



## York City school board hears back-to-back charter pitches (video)

ANDREW SHAW *The York Dispatch*

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**Andrew Shaw video**

York Area Regional Academy Charter School had back-to-back hearings to present updated information on their proposed schools and answer questions.

The charter schools would be the fifth and sixth in York City, if approved. The board has until the end of February to make a decision. Charter schools are independently operated but funded by chartering districts, who pay a per-pupil fee.

The proposed HOPE school would be for 10th-12th grades in the building occupied by the HACC-York campus on Pennsylvania Avenue, at the edge of the district.

Two proposed charter schools received lots of questions but minimal criticism from York City School Board members during their public hearings Monday night.

Officials from HOPE for All Charter School and

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HOPE for All Charter School official Aiko Malynda Maurer describes the school Monday during the York City school board meeting. (Andrew Shaw Photo)

HOPE official Aiko Malynda Maurer told the board her school would focus on making students "independent learners" who eventually would work part-time, either for the school or elsewhere, as part of their studies.

HOPE students would learn entrepreneurial and employee skills through a student-run café. By paying students to work -- café compensation would be about \$6 an hour, as per state standard -- students could better balance academic needs with the need to financially support themselves, she said.

"When are these children going to have time to do homework?" wondered board member Margie Orr.

Maurer admitted it wouldn't be easy, but said the school would better prepare students for what it's like on the job.

"Earning their diploma is going to take some work," she said.

Board member Tom Foust also said he was concerned there were no petitions of support or letters of interest from parents for HOPE. Maurer responded the school's late discovery of a location, just before the application deadline, hindered finding early support.

**YorkCounts IB school:** The York Area Regional Academy would be located in downtown York, in the Smyser-Royer complex near Sovereign Bank Stadium.

It would also be a regional charter school, with York Suburban and Central York also receiving a charter application.

The school was proposed by YorkCounts, a nonprofit, quality-of-life group who believe the school will blend urban and suburban students. They have received more than 200 pre-enrollment letters from interested parents.

The school's proposed International Baccalaureate program would help students become adept at a foreign language, said Dennis

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Baughman, who is co-chairman of the committee overseeing the application. Foreign language instruction would begin at the kindergarten level.

The parent participation aspect of the proposal drew strong interest from the board. Some board members, including president Samuel Beard, wondered how YorkCounts would be able to enforce its goal of requiring parents to be involved.

Baughman replied it's not realistic to require parents to do so, but they will have several measures to help make it happen. For instance, parents will have to submit an application for their child in person and learn, face-to-face, what the school expects from its parents.

"There has to be that commitment from parents," Baughman said. Students who don't have parents able or willing to get involved could still attend, he said.

One of the only critical comments of the night came from the president of the York County Taxpayers Council, Joel Sears. He questioned how the academy's staff, which would mostly made up of teachers fresh out of college, will be able to handle the IB style of teaching.

IB emphasizes blending subject matter, so teachers have to be knowledgeable about all subjects.

Sears also said that a charter school, by nature,

excludes students who don't attend, meaning thousands of York City students would miss out on the IB program.

"What about the opportunities for the rest of your kids?" Sears asked.

**Fast facts about the two proposed charter schools**

**York Area Regional Academy**

- \* Open in fall 2011 for K-2 students, and later expand to add more grades.

- \* Draw from York Suburban, Central York and York City school districts

- \* 225 seats in the first year. Students from all three school districts would be allowed to apply, with a lottery system used if there are more students than available seats.

- \* International Baccalaureate program: Emphasizes critical thinking, global awareness, learning a foreign language. Subjects taught in trans-disciplinary fashion, with teachers blending lessons.

- \* Run by YorkCounts

- \* Located in Smyser-Royer complex in York City

**HOPE for All Charter School**

- \* Open in fall 2010

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**THE YORK DISPATCH**  
York County's Afternoon Paper

\* Located at 2010 Pennsylvania Ave., at HACC-York building

\* Student-run café integral to learning business skills

\* Transportation offered

\* Emphasis on attracting troubled teens

\* Year-round, trimester calendar with extended school day

\* HOPE is an acronym for Help Opportunities Practical Experiences Empowerment.

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