



THE YORK DISPATCH
York County's Afternoon Paper

York Suburban approves York Academy charter

ANDREW SHAW *The York Dispatch*

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One down, two to go.

YorkCounts, a nonprofit quality-of-life group, got its charter school application approved by York Suburban School Board on Wednesday. The Central York and York City school boards will each vote on the application in mid-February.

The applications are for York Academy Regional Charter School, which would be a K-12 school located near Sovereign Bank Stadium in the city. YorkCounts officials want to convert the Smyser-Royer complex, part of the Northwest Triangle redevelopment, into a school.

The academy would have an International Baccalaureate program, which is intertwined into teaching methods. Subjects are taught in an interdisciplinary fashion, with an emphasis on students' asking questions to drive instruction.

Charter schools are independently run but funded by the chartering districts. York Academy is a regional charter school, so it needs the approval of at least two districts.

York Suburban and York City were first approached, and Central York volunteered itself

to consider the application, said Dennis Baughman, who has been leading the application for YorkCounts with Sue Krebs.

York Suburban approved the application in a 6-3 decision.

"They haven't found any holes in it," Baughman said.

Board president John DeHaas was not immediately available for comment.

Voting against the measure were DeHaas and fellow board members Lynne Leopold-Sharp and Roger Miller.

Central York will take a vote on the matter Feb. 15, with York City scheduled to take its vote Feb. 17. All three school boards had already held public hearings on the proposal. Baughman said he believes Central is leaning toward approving it.

The city school board has had a checkered history with charter school approval, but has recently installed several new board members. The board is also considering another charter school application, by the HOPE for All charter school group for an entrepreneurial-focused high school program.

A district can deny a charter application for a variety of factors, such as on a lack of a unique program or adequate facilities; cost, however, is not allowed to be a factor.

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If approved, York Academy would allow students from all three districts to attend. If there are vacancies after Central York, York City and York Suburban students had a chance to apply, students from other districts would be allowed to apply.

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