

The Office for Career and Technical Education
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To Whom it May Concern;

This letter is written in support of the development of a statewide network known as C.E.R.N.

The Coastal Environmental Research Network (C.E.R.N.) is a statewide network of research partnership facilities that collaborate with regional colleges, universities, businesses and government entities to conduct business, research and education aimed at coastal restoration.

The mission of C.E.R.N. is to conduct innovative, interdisciplinary research focused on estuarine ecosystems with a focus on habitat monitoring and restoration while providing an economic engine for local, regional, and state businesses. The C.E.R.N. project has three primary objectives. The first is to construct a network of regional state-of-the-art coastal research institutes that serve as a centralized hub for research, habitat restoration, and economic development. Second, at the local level, C.E.R.N. will develop the Pasco Institute for Environmental Research & Restoration (P.I.E.R.²). The institute will serve as an access point for local business, career education (through local career academies), college and university level research, K-14 environmental education, and environmental public outreach within Pasco County and the state of Florida. Finally, C.E.R.N. will create and foster research and restoration efforts that contribute to ensuring a protective barrier is placed across the Gulf coast in Florida by focusing on environmental stewardship, job creation and preparation, and active research and restoration programs culminating in a regional program mitigation of the Deepwater Horizon Environmental Disaster.

The District School Board of Pasco County will work with local, regional, and state level stakeholders to develop the Coastal Environmental Research Network (C.E.R.N.) using the coastal research institutes as the centralizing feature.

The (Pasco Economic Development Council) in collaboration with Pasco County Schools, **CareerSource Pasco Hernando**, Pasco County Commission and the University of South Florida understands the scope of this work and is in full support of this endeavor.

Respectfully,



Jerome Salatino
CEO/President

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