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FEATURED

Lincoln Academy to start enrollment Feb. 1

By HILLARY GAVAN Senior staff writer
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In between each classroom will be a small breakout room for small group instruction and support. Class sizes will be 25, with a teacher and educational assistant.

The new building will include many areas for hands-on learning including an art studio and construction area as well as laboratories for metals, agriculture, bioscience, information technology, engineering/robotics, digital arts for student media broadcasting and more. The fabrication lab will feature 3D printers and CNC Machines. Five welding booths will also be available in addition to a sound recording booth for students to produce music and have voice lessons.

“There are lots of opportunities for our scholars to have hands-on experiences and exploratory opportunities at the school as well as in the community which is an exciting aspect of what this can bring to Beloit,” Cole said.

The new school is also home to a two-story music and theater space and two-story library in addition to an outdoor amphitheater, playground and parking.

To ensure safety in light of COVID-19, classrooms will have touchless faucets and sinks in each room for handwashing and an HVAC system supporting air filtration.

“The priority will be in-person learning with safety precautions,” Cole said.

Director of Career Planning and Partnerships Laura Benisch said those at the Academy are working with the community in developing partnerships for career pathways. More than 20 businesses already expressed interest.



Students will begin learning about career areas as early as 4K and will write goals as part of an individual learning plan in the following years. By seventh and eighth grade they will begin to take exploratory career-related courses such as hydroponics, construction, metals art, ceramics, healthcare, robotics, information technology, performing arts and more. By graduation students will be either enrolled in a 2 or 4-year college or university, enrolled or enlisted in the armed forces or employed in a living wage job.

School officials are currently reaching out to other school districts regarding coordination with extra-curricular activities. The Lincoln Academy will be offering spring, winter and fall sports. Other extra-curricular offerings will depend on student needs, Cole said.

“We are working with the YMCA and Boys and Girls Club on before and after school care and sports and activities,” Cole said.

Cole said The Lincoln Academy has received notification from the University of Wisconsin Office of Educational Opportunity that conditions have been satisfied and it’s close to finalizing a contract.

If authorized as an independent charter, the school would receive state aid per student in the amount of \$8,619.

Hillary Gavan



BELOIT — Student enrollment is planned to start Feb. 1 and staff hiring and recruitment is underway at The Lincoln Academy charter school.

Construction continues at The Lincoln Academy, 608 Henry Ave.

The Lincoln Academy, a 4K to grade 12 school, received charter approval from the University of Wisconsin Office of Educational Opportunity in May and is close to finalizing a contract. The charter school is planned to be a public school authorized through the University of Wisconsin System which focuses on career preparedness. Tuition will be free to families, and enrollment is open to any Wisconsin student.

In an interview on Monday, CEO Kristi Cole said enrollment for the school will be Feb. 1-28 with the office at 55 Eclipse Center open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m.—5 p.m. Families can enroll in person or online at www.thelincolnacademybeloit.com. If there are more students than seats available, school officials will do a lottery the first week of March.



The Lincoln Academy has two upcoming question-and-answer sessions with its leadership team on Dec. 10 from 6–7 p.m. and on Jan. 7 from 6–7 p.m. A registration link to the virtual meeting will be available at The Lincoln Academy Facebook page. The Lincoln Academy also plans to have a February Event for Enrollment and Information on Saturday, Feb. 6 from 9 a.m.–3 p.m. at the Eclipse Center. More information will be coming soon.

The public charter school will open Sept. 1, 2021 with K4 to second grades and seventh to ninth grades for a total of 350 students the first year, with the potential to open more grades depending on enrollment. It eventually plans to grow to 700 students in all grades.

The team hired to lead includes Cole, Director of Instruction Kari Flitz, Director of Career Planning and Partnerships Laura Benisch and Director of Finance and Operations Gregory Gurley. Director of Student Services Yolanda Rivera, who is bilingual, starts in January. The team just started formal recruitment for the K12 principal, and teacher recruitment starts early next year.

Kids First intends to build a three-story, 112,000-square-foot school on the site. Construction of the school is scheduled for completion in July of 2021.



Construction is on schedule as crews work to finish the outer shell of the building by December to ensure workers can continue laboring inside during winter weather. Windows will be put in this week with exterior brick going up. The curbs are up and asphalt has been put down.

