



The International Baccalaureate Charter School a winner for everyone

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Students learn from their teachers ... and from each other.

For that reason, students attending the International Baccalaureate (IB) Charter School proposed by YorkCounts would get the best education in York County -- true preparation for 21st-century success.

The IB Charter School would be a joint venture of

two local school districts: York City (whose decision to participate is still pending) and York Suburban (whose board has endorsed the proposal unanimously).

The two districts' student bodies are mirror images of each other. York City is 80 percent African American and Latino and lower-income (86 percent qualify for free lunches) while York Suburban is 86 percent white and upper-income (only 13 percent qualify for free lunches).

What the students will learn from their teachers is well established. The International Baccalaureate program, a standardized curriculum around the world, emphasizes learning foreign languages, understanding other cultures and solving problems collectively. The program is interwoven into regular core subjects.

Graduation from an IB program throws open the doors to top-ranked colleges and universities and puts students on the fast track for leadership in business and government in an ever more globalized economy. An IB program would greatly upgrade the quality of educational opportunity in York County, enhancing its economic competitiveness.

What the students will learn from each other is equally important. Today, when a white student sits in a typical York County classroom, the odds are 92 percent that the classmate in the next seat will also be white and middle class.

But not at the future IB Charter School. Its student body should be racially, ethnically, and

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economically diverse. Starting in kindergarten, York Suburban students will have classmates much more like the world they will work in as adults. By mid-century, labor economists predict that non-Hispanic whites will be barely half of the total American workforce.

What better "education" than for York Suburban students to grow up with classmates who will be much more like their future co-workers.

In turn, what will York City students learn from their York Suburban classmates? Forty years of educational research has found consistently that low-income students learn best when surrounded by middle-class classmates.

A recent Columbia University doctoral dissertation on classroom economic integration, for example, found that public-housing children improved their math test scores by 12 percentiles and reading test scores by 3 percentiles when attending low-poverty schools -- well outstripping improvements (if any) from just spending lots more money in high-poverty schools. Classmates count.

Some school districts have organized full-day schools with enriched curricula, enrolling both neighborhood children and children of workers at nearby work sites (wherever they may live). Such programs have been wildly popular with both commuting parents and neighborhood parents.

York City continues to be a major center of high-quality jobs at York Hospital, York College, federal and county courthouses, and others. A

successful IB Charter School could become the prototype for regionalizing all city schools.

The IB Charter School could yield another big dividend to a York City beleaguered by concentrated poverty. It could accelerate revitalization of the city's historic neighborhoods.

With the IB Charter School as an option, more higher-income families (of whatever hue) would move into historic "fix-er-uppers" that, in time, could emerge as the most valuable real estate in York County.

In turn, many poor black and Latino families should have a wider range of housing choices.

YorkCounts, the York Suburban school board, and the York County Community Foundation must be commended for their vision and initiative, and the York City school board should approve its co-sponsorship of the IB Charter School immediately.

The IB school would be the city's fourth charter school along with Crispus Attucks YouthBuild, Lincoln Edison, and New Hope Academy. The city school board is understandably concerned about charter schools siphoning off its best students.

But no school district in the nation with a high concentration of poor children has been successful through purely remedial efforts. Only by seizing every opportunity to diversify the range of classmates city children have (whether inside or outside the city's boundaries) can York City School District -- and the Metro York

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community -- truly help these children develop to their fullest potential.

The International Baccalaureate Charter School will be a win-win for everyone -- especially for the kids.

A former mayor of Albuquerque and New Mexico state legislator, David Rusk is an internationally renowned author, speaker, and consultant on urban policy. He was the author of major reports on York County published in 1996 and 2002.

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The advertisement features a dark grey background. On the left is the Florida Tech University Online logo, which includes a circular emblem with a globe and the text 'Florida Tech UNIVERSITY ONLINE'. To the right of the logo is the headline 'Bring the Classroom to Your Home With a Degree Online From Florida Tech'. Below the headline is a circular icon with a right-pointing arrow, followed by the text 'APPLY TODAY! FloridaTechOnline.com/FD | 1-888-253-5946'. On the right side of the ad is a black and white photograph of an older man with glasses, holding a white pointer stick, standing in front of a chalkboard with mathematical equations like $E=mc^2$ and $1=2$.

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