

Imagine International Academy of Smyrna begins Renovation of its Permanent Location

May 19, 2009

The Imagine International Academy of Smyrna, a tuition-free public charter school, is pleased to announce that work has begun on its permanent home. Imagine Schools and a partnership represented by Oakhurst Realty Partners, have reached agreement on a long term lease, have secured funding and have begun the renovation of the 60,000 square foot first floor of the former Rich's Department Store on South Cobb Drive in Smyrna.

Imagine Smyrna opened in the fall of 2007 in temporary facilities and has been seeking a permanent home for the last 18 months. The school serves students in grade K-8.

“We are so excited to not only have a permanent facility but to have one that we feel will serve as a centerpiece in helping to revitalize this area of Smyrna,” said Cheryl Wilson, board chairperson. “We are also thrilled to be located right next to a city park and in a building that provides space for a potential future expansion and a high school.”

Gloria Clarke, principal of IIAS, is also pleased that she will have the ability to expand the school's International Baccalaureate program to reach more students. “With the International Baccalaureate Program thrust, students are exposed to academics from a global perspective,” said Ms. Clarke. As a member of the Imagine family, the school serves the public to partner with parents and the community to better educate children.

Mike McNabb, Smyrna City Councilman and IIAS board member stated, “I am delighted to finally have Smyrna's charter school located within the city limits of Smyrna. The school will be a terrific catalyst for the future redevelopment of north Smyrna and will deliver a new group of shoppers to the Publix located adjacent to the school. The International Baccalaureate curriculum being taught at The Imagine International Academy of Smyrna will further increase the participation in this same curriculum at Smyrna's Campbell High School”.

Imagine Schools believes that operating a successful school requires constant attention in five important areas called *Measures of Excellence*:

- Parent choice and satisfaction
- Adhering to shared values of Justice, Integrity and Fun
- Academic achievement as measured through same-student learning gains
- Positive character development
- Economic sustainability

“We work hard to balance accomplishments in all of these areas, because a school that emphasizes one while ignoring another will not thrive” said Principal Clarke.

Ms. Clarke added, “I want to add a special thanks to Bart Lester and the people at Oakhurst Realty Partners. They are people who care deeply about our school and about Smyrna and who had to overcome multiple hurdles to make this happen. In today's economic climate, financing a renovation such as this is nearly impossible, but Oakhurst persevered regardless of the obstacles.”

Renovation of the facility will be complete by July 26th and school will open in early August. The school is nearly fully enrolled for this coming fall, but a few spots remain open. Parents interested in considering IIAS for their children may contact Belinda Brown at IIAS at 678-370-0980 (or Belinda.brown@imageschools.com)

Imagine Schools operates 73 tuition-free public charter and independent schools in 13 states and the District of Columbia. During the 2008-09 school year, nearly 40,000 students are attending an Imagine School.

Oakhurst Realty Partners is a leading provider of commercial real estate services focusing on management and leasing, tenant representation, brokerage, and development/redevelopment.

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