

THE YORK DISPATCH
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Work begins on York Academy charter school

ANDREW SHAW The York Dispatch

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Construction began Monday for York Academy Regional Charter School's home in the Northwest Triangle redevelopment area.

But even without a building to tour until this summer, the new school has already received more than 30 applications, according to Dennis Baughman, who was one of the people behind the school's creation. Baughman is a former Northeastern School District superintendent.

There are about 225 openings.

York Academy had its charter approved last year by York City, York Suburban and Central York school districts, who will all pay tuition, partially reimbursed by the state, for their students to attend the school.

In its first year this fall, it will only have kindergarten through second grade, but will eventually expand to a full K-12 offering.

YorkCounts, a nonprofit quality-of-life group, spearheaded the effort to create York Academy as a way to attract families to York City and improve the quality of education.

Key hire: Baughman said a former Spring Grove Area School District assistant principal, Kathleen Eschach, has been hired as chief academic officer, a position that combines superintendent and principal duties.

So far, he's been fielding a variety of questions about the school, from transportation - students from York City will walk, while students from Central and York Suburban will be bused - to food, which will be provided by Central.

Mostly, though, there are questions about the academic side, as the school won't teach in traditional fashion.

"This will not be a traditional class where students have a science class, social studies class, math class apart from each other. You can study any particular subject matter, and switch within a matter of minutes," Baughman said.

How it will work: 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. Foreign language instruction starts in kindergarten.

York Academy still needs to complete the

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lengthy International Baccalaureate certification process to become an official IB school, but it still can offer the curriculum this fall.

More about the school: The York Academy Regional Charter School opens this fall as a K-2 school. The school's 32 W. North St. building is being renovated by Kinsley Construction.

Children in York City, York Suburban and Central York school districts will receive priority in the application process.

Parent information sessions will be held at 6 p. m. at St. John's Episcopal Church, 140 N. Beaver St. in York, on March 17, April 27 and May 25 and at noon on May 7. For more information, visit yorkarcs.org.

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