

Baden Academy Facility

OVERVIEW

Baden Academy Charter School proposes to be located in the former Mt. Gallitzin Academy building located at 1016 State Street in Baden. Mt. Gallitzin was a private Catholic school which occupied the building up to its closure in June, 2009. Baden Academy Charter School anticipates initially occupying the ground, first and second floors of the existing five-story portion of the building. This includes the ground-level cafeteria directly behind the front portion of the building. Initial intended occupancy will be approximately 200 students dispersed in ten classrooms on the three floors. Educational and Administrative staff will be approximately 15-20 adults. The enclosed connector and adjacent Activities Building are not intended to be occupied by Baden Academy Charter School at this time. Baden Academy Charter School will utilize portions of the site for parking, vehicular circulation for students, parents, and visitors as well as outdoor recreational areas. Physical education would be outdoors, in the Cafeteria, and/or integrated into the classroom.

Baden Academy Charter School has engaged the services of Hayes Large Architects, LLP of Altoona, PA to establish scope and undertake any code-required life safety and/or accessibility enhancements deemed necessary to comply with the Pennsylvania Uniform Construction Code. Mr. Russell D. Greaser, Jr., Director of Operations for Hayes Large Architects LLP is already working with the Code Enforcement Officer for the Borough of Baden to request direction on deliverables required by the Borough in order to comply with all requisite codes.

THE FACILITY

Historic grounds, a jewel along the Ohio River, a tradition of excellence, a local asset, a legacy of learning, an integral part of the community, a magnificent structure - none of these fully capture the potential this facility represents to the area and its families. By becoming a public charter school, a living landmark can continue to serve the community, to open itself to even more families, to preserve a tradition, and to provide an education to students whose parents are able to make such a choice without regard to tuition or race, color or creed.

The former Mt. Gallitzin facility offers superb classrooms in a safe, serene setting. Decades of successful education attest to the practicality of the facility as a desirable learning environment.

The many spectacular features of this former school beckon its continued use for education and offer an unparalleled opportunity to any child in the community, regardless of income or background, to thrive in a unique and architecturally-significant learning atmosphere. Meticulously well-maintained, the age of the facility becomes one of its assets. Mobility and access needs, however, were not considerations at the time of construction. Fortunately, we have a team of professional architects that will react to the Baden Borough Code Office's analysis of the building and interpretation of the PA uniform Construction Code. We will complete any necessary renovations to guarantee access and to complete such modifications before the opening of the charter school. The charter school seeks to serve all and, therefore, embraces the architects' recommendations in the best interest of future students, employees and visitors. The law requires no less.

COMPLIANCE

The law also requires the separation of church and state. As a public school, Baden Academy Charter will be committed to providing students of all faiths or no faith a comfortable environment in which to learn, grow, and achieve. Further, the Planning Committee of the Baden Academy Charter School assures all parties that no religious items or symbols will be permitted within the school, its classrooms, on the school grounds. There will be nothing visible that is not also visible from typical public schools. Sharing buildings affiliated with religions and churches is not new or unusual for publicly-funded entities. Indeed, the local area is replete with examples: Pittsburgh Public Schools rented rooms in churches for pre-school and regular classroom instruction; during its recent renovations, the nearby Aliquippa School District recently used the former St. Titus Parochial School building for instruction; furthermore, over the years, the Ambridge Area School District has also used church- or parochial-school related facilities.

A SAFE, NURTURING ATMOSPHERE

Arriving on campus for the first time, a family will observe a setting conducive to safety and perfect for children. Far back from the street, with ample parking, spacious sidewalks, a well defined traffic pattern, the campus invites children to explore, learn and be comfortable. A secure facility and a notable buffer of land between the school and public areas assure that strangers will not be a problem. Clearances will of course be required of all employees and others who might have contact with the students.

The students will exit buses directly to the school entrance – they will not cross in front of or between buses, nor will they mingle with moving cars. The main entrance takes students to classroom areas and waiting teachers. Primary students will always be with adults.

The layout of each of the three floors is consistent with the tenets of sound educational practice. All three floors have a quad of classrooms that permit age appropriate grouping; these four rooms are extraordinary in dimension – with high ceilings, large windows, wall space and great floor space accented by woodwork rarely affordable today. Spacious semi-circular classrooms are well-suited for four year old and five year old kindergarten locations. In addition, smaller rooms are available for tutoring or small group instruction. The compact nature of the three floors serves the needs of elementary students and adds efficiency to its operation. Storage, supply rooms, specialized instructional areas and conveniently located offices enhance the desirability of a building has served students well for decades.

Kindergarten classrooms are stunning. They were designed for young children – bright, open, many windows, own bathroom, room to move – to move, dance, sing, perform, exercise or simply rejuvenate. The classrooms for the older students are equally impressive – designed for movement, hands on learning, or engaging in projects while permitting both traditional desk work and use of technology. Imagine, access to a science lab! Access to a full scale stage and auditorium! Even the hallways are a cause for awe. The grounds yearn to be used for science walks, learning under a stately tree, planting gardens or just being active. Playgrounds and limited sports facilities add to the outside amenities.

The mission of the Baden Academy Charter School is to inspire personal excellence by cultivating the inherent gifts and talents present in all children by providing a curriculum which integrates the arts and sciences in a highly interactive, hands-on environment resulting in outstanding academic and personal achievement. We will emulate the classical rigor that will create a small, scholarly society of renaissance thinkers and scholars.