

Proposed charter school emphasizes classical studies

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NAMPA — A proposed public charter school focusing on the classic liberal arts plans to take its cues from the past and bring the Socratic method back into vogue.

In order to provide this type of curriculum to area students, Nampa Classical Academy teachers would avoid simplified textbooks and focus instead on a deep understanding of the liberal arts. Latin, philosophy, logic and rhetoric would all be part of the course of studies, as well as an emphasis on literature, arts, math, science, moral development and community service.

The academy's founding board has prepared a charter petition for review.

Nampa School Board Chairman Dan Nogales and district spokeswoman Allison Westfall said Thursday evening they were unaware of plans for the proposed charter school.

A public information meeting is set for 7 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 6, at Parkview Preschool, 609 15th Ave. N. in Nampa.

At the meeting, organizers hope to gather support from parents interested in enrolling their children in the free public school. The board is also seeking additional families to join the board in order to meet the minimum requirement of 30 founders.

While the charter school is still in the development phase, organizers hope to open the academy in fall of 2009, serving sixth, seventh and eighth-graders. An additional grade level would be added each year. Although a physical site has not yet been determined, the primary attendance area will be the same boundary as the Nampa School District.

"Parents in Nampa will ... have a choice between traditional public education and the quality of a private education," Isaac Moffett, vice chairman of the school, said.

The academy's organizers believe that when classical education was refined in 18th century America, it produced some of the greatest thinkers, scientists and leaders of all time. Students would be directed to the primary documents, autobiographies and biographies of such thinkers as Aristotle, Plato, Montesquieu, Curie and others. Technology, history, the arts, science and literature would round out the back-to-basics curriculum.

The school's target student populations are those who are not as interested in the many high school activities that divert time and attention away from core studies.

"Our purpose for opening NCA is not an attempt to replicate any of the schools, non-charter or charter, currently open in the district, but to give parents a choice for those who are searching for the highest expectations and standards in academics and behavior," Moffett said.