

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ACTE Announces Georgia Counselor as National Award Finalist

ALEXANDRIA, VA—The Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) announces Sheryl Neely, a professional school counselor at Frederick Douglass High School in Atlanta, Georgia, as the winner of the 2015 ACTE Region II Career Guidance Award. The ACTE Career Guidance Award recognizes guidance counselors and career development professionals who have made significant contributions to advocate, educate and communicate the value of CTE as a viable career option to a variety of audiences in their communities.

As a high school counselor for Atlanta Public Schools, Sheryl Neely promotes lifelong learning and encourages students to work toward achieving diverse goals, competencies and specialized skills. Neely, an Alumni of the University of Maryland, received her doctorate from Walden University and her counseling degree from the University of West Alabama. She serves on Atlanta Public School's CTE advisory board, is currently GACTE's President-Elect for the Guidance and Counseling Division, and Atlanta Public School's High School Counselor of the Year.

Neely has helped secure over \$5 million in scholarships and has cultivated a number of CTE programs and award opportunities for her students, who have a strong track record of success. She led two engineering design teams of students to qualify for a state-wide engineering competition and advance to nationals for a mousetrap car design. Two CTE students recommended and mentored by Neely were named Atlanta Ambassadors for Community Service by Kaseem Reed, mayor of Atlanta. Through Neely's support and recommendation, another of her students was selected out of 4,000 applicants for the Disney Dreamers Academy.

Neely is the founder of the F.R.E.S.H. (Faculty Reaching Every Student with Helping Hands) Foundation, a nonprofit organization focused on empowering and developing youth to become model citizens, while preparing them for career and postsecondary options. The Educational Development department for F.R.E.S.H. provides tutoring and mentoring services, test preparation, scholarships, financial aid, and college fairs and tours. In addition to these efforts, Neely spearheaded a small learning community design team for large high schools that had been transformed from comprehensive high schools to career academies, and she played an integral part in getting buy-in from faculty and staff to make the transition. "Sheryl is an ambassador for higher education and an outstanding leader for social change," says Libra Royster, assistant principal.

Neely is one of five finalists for the 2016 national title. The national winner will be announced at the ACTE Awards Banquet, a dinner and award presentation recognizing the best CTE

educators in the country. The event will take place on Thursday evening, November 19, during ACTE's CareerTech VISION 2015 in New Orleans, Louisiana. The Awards Banquet is sponsored by Express Employment Professionals, Kuder, CareerSafe, Certiport, and Stratasys. For more information about the ACTE Excellence Awards, visit our webpage (www.acteonline.org/awards).

About ACTE

The Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) is the nation's largest not-for-profit association committed to the advancement of education that prepares youth and adults for successful careers. ACTE represents the community of CTE professionals, including educators, administrators, researchers, guidance counselors and others at all levels of education. ACTE is committed to excellence in providing advocacy, public awareness and access to resources, professional development and leadership opportunities.

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