 [Click to Print](#)

[SAVE THIS](#) | [EMAIL THIS](#) |

[Close](#)

Detroit

## School to cater to kids who love math

**Growth follows success; science will be focus, too**

January 18, 2008

By CHASTITY PRATT DAWSEY

FREE PRESS EDUCATION WRITER

The charter school that delivered on a guarantee to send 90% of graduates on to college plans to open a math and science middle school attached to the Detroit Science Center.

The University Preparatory Science & Math Middle School will open for grades six and seven this fall in a temporary location, then move to the new school built onto the center.

### Advertisement

The public school promises a rigorous hands-on curriculum, an extended school year, at least one year of algebra by the end of middle school, internships, personalized learning plans, interaction with the center's staff engineers, the opportunity to help build exhibits and Chinese or Spanish classes for all students. The need to fill jobs in the science, technology, engineering and math fields was an incentive to open the school.

"We have to give our kids something stable, a career that will support a family," Margaret Trimer-Hartley, who will be the new school's superintendent, said Thursday.

It will be the second charter school and fourth building founded by Doug Ross, who started the University Preparatory Academy. UPA sent more than 90% of its first graduating class to college and post-secondary programs last spring. The new school also promises a 90% graduation rate.

The 80,000-square-foot school is being planned as the science center ramps up its remodeling and focus on math- and science-oriented careers. The center will get new exhibits such as a 15-story oil and fuel

technology one that will tower over the Cultural Center in the next few years and an interactive movie theater opening in December, said Kevin Prihod, president and chief executive officer for the science center.

"We want this school to be the Cal Tech or MIT breeding ground, the way to get into the top schools," Prihod said. "I think that's possible."

The school will be open to any student, whether from the city or suburbs, Trimer-Hartley said. Additional grades will be added yearly so that by fall 2010, a high school will open for ninth-graders. The site for the high school has yet to be determined, she said.

Grand Valley State University, the chartering organization, granted the contract to operate the school last month to Public Academies of Detroit, the school board that will oversee the school. The Thompson Educational Foundation, founded by Plymouth businessman Robert Thompson, was the applicant, university spokesman Edward Richardson said.

The foundation built the UPA high school adjacent to Wayne State University and leased it back to the school for \$1 a year. Neither GVSU, UPA or Thompson Educational Foundation officials would say whether there would be a similar arrangement for the new school. The school was allowed to open under the 2003 state law the Legislature passed after Thompson expressed interest in spending as much as \$200 million to help open small high schools in Detroit.

The law allows wealthy entities such as Thompson's foundation to open up to 15 charter high schools in the city, where only about 60% of students graduate from the public school system.

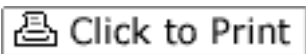
Shawn Hill, who will be principal of the new school, said she is looking for students with a passion for math and science or engineering careers. "This will help with the revitalization of the city of Detroit," she said.

Contact **CHASTITY PRATT DAWSEY** at 313-223-4537.

---

**Find this article at:**

<http://www.freep.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080118/NEWS01/801180415>



[SAVE THIS](#) | [EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)

Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.