



Photo by STEPHEN MILLIGAN

**Back row from left are Walton Career Academy CEO Mark Peevy, Athens Technical College president Flora Tydings, Walton County Public Schools superintendent Gary Hobbs, William Barton, Mark Greguson, Paul van Ficher, Lucy Phillip and James Woodard. Front row from left are Dorothy Zuiderhof, Diana Koch, Lindsey Karlson and Celeste Cannon.**

## WCA hosts visitors from South Dakota

School's structure gives group ideas

MONROE — Even as Walton County Public Schools works to expand the Walton Career Academy and use the program to its full potential, the model has attracted attention from some far-off locales.

Some of that attention came for a visit last week as the WCA played host to a delegation from South Dakota looking for tips and hands-on experience with the career academy model.

"They've come to understand what the

model looks like and how they can take it back and install it across the state," said Mark Peevy, CEO of the WCA. "We're very excited to be able to share our experience."

Diana Koch, leader of the South Dakota delegation, said the visit was an important one for the state.

"We are in the process of installing something similar," Koch said. "We are here to learn about the career academies across Georgia. I thought it was a perfect model."

The delegation —

made up of teachers, business leaders, school superintendents, technical school officials and others invested in the process — met up with counterparts from Walton County, including officials with Athens Technical College, WCPS superintendent Gary Hobbs, Peevy and even officials from Lt. Gov. Casey Cagle's office.

"It's been beyond our expectations," Koch said. "These are the people we need to have at the table. It's been fantastic."

The group talked about the model, toured

the facility and sat in on classes, talked with teachers and others at the WCA and left for South Dakota with a better understanding of the career academy model.

"We can start developing," Koch said.

Flora Tydings, president of ATC, said the visit was a valuable way to share education experience with others.

"We're proud to be able to share this," Tydings said. "It shows we have a very successful model."

— Stephen Milligan