New Salem charter school gets name

BY STEPHANIE JADRNICEK
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SALEM — The name of the new charter school in Salem, NEXT School-Eagle Ridge, gives a nod to the school that occupied the building before it.

A respected architecture firm and area civil engineer will perform a site review for the facility next week, according to NEXT High School project facilitator Joe Greenberg.

SEE SCHOOL, PAGE A5

SCHOOL: 'Enrollment interest remains strong and on target'

FROM PAGE A1

The focus of the review will mostly look at life safety and accessibility issues and list remediation needs and recommendations for building enhancements prior to the town of Salem agreeing to the transfer of ownership.

In the meantime, the school is continuing its local outreach to families about enrolling students.

"Enrollment interest remains strong and on target for the numbers we are seeking, but there are spots still available," Greenberg said. "We are fielding a steady stream of phone calls and email inquiries with questions and requests for one-on-one meetings."

Several days each week, Greenberg is in Salem holding meetings with individual families, as well as small information sessions. In the coming days and weeks, NEXT staff and volunteers will be at regional community events continuing to spread the word about the school and its innovative approach.

The school is now also placing attention on faculty recruitment efforts for its innovative program for sixth through 12th grades.

Greenberg said there's been an amazing response to the school's faculty recruitment efforts, both from experienced local educators and those entering the field through a mid-career shift or launching their teaching vocation.

"For educators, the NEXT School model is exciting because of the creativity and autonomy we expect and encourage. We do not do cookie-cutter curriculum at this school, so we need teachers who are tireless, inventive, instructional leaders," he said.

"The faculty we are bringing on are those who have shown us that they are not just knowledgeable, but who want to collaborate in conceiving and then facilitating engaging and empowering community-based learning opportunities for our students."

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