



LEE COUNTY RISING STUDENT SUMMIT

RISING TOGETHER. BUILDING WHAT'S NEXT.

Lee County Rising Student Summit –FAQ

What is the Lee County Rising Student Summit?

The *Lee County Rising Student Summit* is a joint effort between local schools, the District Attorney's Office, Southern Union State Community College, Opelika Chamber of Commerce, and other community partners designed to help young people discover their next steps after high school. The summit will provide students with tools, resources, and connections to help them thrive beyond high school—whether in college, training programs, or the workforce.

Who Will Attend?

Approximately 240 students from all three local public-school districts will participate. Students were nominated and selected by their schools for this opportunity. The group represents a wide range of young people with varying interests, abilities, and experiences. Many are still exploring what comes next after high school, while others are looking for direction, guidance, or a connection that will help them see their potential in a new way.

When and Where is the Summit?

Lee County Rising Student Summit will take place **January 29–30, 2026** at **Southern Union State Community College, Opelika Campus**. Each school will attend on one of the two days to allow smaller group sizes and more meaningful interactions between students, mentors, and employers. The same curriculum will be offered on both days. The summit is free of charge, and transportation, lunch, and snacks will be provided.

What Happens at the Summit?

- Inspiring speakers will challenge students to think about their future in new ways.
- Interactive breakout sessions will inspire students for life after high school.
- Students will engage in small-group mentoring.
- A fun, youth-centered day featuring music, swag, and interactive learning experiences.

What Topics Will Be Covered?

- Career paths and local industries exploration
- Workforce readiness and employability skills
- Leadership, teamwork, and communication
- Financial literacy and life management
- Goal setting and personal motivation

What is a Reverse Career Fair?

Select summit students will have the opportunity to experience a **Reverse Career Fair** designed to build communication and presentation skills.

In a traditional career fair, employers set up tables and students visit to ask questions and learn about job or training opportunities. In a Reverse Career Fair, the roles are flipped—students become the presenters. Each student or small group will prepare a display or portfolio showcasing their interests, strengths, and career goals. Employers and community representatives walk through the space, meet the students, and initiate conversations.

Leading up to the event, mentors will work with students to help them prepare—coaching them on how to introduce themselves professionally, discuss their goals, and present their skills with confidence. This mentoring also supports future job interviews, college admissions conversations, and workplace readiness.

This approach helps students:

- Practice introducing themselves professionally.
- Gain confidence in sharing their skills and ambitions.
- Receive direct feedback and encouragement from business leaders.

It also helps employers identify potential future talent, learn what motivates today's students, and strengthen connections between local industries and the next generation of workers. Students will also have the opportunity to participate in a traditional career fair.

What Are the Goals of the Summit?

- To help every student graduate with direction, purpose, and confidence.
- To connect education and workforce development, showing students that opportunity exists right here in Lee County.
- To build mentorship relationships that last beyond the summit.
- To strengthen local talent availability and inspire community engagement in youth success.
- To meet students where they are and help them rise—by connecting them with real opportunities, real people, and real purpose.

How Can Businesses and Organizations Get Involved?

- Serve as a mentor.
- Participate in the Reverse Career Fair or traditional Hiring Event & College Expo.
- Provide hands-on demonstrations or activities that highlight your industry.
- Become an event sponsor to help make the event memorable and accessible.

Your involvement sends a clear message to our students: Lee County believes in them, values their potential, and is ready to help them succeed.

Who Can I Contact for More Information?

For details or to get involved, please contact:

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