



YorkCounts' York Academy targets suburban families (video)

Andrew Shaw *THE YORK DISPATCH*

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Andrew Shaw video

One day, the new York Academy Regional Charter School will be so successful suburban parents will again feel comfortable living in York City.

That's the hope of YorkCounts officials, at least.

The nonprofit quality-of-life group held its annual summit Friday at Penn State York, a few miles from the downtown York location where York Academy will open in August of 2011.

Part of the summit's focus was on York Academy, which recently had its charter approved by York City, York Suburban and Central York school districts.

A charter district is independently operated, but is funded primarily by the chartering district or districts. York Academy is the county's first regional charter school, meaning it will draw from all three of those districts.

YorkCounts director James DeBord said he envisions the school being a lure for suburban families who had fled the city out of fear of the city schools, which haven't performed at the level of its suburban counterparts.

Widespread appeal : DeBord said York Academy, located at 32 West North Street in the Northwest Triangle redevelopment area, will "create a middle-class school" in the city, noting the poverty in the city school system.

"They will become comfortable coming into town . . . citizens will consider remaining in the city," said Sue Krebs, who along with Dennis Baughman has led the charter school effort .

So far, 210 students' families have expressed interest in enrolling:

- * 123 from York City
- * 48 from York Suburban
- * 39 from Central York

About 225 seats will be made available for the first year, which will be limited to kindergarten through second grades, with plans to add a grade each year until it is K-12.

The school will 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.

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Foreign language instruction starts in kindergarten.

Web site rolled out: York Academy now has a Web site, yorkarcs.org . News and background information about the school is available.

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