

\*Ukulele music\*

Keith: Welcome to the LeeCoSchools Edcast number two with Beth Parkman! Why did we talk to Beth today?

Kyle: Okay so Beth is a career coach here at Lee County Schools. She also spent some time working with Chattahoochee Valley which is one of our local community colleges. Fantastic interview with Beth. Fantastic! It's one of those things that I wish I had had that type of person that I could have talked with when I was coming through school because this is information that I would have LOVED to have known.

Keith: It's a relatively new position, we found out...

Kyle: That's right.

Keith: ...and her job is to introduce students to the throat punch that is real life after school.

Kyle: Basically! That's basically what's happening they've not ever had to deal with or ask some of these questions of themselves, "Hey how are you logistically going to do this?" "What is your plan?" "Do you have a plan?" "If you don't have a plan, how are you gonna achieve it?" I don't know if you know this but school going through college or whatever your after K12 experience is, it's not going to just magically fall in your lap and be the most perfect thing you've ever experienced.

Keith: Oh yes.

Kyle: It takes planning and Beth is the human being that is in charge of giving that plan...

Keith: Give it some focus and some realism.

Kyle: Absolutely

Keith: Because...

Kyle: Nice realism!

Keith: Of course but I mean, you know, if your idea is "I'm want to apply to 40 colleges", she's gonna go, "Sweetie, that's nice but..." Kyle: There might be some reasons that that is not...

Keith: A thing...

Kyle: Right

Keith: Or, you know, "oh hey, I want to go to, you know, Mississippi State!" First of all, why?!? Second of all...[laughter]. Hashtag Auburn! Hashtag War Eagle! Hashtag I am using hashtags in conversation. But second of all, like, have you thought of out-of-state tuition and the logistics and you know you're gonna be what feels like a million miles from home and is that something that you've thought about.

Kyle: Is that something you can logistically achieve?

Keith: Right

Kyle: I mean, even transportation...Anyway we don't want to give too much away.

Keith: Right.

Kyle: Lots of really good stuff and we had a great time.

Keith: Yeah, so enjoy it. If you find yourself with any questions, comments, complaints, criticisms, compliments, colloquialisms, conundrums, or even concerns, you can find us on the website at [www.lee.k12.al.us/edcast](http://www.lee.k12.al.us/edcast) or on Twitter @LeeCoSchools, we're also on Facebook, and you can email us at [edcast@lee.k12.al.us](mailto:edcast@lee.k12.al.us) and thanks for listening and Kyle...

Kyle: Here we go!

\*Funky transition music\*

Keith: Did you start out at Lee County as a career coach? What did you do before you...

Beth Parkman: Well, I actually have a background, college degree in communications and then I went back for broadcast journalism then kind of crossed over to mass communications...

Keith: You should be doing this is what I'm hearing (meaning hosting the Edcast)

Beth Parkman: Yeah...

Keith: Pretty much...

Beth Parkman: Correct

Keith: Where did you go to school at?

Beth Parkman: The University of Alabama. After graduation I quickly realized there's not a whole lot of money in the field unless you're at the tip-top, but the skills that I have I definitely--it was all there for a reason because I do a lot of public speaking talking to parents, talking to assemblies, and even one-on-one. So it definitely has served me well. Then a year or so out of college, I ended up being hired at Chattahoochee Valley Community College, CVCC, one of our local community colleges, in the role as recruiter. So again it was day in and day out doing the assemblies in high schools, lunch room visits, working one-on-one with counselors, and also with it being a smaller school you do a lot of different jobs you cross train. So becoming familiar with financial aid, working with the admissions office everyday because if you go out and recruit a student and they decide to apply well then they go through the admissions process of a college, so I learned all of that and I did that job for eight years. And it was a great learning tool just learning everything there is to know about the college process, two-year degrees, four-year degrees. If somebody goes on and gets a masters degree. Even...I got the aspect of a non-traditional student-an adult-coming back to school maybe they didn't finish the first time, maybe didn't have the opportunity to go to school, or just the middle of life "I want to do something else and I've got to start over"...So yeah, from that point that launched me of having a pretty wide knowledge of picking careers, colleges, and what are the pros and cons to that. Then from that point, when I interviewed to be the career coach I had that basis and I'm going on four years here at Lee County serving as the career coach. I'm the first person in the position. It was a newly created position so there was a lot of learning curve because they said, "this is what this position is we want you to help students get ready for life after high school".

Keith: Yes

Beth Parkman: And let me be clear life after high school for everyone is not college. Not everyone needs to or wants to go to college. So that could include going to work, starting a career, joining the military, or going on to seek further education. So they said "we need some help kind of helping students launch", "good luck and here you go", so it has evolved over the last three or four years and I really enjoy helping students figure out what that next step is.

Keith: We could have used something like that we were in school. We were handed the diploma and told, "Good luck!"

Kyle: "The door's that way"

Beth Parkman: Yeah but I hear that a lot. When I'm talking to students, I don't get frustrated or annoyed because, if you're 17 or 18 go back to where you were: you think you have it all figured out but you don't because you've only experienced K through 12. You don't know what a full-time job is like. You don't know what college is like so you can make a plan and you can map it out but so kind of guiding them and I have students that sit down one-on-one with me with very unrealistic expectations very!

Kyle: Like what?

Beth Parkman: Like "hi I want to be a veterinarian" "I want to be a doctor" which is great and we pull our grades and they have maybe C's and D's or or they don't like science or they don't like math and that's truly maybe that just something they seen on a TV show or thought it was a good idea. So it's my goal that we don't break the student down, we say, "okay so you're interested in what?" "oh I like history and I like stem or engineering or taking things apart" and then we kind of restart the path and we say okay well let's think about what classes would you take. Are you interested in a two-year? Maybe a technical degree? A four-year degree? So I never crush anyone's soul or I try not to but at what point are we gonna become realistic with the students and when you're a junior and senior it's time to get real with what is it can you really do with the skills that you have and we're all good at something and we're all bad at something. So you start real basic, "what's your favorite subject?" "what do you do when you're not here?" "what's your hobby?" "play video games?" "oh you like to be outside and hunt and fish?" "oh you like to create and draw?" and then from there you start the conversation of what job could you really do all day every day that you would enjoy and be able to be successful at.

Kyle: Wow

Keith: I started out wanting to be a vet and Grandma was excited...

Beth Parkman: Yeah

Keith: Because I was gonna be a rich veterinarian. I was gonna be a rich doctor. I was gonna take her everywhere...

Kyle: Well that's one of the reasons that people want to become a veterinarian because "oh I get to play with animals and be wealthy"...

Keith: Then I realized that there's lot of blood involved and so then I was like "hey I want to be an I want to be a history teacher". Grandma was like, "oh my lord, there goes my vacation! You can't take me anywhere now that you're a history teacher"

Beth Parkman: So students, like I said, it's nothing wrong with having goals and ideas but then you layer in the realistic then you layer in if you're going to college where are you paying for it like what those steps are. Then students quickly realize college is very different from high school a lot more independence in class face-to-face less so that means when you're on your own you may have two hours of class time on a Monday and a Wednesday but that means five to six hours of studying independently on your own and it's a rude awakening for a lot of students. Not saying they can't do it but you talk to a lot of students when you look at numbers start school and then leave school before they finish because it's not what they thought it was going to be.

Keith: Because there's such a culture shock. I know whenever I got there, I was like, "Ohhhh, this is awesome!" So are there ways that you guys help the students prepare for that culture shock between college and high school?

Beth Parkman: Yes. So there are days that I will schedule presentations in certain classes maybe senior history classes or tenth grade English classes and the teachers may have a specific topic or they may come in and say, "hey will you kind of go over what students should be planning for or what's coming next?" So yes anytime I get a chance to talk to students I try to weave that in there. However we know that students tend sometimes to block out "Oh my parents have told me, my teachers have told me that" so sometimes life you just got to do it yourself then you walk in those shoes but we do try to guide them a lot of times in question and answer sessions we even have done quizzes or other online games where they can answer questions. They don't realize that they have credit hours in college so you might take 12 or 15 hours which is four or five classes and of course that's very different from the bell ringing seven times and you go to this class and you go to that class. So a lot of them some of them know if they have an older sibling or a cousin that has attended college but some of them are like "wow!" so we just talked about they may go to class Monday, Wednesday, Friday and then have another class Tuesday, Thursday. Some of them are really excited to find out a lot of colleges don't have Friday classes. But then we reiterate that probably 60 to 70 percent of college students have a job or a part time job so that would be a day that you could get hours or I always tell them I highly recommend that would be a day that I would plan studying or study group or working online or writing a paper or whatever. So they hear it but again until you get used to that schedule. So yeah we discuss it and some of them absorb it and some don't.

Kyle: What would you say are things that someone who is leaving K12 needs to know.

Beth Parkman: Okay first of all have a plan okay because in my experience not only with my background in the community college system but in K12, students truly want to go on to the next step. They're excited. They are looking forward to it, but without a plan you are dead in the water. Whether it's military: okay have you talked to a recruiter? What are your grades like? Do you have any interest? Some of our schools or Smith Station High School has a JROTC program, have you taken one of those classes? Do you have any idea? And we just have those conversations. If you're interested in college, have you gotten online and looked at websites? Because again I've mentioned students will come in and say, "I want to go to Auburn University." Okay, great. What do you want to study? And they might list something that Auburn doesn't offer or I want to go to JSU because my cousin played football there. That is great but I want to study I'm just gonna make a topic forensic science and they don't have it so as simple as it sounds if you have not written things down or looked at a website or made a phone call or visited then you really don't have a plan so we go over that. I reiterate that a lot in junior and

senior classes when we can talk with them go on college visits go sit down in a recruiter's office whether it's military or college. If you're interested in going to work do you have a contact? "Oh I'm going to work full-time at Walmart distribution." Okay, great. Do you have an interview? Have you put in an application? So a lot of times I'll have those uncomfortable conversations and kind of hold the students to that. I will even grab a post-it and write down and say this is your homework go home and do this go to these three websites. Have you done financial aid, which we'll talk about in detail but the plan is probably one of the most important things. Also another thing that's very important have you had a conversation with your parents or whoever you may live with, whether it's grandparents, your mom or your dad? A lot of times students will have a plan but they've not had that conversation with their parents and this is why it's so important: if I want to join the army and I haven't mentioned it to my mom, she's gonna freak out when I tell her, "hey, mom, I want to join the army." So I even tell students ease them into that. "I was thinking about this" and then step back from it. Week or two later go back and the more time you have to come to terms with an idea... "hey, mom, if I do this they'll pay for this" or "I have a place to live, they'll pay for my training", "if I join the National Guard, they'll pay for me to go to college" if you depending on what how you sign and how you enlist. Same for college students will say, "well I'm going to..." and they name somewhere far away "I'm going to LSU." "I'm going to Oregon." And really whoever the football team is popular that year that's... So I say, "great, have you thought about out-of-state tuition? Where you're going to live? Do you have a car to get back and forth or you know you're gonna fly back and forth?" And then you can see their eyes just getting as big as saucers because they've not thought about any of the details. So again "have you talked to your mother or your grandmother about this?" and "if financial aid doesn't cover or if you don't get a scholarship who's helping you pay?" Because again those are the details. It's great to have a broad idea but have you dug in and found out. What do your parents expect of you? I've had students tell me, "my mom said when I'm 18 I have to get out and get a job." Okay that was the agreement in their household, so what is your plan? And we've talked about that so every household is different and that is perfectly fine but how is that student and whoever is going to support them in that or will they be on their own? So conversations ahead of time is very important.

Kyle: Is there a time that it's too early to start planning?

Beth Parkman: No. We open discussion as early as 8th and 9th grade. Through our career preparedness classes which is offered at all of our schools in Lee County and all public schools in the state of Alabama they begin career research they have a unit on career research, they do basic college research, they have to do a little project: what's the difference between public and private colleges? What's the difference in a two-year college and a four-year? So they dabble what I call dabble in it because in ninth grade your senior year seems so far away and we're not encouraging students the teachers aren't saying, "pick a major right now because you still have a lot of exploring. But the conversation's opened. I know at one of the high schools they get to pick a college and they research it and have let's say ten questions they have to list and they make a project, a pennant, and decorate they put the school's mascot and put majors that they have they have to list the tuition the students are freaking out when they see that Auburn is twenty five thousand dollars plus...

Keith: That's in-state! Out-of-state is insane!

Beth Parkman: Yes. It puts a number instead of I'm gonna go to college and I'm gonna get a scholarship well that's a broad you know but when they say the cost all of a sudden they're like "Oh community

college really does..." So they start as early as ninth grade talking about it and even in eighth grade they do some career exploration but again that's like dipping your toe in the water. So ninth and tenth grade is a good time to research talk about you know start thinking but I would say eleventh and twelfth is when things get serious I encourage students as early as 11th grade college visits start going. If you have a list of colleges, go see them. I tell students this, again very simple, but you normally wouldn't buy a car or a house without cracking the door open and looking in. Why would you do that for a college? So go see what it looks like. What does it smell like? How old are the buildings? Do you like the layout of the campus? Is it huge and you're overwhelmed? Is it too small? Is it rural? You know because same thing you're committing to living there for two to four years if you're moving away and you need to see what it's like. I've had situations where student was very interested in UAB for a new medical program yeah and she and her mother went up for an open house college visit day and she came back and she did not like it but it was in the middle of downtown Birmingham. It was just very different from what she had in her mind she was thinking like spacious quad and that was not the case she's like "we heard ambulances the whole time". Well there's major medical hospitals there. A big city population. She even mentioned "oh there was a homeless man". Yeah but cuz that comes with the territory. Now UAB is an excellent college, an excellent university but it wasn't what she thought it was going to be so I like to tell that story. The same for if you're going to a smaller--a small to medium size college--and you go and there's nothing to do there people these students will complain well you need to go see it can you deal with that is what? What are the dorms like? On websites are putting there one new beautiful building with the best-looking students walking across the quad yeah when you get there and there's buildings from 60 years ago that smells strange and nobody's smiling like you need to know what you're getting into. So eleventh and twelfth grade is gonna be the best time for those types of visits and and I tell them maybe you start with five and you need to start figuring that out whittle it down to three then maybe two and of course by January February March of their senior year you want to start honing in on that that where you're gonna go commit and then over the summer you would do orientation and register for classes.

Keith: And not be afraid that they have to maybe start out with a new list of five at sometime because the five they picked out were pies in the sky that ain't coming down.

Beth Parkman: Another tip, we talked about this a little bit but the real world may not be as kind as high school has been so we just talked about the transition and we've touched on that, but just the cost of living. A lot of times if that's the age break where parents say "it's okay now you can stay here but you got to pay for your car insurance or you got to do..." you know there's some life transitions and just the minimum wage is not as great as you thought it might have been and so again just preparing them for that and then I tell students this kind of ties into having a plan but apply apply apply. I'll have students who say "well I want to go to..." and they'll name and I'll say "well have you applied there yet?" "Well no." Well you can't get in if you don't apply. Number one, that is the first step and the same for scholarships and the same for financial aid like you have to go through the application process. Some processes are easier than others some are more detailed but if you're not putting your name in the hat you're not gonna get picked for anything.

Keith: So do you suggest everybody, all students apply for financial aid? Even if you don't think you're going to qualify for anything? It's not going to cost anything to go through the process, right?

Beth Parkman: The financial aid process, students either call it financial aid application or FAFSA. FAFSA.gov Yes we push all the way down from the state level from the county level from the high school

it is a really we strongly encourage that everybody apply this is why students say "oh I'm not gonna apply because my mom has this job". Well there's formulas if the parents are divorced, there's different points awarded. If there's other siblings in the household that plays in your favor. Maybe you have an older brother or sister that's in college that plays into the formula. So wouldn't it be better maybe you don't qualify for a full Pell which Pell is the free grant that you do not pay back. Maybe you get partial, maybe you get \$1,000 towards tuition why would you not take that if it's free money? So yes we kind of have to strong-arm and say no do this and so in a lot of the schools I'll team up with the high school counselor and we'll pull students into a computer lab maybe through their English class or whatever class we can work to get them in and we take them to the website and show them it's not as scary as they think it is. Also things to point out about FAFSA students should go to [fafsa.gov](http://fafsa.gov) it's a free site. There are some other people that of course have jumped on the bandwagon [fafsa.com](http://fafsa.com) and others that want to charge you. There should never be a fee. There's places that claim they'll do it for you but the problem is you got to have all your tax information you've got to know your parents social security numbers and yours so an outside source probably can't do that they're charging you a fee. But it's a free application and it drops all of...it drops the application to any college that you want and so there's a screen you drop down I think you can add 8 to 10 colleges. So there's no reason it does it for you once this process it shoots it out to your top schools. Now if you don't end up going there that's fine they get rid of that information after you have made a decision to go somewhere else. But yes and it also ties into you have to do one application for Pell Grant which is the free money we talked about. A student loan. If you go in and maybe your parents are helping pay for part and you're paying but you still need to borrow you have to do that FAFSA application to get a student loan. Work-study which is where students can work part-time on a college campus they require you do the FAFSA so it's kind of a blanket one application and it will follow you the whole time you're in school you will log back in each year and just update but even if you take a break and then go back and get your master's degree three four or five years later that same account follows you so yes it's a good idea to set it up. We ask students we tell them to put the information maybe save their password in their phone or write it down but it can be intimidating and I do get that but will help them and also every college has a financial aid office and for no charge they will assist students because it's a federal it's a federal government initiative. So if you're working on it and you're planning to go to Southern Union you can pick up the phone and say, "hey can I come in I've got an appointment" and they will assist you with financial aid. So don't get overwhelmed don't get afraid to go forward with it because it's a process that you're just gonna have to embrace whether you like it or not.

Keith: What time of the year do...because I've gotten into the habit of filing my taxes in February. I don't wait till April because while I was in college every year I needed to file my FAFSA every year and so I got used to filing taxes in February as soon as I got everything in. So is there a time of the year...?

Beth Parkman: I have to commend FAFSA last year they rolled out where you could start applying as early as October 1st it used to be that they held it till January 1st and people were scrambling for tax information and they finally heard the cries of the masses and they rolled out that October 1st and you do have to be a senior to do your financial aid application or or beyond maybe an adult or out of school but and you can use the w-2 the tax information from the previous year. So students will be uploading information from 2015 or 16 depending on what what your they're applying. So gone are the days of waiting til your parent gets that back at the last second. It was holding people back and then I had people come to me and say "look I own my own business and I got an extension" and it was kind of a...it

was a mess right and that is not fair to an 18 year old that has no control over what their parent is doing. So this gives them leeway most of the time people have filed if you haven't filed by October then I don't know what to tell you. That's a whole nother conversation but so I will say financial aid has become a little more user friendly and they heard some of the problems and the hurdles and they have really made it much more of a user-friendly process.

Keith: So you know you have to take these tests to get into school so I took the ACT and the SAT just because I'm a nerd like that.

Kyle: I only took the ACT

Keith: Well I took ACT like three times trying to get my grade up because I heard they'll take your highest one and after the second time I got it I got a couple points higher the third time there's an exact same thing. I think I may have taken it one more time to see but I realized I just plateaued. This is as high as I'm gonna get this is good as it gets. If Auburn isn't happy with it then I'm just gonna have to go to somewhere else. Luckily Auburn took me anyway. So which one do you prefer or do you suggest students put most of their energy into?

Beth Parkman: Okay so there are, as you said, two major college standardized test that they're gonna look at for admission: ACT and SAT. It's been my experience from being in the state of Alabama for all of my career ACT is more preferred in the state of Alabama. Now most of the colleges will accept an SAT and they just translate the scores for you. The admissions office is used to that. Colleges in Georgia tend to prefer SAT but again they'll accept ACT. So my advice is if there is a certain college that you're just dead set on just hop on their website and see they'll tell you the requirements before you apply. But ACT...when I'm talking to a student I encourage ACT. ACT.org or we do testing with our Lee County system through ACT. The teachers are preparing some of their lesson plans and standards they're teaching kind of tie in with ACT testing. So that's the one I push but most colleges will accept either and so again you just want to check on their website or give somebody in admissions a call. ACT also, I was telling Keith this, in the last couple of years the state of Alabama has been kind enough to sponsor pay for one free ACT test for all juniors in the state of Alabama. Our students at Lee County benefit from that. It is administered here within our high school. The teachers, proctors, employees are trained so their test administrators, counselors you're testing administrator for the school heads it up it's a major undertaking but every junior now it's paid for which is a wonderful thing so we encourage the students obviously not to squander that away but especially those like you said that taking it multiple times some students will take it once their junior here like in the fall to get a feel of it some let this be their first time just to see as a as a baseline and then go from there but most of the time what I've researched and read is they encourage you spring of junior year is like the optimal time to take it. Now some of our students will take it sophomore year but it gives you more time to get deeper into math and science and the more that you can get in the classroom you're there in a saying you get better a chance for your scores to increase. I have seniors that so once you take it once okay maybe I made a nineteen, maybe I made it 24, but what is my goal? Troy or Jacksonville State will start awarding scholarships with an ACT of 26 or 27. Okay now I know my goal my goal is I want to go back and take it so yes we do have students that take it multiple times we have students that take it one and done and they're like "that's good enough". We have some that take it in and can increase your score I mean that is just how standardized test run but it does determine many schools have a minimum ACT and you have to meet that along with a GPA requirement and some other things to get in. Let me point out this is a kind of a hidden secret,



community colleges in the state of Alabama do not require an ACT or SAT, what a beautiful thing. So if I'm that student and I'm a good student and I have a pretty good GPA but my testing I just I'm just not a good tester or I have a certain score that I just can't meet when you apply to any Community College in the state of Alabama they have a placement test there that's free once you apply and they're just trying to find out what math and English and reading to put you in so do you need to start in remedial are you ready to start college level and you start that way. So I like to tell students that's kind of going around the process maybe after one year at a community college you're ready to transfer four year colleges when you transfer in from another college do not look back to your high school they only look at your college performance so if I'm a student at Southern Union and after one year I'm ready to transfer to Auburn when I apply as a transfer student they just look at my transcript from Southern Union. So when students do come in almost in tears I can't get this particular score or I'm not gonna qualify for full scholarship at XYZ large College oh but wait and many of our students that maybe have made a 23 a 24 which is a good score that's not a bad score it's not full scholarship at Auburn and your large public colleges it is extremely competitive you're not getting money you're not getting any money till you have a 28 a 29 or 30 and let's be real I never even saw those numbers when I took tests like that that was just not in my so that's a very tiny percentage of the students applying but hey if you're willing to look at small to medium sized colleges money even for a year. That's one fun thing when a student is sitting there almost in tears and I pull that nugget out that carrot and they're I mean they're like they're relieved and the parents are relieved because again it's given you an avenue and of many students actually once they go they end up saying two years because it's more affordable the classes it is the same if you are in English 101 and you look at Auburn's roster English one is the same course that will go on your transcript and when they see that they're like oh I'm going to say one more year because and they're saving that money kind of hold them back until they're gonna have to spring for that entire tuition. So yes and again I went straight to a four-year college and I have that experience to tell to students but also working in a community college I see the great benefits and one is not better than the other it's really based on the student situation.

Keith: So are there other resources out there that students and parents should be using that they're not?

Beth Parkman: Yeah there's a lot like I said earlier or I tell classes this um a lot of times you don't know because you just don't know. If you've never worked in a restaurant you don't know how it works if you've never had children you don't know how that works so a lot of times as I'm talking to parents or in a classroom talking to students they're like, "I don't know what to do!" Well here's some resources: first of all there's tons of free websites like we've talked about and that's something in the last 10 to 15 years when I was applying to college you fill out a postcard that had to mail you information well those days they'll still mail you information that you can find out what you need immediately so websites. And a lot of times the students say "I want to go to Troy" I'm just gonna say "great have you visited their website?" "No." But again just all that's right there at the fingertips so that's one thing I tell students. Scholarship sites and this is interesting and we'll have links for that available but the number one question and it's kind of it's a doozy hey I need a scholarship. So I tell students I said if you were to sit at your computer and type in the Google bar college scholarships you're gonna get hundreds of thousands of hits maybe a million hits and then you are overwhelmed and you close your computer and never come back is scary. Well there are websites for that and apps for that one okay CAPPEX is a site that drives their filters that drives searches for scholarships well take it one step further the state of Alabama

works with Cappex and there is a site called Achieve Alabama and it's more tailored to students in the state of Alabama there's also one called Scholly and he was actually on Shark Tank the guy who came up with this. And it's really neat there's a video out there but it's an app and you actually pay a small fee for it but Achieve Alabama and Cappex are free and again the students say "well should I have Scholly?" Maybe if it's worth two or three dollars a month if you were to get a \$20,000 scholarship. That's totally up to the student to decide what they want to do the way these work is you go you create a profile and it's pretty in-depth I've had students say "it takes 20 minutes to set it up" but again if that 20 minute investment...it asked all about just demographics and what you want to study and do you have what heritage and what does it dot and what background you interested in certain things are you an Eagle Scout are you all this type of stuff and then it filters it puts filters in place so as they as the thousands of scholarships are out there and they drop down then if one applies to you they send you an email and say hey Keith we've got a scholarship you may be interested in. Now it's up to you to click on that link and see what the deadline is you have to write an essay do I just have to post a picture and there's all kind of there we were doing one in one of the senior history classes and the teacher just typed it in just for kicks they had it up on the screen and there was a zombie apocalypse scholarship and it was like hypothetical "what would you do if your school was attacked by zombies" and 500 words or less.

Kyle: Who's providing this scholarship?!?

Keith: AMC and the Walking Dead!

Beth Parkman: And so the students were of course like "what! That's great!!" And so students had written that the winners from the year before one was a poem about and it was really funny and the one was a story so again yes it's gonna take some time but some students but and it was a I want to say a one-time five hundred or thousand dollar reward. Well just get it and then also one thing to know that the scholarship stack up so if I get one it doesn't mean I'm out of the race if I get financial aid and then I get a presidential scholarship from CVCC and then I get the Alpha I don't know farmer federated buffalo Rock Pepsi or Aflac gives me a stipend or the ARISE foundation stack stack stack stack so if you were out there doing the work pulling those in you're the one reaping the benefits so there are scholarship websites and apps out there but again you'll put some time and I encourage students to set it up in the fall. Now there will be some that come in that are not in your wheelhouse and you just delete that email and that's up to you. Also other sources: Potential Magazine. They have a website as well but it's a local that are out of Montgomery they have college organizers, checklist, find the right fit, they have a lot of resources so they have gone out and brought all this into chewable bites. I really like that resource so a lot of times they'll mail magazines to the high schools the teachers will send them out to the seniors or put them on a desk outside the counselor's office but again it's up to the student to actually pick it up or and crack that open. There's a lot of resources like this where they have taken out the guesswork there's even one here when I go on a tour I write down things how many miles is it from my home what's the tuition and I can have a comparison chart. Some students are going to like that and some aren't but again that's a tool and then don't forget not everybody is necessarily college bound so there's a lot of good resources through the Alabama Department of Labor. They have a site onet and my next move so I might go out there and I'm not sure what I want to do they asked me there's some free quizzes out there what's my personality what are my skills that I'm good at and it recommends areas career clusters that I might excel in like will you just like or dislike I like to assemble a cabinet yes I like to read yes I like to I would love to create a cure for cancer yeah I don't know that I can I'm not science minded and you

click all the way through and it's in it says okay these three clusters you scored highest in so it gives you some ideas of what you may be drawn to. So if I know that I don't want to go to college right away or that's just not what I want to do well what is it and what jobs also the Department of Labor the o-net does lots of job forecasting so when the year 2020 or the year 2025 who's hiring what's gonna be in demand because I can go get a business degree all day long but if it's saturated no one's hiring then I am unemployed when I get out of college. In fact I've just happened to share something with the class medical field that's no secret but home health aides RNs, being a doctor is great but all that all the inner workings respiratory therapists things like that x-ray technicians those I mean there's just hundreds of tons of jobs that fall under the medical umbrella networking IT computer that's kind of a hot job. In different states again "hi I'm not gonna stay in Alabama". Great go to South Carolina's Department of Labor yeah if I live along the coast there's going to be lots of jobs that maybe aren't in middle central Alabama and that's what we tell students if there's a certain job you want to do you may have to move right or I want to work on the coast I want to do all rigging or working on ships or metalwork great then you can make a lot of money but you may have to move or relocate and students that come to me and say I want to be a marine biologist because that's cool and I'm like that's wonderful so we kind of go through the steps you know you may have to move to South Alabama or to Florida. So again just thinking kind of that plan oh well you know I am willing to move or I have family there and so an idea but the Department of Labor site helps if you're not sure what you want to do construction jobs labor a lot of those are on the increase just depending on what area of the state you're in and then it lists jobs that are kind of you know saturated. And say you can look because that it would be wonderful if you can navigate college but if you come out with a degree or certification that nobody's hiring you're at back at square one. So those are some sites some resources that are free or some with a small fee like scholly but you can help yourself you can get in there and figure out where to pull this information from.

Kyle: I guess one of the things I've been shocked about is a couple times you said you know some people who are not looking to go to college I don't think I expected to hear that from being the you know the college and career coach I was like okay well that's what this is gonna be. So college isn't for everyone?

Beth Parkman: No and we have to break that mindset that everyone's going to college everyone's going to college why everyone doesn't need to go to college and I am always floored when I find out how much money somebody makes when they maybe did a six-month certification. Okay I ask students this one in a classroom the teacher in the back of the class decide they make more than me and I have a master's degree. So but here's the deal a lot of times people will say oh yeah college is not for everyone but my child's going to college so we've got to break that cycle and I think and I work in education what if my child came to me and said mom I'd rather do XYZ am I gonna support that? But for example I ask students in the class we will play game how long do you have to go to school to be an EMT a man or woman that rides on the ambulance and they six years nine years one semester to semester or three semesters depending on if you want to be a full fledged paramedic yep or just entry-level EMT what again that's a career you could do that now you could be a little not if you wanted to you could continue on up the ladder as students hey a line man or a lot of woman it might work for a Power Company Alabama power, Tallapoosa six years three years zero college zero now you do have to be hired by the company and they do an apprenticeship program but they're paying you if you can get hired on by these companies they pay you the entire time they're training you and then you've got a pretty solid career. And again I share examples of just family friends about what they make or they volunteer to go do storm work and your other state I mean they're making sometimes six figures if they are willing to work now

we pause and say hey now these people are willing to get up in the middle of the night right or in the storm when you're at home cozy and they call and say all right Keith let's go you may have to roll out at 2:00 a.m. or you can go stand in the rain but if you're willing to work and that is let's go over that zero days of college. So that myth of everyone must go to college and let's dance in a field of daisies that's great for some but it's not the the solution for everything. So we as a society kind of gonna have to learn to process that I know people that work in sales not just at a store buy things but maybe outside sales or sales for a company they make a lot more money than I do they're good at it they have the people skills they're outgoing they're also willing to to work hard that's right um work longer hours but Wow. You know and I find out what they make and as you as they progress with their 20s and 30s there making bonuses and doing this and again no college or maybe one year of college or maybe maybe a two-year degree just depending on what they were doing so we've got to open those windows and say oh look at that yeah don't just think you can roll out of high school and make \$100,000. What what can you bring to the table? What are your skills? I've also, in this job, had an opportunity to learn a lot about career technical education and that's probably the one piece that I knew the least about coming from the Community College because I just had not there are some awesome career tech programs in our county. So if we can encourage students to stick their toe in the water like we talked about before with welding, with Health Sciences, with computer classes, they can find out real quick for free is that something they enjoy or something that don't enjoy but again I can't tell you how many students have come and said hey I really like the welding class here and I'm applying for a technical scholarship at Southern Union and they're gonna get that Welding certificate or a degree and they're gonna be able to go wherever they want to work and make plenty of money so that is kind of that tie-in so we just have to be open to that and realize certain jobs just require more skill than that piece of paper. Also in our area in Auburn, Opelika, Phenix City, Columbus: industry and manufacturing there's a lot of money to be had if you're willing to work and we sit down the HR directors from these companies they come to workforce development meetings and they come to the schools and say hey we need to we need more people we need more people what can y'all do how can you get them ready and then we ask okay what do you need and they say they don't have to have any knowledge of robotics or any knowledge of the production line we'll train them but we need them to be able to come to work on time. Come drug-free and be willing to buy into what we're selling if you will and sure enough people with only a high school diploma and they'll tell it will hire you to ten fifty and then after ten fifty an hour then after six months if you do this this and this then will bump you up to twelve dollars and it's amazing some of the people are making fourteen and fifteen dollars an hour and they've done all their training right there at you know on these different plants or on these in the industry in our area as long as they can come to work and are willing...

Kyle: You just have to be able to show up ready to work.

Beth Parkman: So they do tell us and sometimes it's they're kind of banging their head against the wall because if you hire an 18 or 19 year old sometimes that maturity level is not there but for those students that are willing they can they can name their paycheck and if they're willing to work and learn the different you know hey this is what I do and here's the molds that I put in well once I get good at that I might put in to go to step up to the next job and so again very little maybe no college education they do hire if you had a two-year degree in a specific area but they're they're very willing to hire you with no experience and they'll train you like I said and as you go each six months or a year two years that pay raise is hopping in and they're making good money.

Keith: Yeah because I was always told you know if you don't you don't want to be flipping burgers for the restaurant or something like that you need to go to college. First of all, there's nothing wrong with flipping burgers. They need to be flipped and there's nothing wrong with that and - yeah I do agree as somebody used to teach at the college level, not everybody is meant for college. That's not a slam on anybody that's just they...

Kyle: People are individuals exam and it's good to know that there are people who are advocating for hey if it's not for you there's also other things you can do.

Beth Parkman: So I'm glad that I've had the experience to be able to tour a lot of these plants, to hear from people in human resources what they're looking for again maturity and just being willing to come with a good attitude they'll tell you it's like 80% of the battle we can teach they said we can teach you anything you need to learn but will you show up and are you willing to take our advice and are you teachable are you coachable if you're not and you're on the line you're working with other people and that's what they said if they can't get along with people we can't keep them we end up letting people go because they can't get along with the people that they're working around me if you're on an 8-hour shift or a ten-hour shift you've got to be amicable and they said you know when you have the right person they can joke around and then they get to work and do what they're supposed to do so again some of that comes with time with age and maturity but if students and adults can go ahead and figure that out they'll be a lot better off in the long run.

Kyle: Start off with the right attitude.

Beth Parkman: Right

Keith: So as we're winding things down here, our mantra here is to be awesome...

Beth Parkman: Yes, all the time.

Keith: You have any awesome things that you've been able to do or or see or experience?

Beth Parkman: Yes. I will say through my time here at Lee County and being the career coach, I told you guys that I've learned a lot more and I hope that I'm always learning and I tell the students and they're like "ok whatever" but really you should be learning and seeing new things. So I've had the chance to organize and go on some really neat field trips in our area. I mentioned manufacturing last week we were able to take two groups--one from Smith station Freshman Center and one from Smith Station High School--into TYSYS which is a credit card processing company. I've ridden by many times and seen the nice building but I really don't know what they're doing inside those walls and so they rolled out the red carpet and did a really awesome they had presentations they let students tour the building they even got to sit down and kind of talk one-on-one so we got to talk to programmers we got to talk to people who do conversions whatever that means. Basically if you swipe your credit card you don't think TYSYS, you think Visa or MasterCard, but they're behind the scenes making sure everything goes on. They were telling us how many thousands of transactions go on each second. The students, their minds were just blown. They have offices all over the United States and internationally. They have even have a card processing plant in town (Columbus, GA) where they actually make the credit cards and stamp them. So you do the computer side the IT networking side then you've got the basic skills side then you've got trainers who go out so if a group out of Arizona is gonna now use Total Systems, TYSYS they go out for months and months and train them on what to expect so it was a really that was awesome. So

again I've gotten to go into places that I probably never would have I've driven by and said "oh yeah there's a building" or that lady who goes to my church works there but what's going on in those buildings. I mentioned that I've just learned so much about career tech education and I'm drinking the kool-aid there's a lot of good stuff going on in career-tech whether or not you end up doing that specific major in high school are you're gaining skills you're laying that foundation that you'll use down the road and just being a part of some of those things have been pretty awesome and I can stick that in my belt and maybe I might not go work at TYSYS when I'm talking to a student and I hear some of those key words and what they like to do I may be like hold on you know you may want to study this or look into computer science or you may have a passion and let me show you this employer. So it helps me in conversations with students and parents when I'm not sure what else you know where to go I can say hey this is in our area and these things are going on and like TYSYS says they're hey we're the best-kept secret. We know what it is and we see their sponsorships all over town but how do I work there and how do I become a part of that? Again talking with students, benefits are just as important as pay. Vacation and family leave things like that you don't really care about that stuff in high school because it doesn't mean anything but again they got to hear that and when students take field trips they talk about you get this much paid leave and this much flex time or even tuition reimbursement. Some companies will pay for you to go to college. So it's just really neat to find out what is out there for our students.

Keith: Do they talk to them about taxes or is that just that secret they find out on their own?

Kyle: Everyone has to experience that. I remember the first paycheck I got and I was like, this does not look right. Look I know math okay this is not right.

Beth Parkman: I will say a lot of our students that work part-time are like, "Miss Parkman, can you believe this?!?" and I'm like I know welcome to being an adult I'm sorry.

Keith: I've learned a lot.

Kyle: We've had some expectations broken.

Keith: We've probably learned it about 16 years too late. Where were you about 2000-2001?

Beth Parkman: Absolutely and again like I said in the beginning you don't really know this until you're it's your season of life so parents I'll talk to parents a lot hey maybe they didn't go to college so they're a little intimidated or maybe they did but it's been 20 or 25 years well it's changed so much even since we were in school. So there's no shame or there should be no you should not feel any hesitation to you know for parents to ask the questions and go to the colleges, go to the college visits, make the phone calls and the students as well because it's always evolving. Even in the last several years now the thing to do is most applications to colleges are online period. Those paper applications are kind of a thing of the past and I even had to kind of train myself I was like but I love paper and I love being able to hold it and I realized that's not the norm anymore so students are accustomed to it and then sometimes parents are a little leery so again it's gonna always be evolving every year every couple of years each college they're competing with each other okay if you don't have students then you can't be open so they're competitive with each other and so it's going to be an ever-changing process of recruiting students.

Keith: Yeah. Do you warn them about the application fee?

Beth Parkman: Yes a lot of times I do tell because just about every college does charge a application fee. Also one more fun story you're gonna fall out of your seat community colleges do not charge a fee in the state of Alabama.

Kyle: I don't know that I remember that. Has that been the same?

Keith: I'm calling shenanigans on the whole thing!

Beth Parkman: So again I might tell a student okay so your top your top three Auburn, Troy, and University of Mobile okay but also hey will you do mind, let's do CVCC as a back-up plan oh and it doesn't cost you anything and they're like sure because they may qualify for full scholarship and but again a lot of times so that is a helpful tool especially for students that don't have a lot of money. But yes college application fees are crazy to me but that's their doing I can't change it and some are as expensive as 50 dollars just to apply. And I do tell the students this doesn't mean you get in this means they will review your application.

Keith: This means they will they will open that envelope.

Beth Parkman: I tell them I said it's not a fun game and I didn't come up with the rules but this is how we play the game. So again when the students come in and say "I want to apply to 40 colleges!" No you don't and I tell them that and then all of a sudden they're like nevermind, I'll whittle bit down to three or four. You're absolutely right that tends to get things get real serious all of a sudden like oh never mind that one I was kind of thinking about we're tossing that one out.

Kyle: It sounds like what you do is you are a much needed crusher of dreams. And you're fighting misinformation and you are trying to guide these people out of this mythical magical high school world and to bring them into reality.

Beth Parkman: I like to tell people when we have statewide career coach meetings because there are career coaches in every system school system in the state of Alabama I crushed souls but I do it with a smile and then I offer other options. Also another fun mythical of, funny that you said that, "my grandma said I can get a scholarship because I'm left-handed" or "I can get a scholarship because I did Cattlemen's Association"

Keith: I remember hearing like you know if you live near the railroad...

Beth Parkman: Or I'm one one-hundredth Indian and I'm like that is wonderful however good luck finding a scholarship so you have to dig down. A lot of students really believe they're just gonna get this magical scholarship but they have very average grades, they've done no activities, they've done nothing to stand out, and then I'm like I've got to tell you something I have to em you know. So but again as early as ninth grade that's why I go to the Freshman Center one day a week. We push people why being in clubs is important. Why taking leadership roles is important. Playing a sport that's great because it's showing teamwork being in the band even better because you're practicing summer 'round, you're committed, you're part of a team. Those are the kind of things that when you're going for scholarships or to get a job and they say you've been ok you've done things maybe that aren't always the most fun that you can "hang" if you will and that you've done other things outside of the school. So we try to start selling that message as early as ninth grade and I tell people if a lot of times it's not uncommon that they might bring me a resume and say will you look over this absolutely yeah. Yeah, you've done nothing you

need to go and if they're 11 grade, it's not too late. If I'm talking to a senior in March or April that has no activities I tell them I'm like it's too late. Also part-time jobs students should definitely list their part-time jobs on a resume because that's a big deal if they can work and go to school so again that coaching part of career coach that be involved do things that make you stand out because a lot of people can have pretty good grades but who can take it up a notch can you can you play a sport can you be in the band can you be in choir or drama or take a career-tech class for dual enrollment while you're in high school it's helping you stand out because there will be competition to get into college to get those mythical scholarships what are you doing to put your name at the top of the list?

Keith: Yeah. How do you deal with a student that will watch a 20 minute unboxing video on YouTube but go oh this application online took me 15 minutes to do I just I can't do it?

Beth Parkman: Yeah I know because I know what's gonna happen they're not gonna have anything on the awards program night and they're gonna be standing there with their hands empty but I do tell students hey instead of hopping on Twitter for the eighth time today, take that time and look at this and I'll tell them instead of going and wasting time on snapchat or you know we have Chromebooks in every classroom now and maybe there's 10 minutes at the end of class where you've finished your work well instead of just zoning out or staring off the ceiling or sleeping go ask them may I get a Chromebook and look at this? Absolutely! So I mean I will tell them and then sometimes they're like "but it hasn't a 500 word essay" and I sometimes I do say "whaaa!"

Kyle: Every human being at some point needed that.

Keith: That's like four tweets! You can get that done in about four tweets!

Beth Parkman: I will a lot of times speak in their language and say instead of doing this or if you can carve out I will even tell students hey Martin Luther King holiday said you're off Monday so you've got extra time to do this application they're like you know they don't really love to hear it or you've got all weekend. Well some of them may not have internet at home that's fine but one kid said well I've got my phone. I said if you can do it on your phone even better. We have computer access in the libraries like I said many classes teachers will allow students to do things on the Chromebook so there's definitely options for them go to the public library do what you gotta do to make it happen. Bue a lot of times I'll just tell them, hopefully in a kind way, and if they did come back and say I don't have any scholarships, I put it back on them well have you gone to the website have you look did you set up that achieve Alabama like we talked about in August in your history class did you do that? "Well no." Then you're at the point where it's time for them to grow up.

Kyle: How do you fight apathy? Ts there a great way to do that like do you have some secret because I just can't imagine all right I have all gathered all these tools and presenting them to you in this beautiful bow and they go, "meh..."

Beth Parkman: I probably don't deal with it as bad as the classroom teachers because they're seeing it day in and day out and again they're there they put so much work and effort into certain lesson plans or really awesome whatever they're teaching them and so it's everywhere and I wish it wasn't and I wish it wasn't rampant. Sometimes peer pressure helps. They're apathetic and just chilling and the friends start, "oh my friend signed with the college yesterday". My friends go and she got a scholarship sometimes that helps as they start seeing people around them succeeding and excel so but sometimes I guess I just



soothe myself knowing that when they and I and I'll tell students May 24th or May 25th when you walk across that stage we congratulate we we take pictures and then we push you out of Lee County but we have what have you done with your time here? Have you used your resources? Have you gone to the counselors? Have you used career coach? Have you've done what your teacher has asked you? Because yes they tend to grow numb to the teachers voice they may hear that every day and I'll come along and say hey they're telling you accurate information. There are times that we might get a guest speaker to come into the classroom and again when someone new says it the teachers are like, "I've been telling them that!" I'm like I know you have but they want to hear it from someone else and parents feel that way too. "I tell them all the time..." and you just don't want to hear what they have to saw. So it's out there. I wish there was a magic solution to it.

Kyle: Maybe one of the one of the successful things is that you start so early, I mean starting in the eighth grade is...

Beth Parkman: Yeah. Yeah there's really no excuse and again just like anything if the information's, there you can take the horse to the water but you can't make him drink. And that applies in education as well but again there's a lot of outlets some students it just it takes time for them to come to it on their own and I've talked to people that said oh I goofed around until I was 21 and I just didn't get it so some people just aren't gonna get it right now. It takes a few years of work a minimum wage or flipping burgers like we said and then they're like "I don't want to do this forever I want to do something different I want to you know have more goals for myself". Sometimes I tell students your parents may let you hang around the house a little while but I promise you in six months to a year they're gonna get tired of this cuz you're not going to school you're not working or whatever and at some point that will spur them in their own household with what their parents allow them to get away with. And hopefully that will spur them but yes the answer is each student kinda has to come to that on their own figure out that other people around them are launching and moving on and they're not so hopefully that would inspire them.

Kyle: Well I really am pleased with what we've got here today.

Keith: Thank you so much for agreeing to be on the Edcast and be awesome, everybody!

Kyle: Be awesome!

\*Ukulele music\*