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Oxford to open international academy

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By KATHLEEN QUANDT
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The Oxford International Residence Academy will open its doors for the first time in the fall.

William Skilling, Oxford Community Schools' superintendent, said the school will host 20 Chinese students who will be chosen through an application and interview process. Most students will be in their senior year.

"The following year will be for any international student," Skilling said.

Skilling recently met with the consul general and deputy consul of Mexico to help attract other international students.

The interview process helps the students and parents understand expectations and opportunities, Skilling said.

The academy, east of M-24 on Drahner, will feature a residence hall, Adventure Center and a private lake.

The residence hall is a two-story house built in the colonial style with dorms on the second floor and general living quarters on the first floor.

The total cost of attending the school is \$36,200 per student and includes the application fee and all activities.

Several activities are planned for the students, including skiing, rafting and attending professional sports games, Skilling said.

"They will be experiencing things a lot of American families do — a well-rounded cultural experience," he said.

The academy will be at the high school and will follow the same schedule as regular classes. A one-week orientation will welcome the new students, Skilling said.

The school's mission, according to the website, is to, "provide a world-class education that challenges all students to achieve their maximum potential and prepare them to succeed in a global society."

Academy staff will consist of resident teachers, activity coordinators and residence supervisors.

Students who participate in the academy will live in a community environment directed toward their academic, personal, social, emotional and physical formation.

Students enrolled in the program will receive room and board, which includes three daily meals, a comfortable room, laundry facilities and close proximity to all the schools' recreational and academic facilities. Boarding students will also

have access to a recreation hall and a large-screen television.

Two teachers fluent in the home language of the residents will reside in the residence hall and provide adult supervision and guidance to the students.

A residence supervisor who speaks English will be present and awake in the residence hall whenever the students are there to ensure ongoing assistance and safety for the residents.

A one-week orientation period living with a sponsor family will make the transition to Oxford easier for students.

During breaks, students will be permitted to stay in the dormitory. However, students will be provided the opportunity to stay with their sponsor families. Trips with sponsor families also may be planned during extended breaks.

The idea for the school came about this year when Yong Zhao, executive director of the Confucius Institute at Michigan State University, visited Oxford to speak with staff and the community.

He suggested looking into a boarding school because Oxford schools offer a lot to students, and he would help support it, Skilling said.

The school will provide Oxford students the opportunity to work with others and prepare them for a multinational environment, Skilling said.

The Oxford International Residence Academy is looking for sponsoring families to host one student during the holiday and vacation breaks. In addition, sponsoring families are encouraged to host the students for evening dinners, weekends and/or to take their foreign exchange student on special trips.

FYI

Families interested in sponsoring a student may contact Linda Lewis at 248-969-5049 or Pat Bono at 248-969-5002.

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