

# York Suburban signs on for IB charter school

By ADAM RICHMAN

For the Daily Record/Sunday News

Updated: 07/26/2009 06:54:22 AM EDT

YorkCounts has gained another ally for its push to establish an International Baccalaureate regional charter school in the [York](#) Suburban School Board, which voted unanimously recently to partner with the [York](#) City School District on the project.

Ellen Freireich, a member of Suburban's board and the YorkCounts educational opportunities committee, spoke in favor of the move.

"We are willing to partner with the York City School District to put together the charter application that has to go to the [Pennsylvania](#) Department of Education for the establishment of a charter school," she said.

Freireich said the two chartering school districts would have the first opportunity at the open slots for students.

"If the students applying (from those two districts) do not fill all those spots," she said, "then the opportunity will be open to other districts."

YorkCounts has already received \$75,000 in grants for the school, Freireich said. The financial burden for the school districts involved would be only the tuition for each district student enrolled in the academy -- the same obligation as with any charter school.

With the addition of York Suburban School District as a partner, the charter school becomes regional and might also be eligible for extra state funds.

Dennis Baughman, co-chairman of YorkCounts' educational opportunities committee, said the curriculum of the York Charter Academy would differ from other charter schools.

"We have spent about 18 months trying to develop a charter school with a unique academic program," Baughman said. "It's trying to educate students about the world internationally."

The IB program was founded years ago through the [United Nations](#), Baughman said.

"It was developed for the diplomats who moved around the world," he said. "It looks the same whether it's taught here in the [United States](#) or in [Great Britain](#)."

The curriculum, including foreign language education beginning in kindergarten, will teach to themes, Baughman said.

"One of the themes stresses who we are, who kids are, who students are, what role they play in the community, in the school, in the world," he said.

Baughman said he supports a collaborative effort between school districts.

"We think if school districts work together on this, it's going to be a beneficial program to everyone," he said.

Freireich said she visited an IB regional charter school in the [Lebanon](#) Valley area to see how it is run and learn about the challenges they have faced. "They have been very successful," she said.

### **WHY START A SCHOOL?**

The efforts are based in part on a study several years ago by consultant David Rusk that identified York city's concentration of poverty as a major problem.

The report also stated something needed to be done about educational opportunities to break the cycle of poverty.

Establishing an alternative charter school is YorkCounts' way to help fill that gap.