

Lee, Barbers Hill ISD plan exciting future for students

BAYTOWN, TX — Leaders of Barbers Hill ISD and Lee College are taking steps that could lead to the creation of a college campus in the Mont Belvieu community.

"We are thrilled to be working with Barbers Hill Superintendent Dr. Greg Poole, a tremendous visionary leader, who has brought exemplary programs to his district," said Dr. Lynda Villanueva, Lee College president. "We look forward to advancing the tradition of excellence at Barbers Hill ISD."

The dialogue started in 2015 with the district's desired outcome being a campus with course offerings specific to the needs of Barbers Hill students and the community with significantly lower tuition costs and at little cost to taxpayers.

"This process has certainly been a bumpy road with what appeared to be dead ends at times. Yet our stated goal remained the same: a higher education presence in the community with course offerings specific to our needs at minimal cost to our taxpayers," said Dr. Poole. "It is evident after many conversations with Dr. Villanueva that she values and shares our vision. She truly gets the big picture and the powerful potential that such a partnership could create."

State law allows for the formation of a branch campus in which the tax moneys raised can only be utilized within the jurisdiction of the Barbers Hill district. There are a number of formal steps that must be taken — starting with the creation of a steering committee and culminating with a vote by Barbers Hill ISD taxpayers.

Barbers Hill's remarkable tax base can support a premier college setting with unique class offerings for local students and community members to receive certifications and/or degrees currently not offered in the area. The new campus would provide a complete array of student services to ensure the Barbers Hill community receives the same level of amenities found at the main Lee College campus in Baytown.

The tax associated with a Barbers Hill college cannot by law exceed 5 cents per \$100 valuation. The tax would be assessed by Lee College and collected by the school district, with the branch campus receiving 100 percent of the tax revenue.