

Rise School Affiliation Announcement  
July 22, 2014

Welcome to the UAH campus and the Rise School of Huntsville. We appreciate you being here as we make a few announcements about the future of the Rise School.

Before I begin though, let me introduce some special guests. We have with us today Mr. Paul W. Bryant, Jr., President Pro Tem of the Board of Trustees of The University of Alabama, and members of the Board from the 5<sup>th</sup> Congressional District Ron Gray and Britt Sexton. Also joining us are the Co-Founders of the Rise School of Huntsville, and current members of the Board of Directors of Rise of Huntsville, Inc., the governing Board of the Rise School of Huntsville, Amanda and Jerry Lee. Rise Board members attending today are Jill Gardner, President, from whom you will hear shortly, Caroline Bradford, Director of the Rise School, and Ken Watson. From UAH we have Christine Curtis, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, Ray Pinner, Senior Vice President for Finance and Administration, Delois Smith, Vice President for Diversity, Ray Vaughn, Vice President for Research, and Beth Quick, Chair of the Department of Education.

The concept of the Rise School, Rise originally standing for Rural Infant Stimulating Environment, in which educational services are provided to children six weeks up to six years of age with developmental disabilities and children without disabilities in order to provide them with a firm foundation for their next educational experience, began at the University of Alabama in 1974 supported by a grant funded by the U.S. Office of Health, Education and Welfare. The concept expanded from there with Rise Tuscaloosa becoming a unit of The University of Alabama in 1977. The University of Alabama Rise School now serves approximately 100 children, evenly balanced between children with disabilities and typical children, in the Stallings Building, a state of the art facility with six classrooms. There are Rise Schools, modelled after The University of Alabama Rise School in Texas, Colorado, and Oklahoma at Oklahoma State University.

Amanda and Jerry Lee had the vision of a Rise School in Huntsville, and launched the School in January 2013 at Trinity Methodist Church. In August of 2013 Rise School of Huntsville relocated to the UAH campus in three buildings and began on a path of affiliation with the University ultimately leading to the structure of the The University of Alabama Rise School in Tuscaloosa. The Rise School mission and vision fit well with UAH's vision of a university where technology and human understanding converge with core values of inclusiveness and diversity and a goal to foster an environment of community service and engagement. A close affiliation with UAH will assist us in leveraging the knowledge and expertise of faculty and students, particularly from the UAH Department of Education and the College of Nursing, as well as the College of Engineering through projects to assist students in their daily activities, and enhance the educational experience of Rise School students.

We anticipate recommending to the Board of Trustees of the University of Alabama at its September meeting that the Rise School of Huntsville become a unit of The

University of Alabama in Huntsville housed within the UAH Department of Education and the Department be elevated to more prominent status within the University's academic structure. We believe this structure will facilitate growth of the Rise School of Huntsville, allowing us to serve more Huntsville area children, provide opportunity for relocation to permanent campus facilities beyond the current portable classrooms, and provide a unique educational experience in the region for UAH students.

At this point, I'd like to turn the podium over to Jill Gardner, President of Rise of Huntsville, Inc. Jill is Church Administrator at Trinity United Methodist Church and has over twenty-five years of experience in nonprofit management, and she will bring us up to date regarding classroom expansion for the Rise School.

Thank you Jill. And thanks to everyone for attending. Please join us for refreshments and feel free to tour the facilities.