



New charter schools proposed in York

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Sallie Francis, a parent in Spring Garden Township, has been following a proposal for a charter school in the city.

The mother of a kindergarten student at York Suburban, Francis said she's talked to several of her friends who like the concept. The school, which would have an International Baccalaureate-style curriculum, would bring together students from the city, York Suburban and Central York.

"I like that it is an internationally valued standard of education," Francis said, "and that a school of that quality, in York, can not only help educate our kids, it can also draw more people to York."

But the York Academy Regional Charter School, which would initially open with elementary classes and gradually build to a high school, still needs to be approved.

All three districts plan to host public hearings for the charter school in December. The charter school was conceived by a YorkCounts group that was studying education.

York City has a second charter school

application for a vocational-style high school. The school, HOPE for All Charter School, would focus on city students, said Aiko Malynda Maurer, of Blair County, who is heading up the application. York City was selected for the charter school because of the "foot traffic" and the low graduation rates at the city high school, she said.

To begin the approval process, the charter schools submitted lengthy applications to school districts. The applications outline curriculum, staffing, location, budget and supporters.

After holding a public hearing, each school board will schedule a second public meeting to vote on the proposal. If it is rejected, the charter school supporters can appeal that decision to the state Department of Education, which often has the final say.

Here's a look at what each school plans to offer, according to the applications and interviews with leaders of the proposed schools:

York Academy Regional Charter School

--- Plans to open with 225 students in kindergarten to second grade, but would grow each year until it had 525 kindergarten through 12th-grade students.

--- A proposed location is in the Smyser-Royer building at the city's Northwest Triangle project.

--- The detailed curriculum includes

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information on teacher evaluations.

--- An International Baccalaureate curriculum. The school would not open as a certified IB school, but would eventually apply for recognition. This type of learning teaches students that they are world citizens, introducing them to other cultures in the world, in addition to the traditional subjects such as reading and writing.

--- The application has hundreds of letters of support from local educators, parents, community members and business leaders.

--- Opening is slated for August 2011.

HOPE for All Charter School

--- Plans to enroll 90 students in grades 10 through 12.

--- It would open near the Harrisburg Area Community College branch campus at 2010 Pennsylvania Ave. That is north of Route 30 on the edge of the city.

--- Students would be those who did not do well in a traditional school setting.

--- The school would operate a café that would cater to the public. Students would work there and in other jobs, such as janitorial and secretary, as part of their schooling as a means of teaching them vocational skills.

--- There is no set curriculum, other than meeting state standards for education. Each student would have a personal education plan.

--- No traditional classrooms. There would be conference-room settings for learning. Some students would graduate early.

--- The application includes no letters of support, but a statement says the Harrisburg Area Community College supported it verbally.

--- Opening is slated for August 2010.

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--- The York City School District will host its public hearings for the HOPE for All Charter School Dec. 14 at 5 p.m. and for the York Academy Regional Charter School Dec. 14 at 6 p.m. The hearings will be at the district administrative center, 31 N. Pershing Ave.

--- The York Suburban School District will host its public hearing for the York Academy Regional Charter School Dec. 7 at 6:30 p.m. at the high school cafeteria, 1800 Hollywood Drive.

--- The Central York School District will host its public hearing for the York Academy Regional Charter School Dec. 7 at 6:30 p.m. at the district education center, 775 Merion Road.

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money. Each school district sends money based on how many of its students attend the charter school. Parents do not pay tuition.

There are four charter schools in York City. The county has no charter schools, but some students there attend cyber charter schools.

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