



## Plans for two York County charter schools presented

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The York City school board heard presentations Monday from two prospective charter schools, but will not likely vote on the issue until next year.

The schools, both to be tuition-free for students and paid for with taxpayer money, were proposed by two different groups.

A group of York County educators, business people and city residents submitted a proposal that stemmed from a joint effort spearheaded by YorkCounts.

A Blair County educator presented the other proposal for a prospective charter school dubbed the HOPE For All Charter School.

Dennis Baughman and Sue Krebs, the co-chairs of the YorkCounts group, outlined details about

the proposed York Academy Regional Charter School including plans for the curriculum and why they wanted the school.

The charter school would be a joint effort by the city, York Suburban and Central York school districts, and would eventually encompass grades kindergarten through 12th grade. Initially, the school would only open to kindergarten through first grade, adding on a grade each year.

Students in the school would hail from the city and suburbs, which would benefit both groups of children, Baughman said.

Students would be required to learn, and be proficient, in a second language, Baughman said.

One of the issues raised by board members Tom Foust and Margie Orr addressed the proposed location of the school and its proximity to an active rail line.

The charter school would prefer to lease space in the Smyser-Royer building in the city's northwest triangle.

There were five supporters who spoke in favor of the regional school, saying they believed it would be an asset to the area by creating more opportunities for students and an incentive for families to stay in the city.

Joel Sears, president of the York County Taxpayers Council, spoke against the school. He

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said the plan would leave too many city children behind and would raise taxes.

"These are the things that have to be taken into account," Sears said. "It has to be more than a feel-good deal."

The other charter school application, the HOPE For All Charter School, also gave a presentation at the meeting. That plan that would have non-traditional students working while attending classes as a means to help them learn work skills, founder Aiko Malynda Maurer.

The plan would include a student-run cafe to serve the Harrisburg Area Community College students at its York campus.

Orr questioned why there would be so much time spent working at a cafe or other low-skill jobs, and if those work hours it would interfere with academics. Maurer said students would learn independently, and would acquire skills such as "showing up for work on time." Although students would be doing cafe, janitorial and secretarial work starting at a pay rate of \$6.16 an hour, they would gain "employability skills," Maurer said.

**AT A GLANCE** The York City School Board must vote to approve or reject the applications of the York Academy Regional Charter School and the HOPE For All Charter School by Feb. 27, said solicitor Greg Gettle.

The vote could take place before the deadline, and will probably happen at the board's regular February meeting, which is the third Wednesday of the month.

If either application is rejected, they have the ability to appeal to a state board to get approval to open.

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