)

[Instagram](#)

[Facebook](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/844101313>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2025 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.