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## Communications

### Communications

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## GRCC and Wyoming Public Schools to Sign Middle College Partnership

Grand Rapids Community College and Wyoming Public Schools (WPS) will be signing a letter of intent for the creation of a middle college program for the fall of 2012 at tonight's school board meeting. The meeting will be held at 5:30 p.m. at the Wyoming Public Schools Administration Building.

According to the agreement, the vision of the middle college partnership is to provide the opportunity for participating students to earn both a high school diploma and an associate of arts degree in four years. Wyoming Middle College students will begin in their sophomore year and complete the program after an extended year of classes. Students will be "dual-enrolled" in high school and college courses, with tuition for the college courses paid for by WPS as part of the district's per pupil state funding.

"This is part of our ongoing commitment to encourage our students to pursue post-secondary education," said Wyoming Public Schools superintendent Dr. Thomas Reeder. The first year of the program, according to Dr. Reeder, will consist of fifty tenth-grade students, with plans to double that number in year two.

GRCC officials view the program as a way of preparing students for college, and ultimately successfully completing college. "This is a great opportunity for these students to not only graduate from high school, but also earn their associate degree, without having to worry about paying for tuition," said Dr. Steven Ender, GRCC president. "And by breaking down some of the economic barriers that students and families have to higher education - like lack of financial resources for tuition - we can increase their chances of earning two- and four-year degrees."

Wyoming Middle College - with students being able to earn an associate of arts degree by starting in 10th grade - will be the first such program in the region, and the 26th early/middle college statewide.

Details of the program are as follows:

- Application-based program during freshmen year, with their college courses beginning their sophomore year

- Students will be dual-enrolled
- students will take fewer high school completion courses and more college degree courses in each subsequent year of high school
- college course tuition paid by Wyoming Public Schools

#### About Grand Rapids Community College

Grand Rapids Community College, established in 1914, offers opportunities for over 32,000 students annually in degree courses, certification and training programs, workshops and personal enrichment classes. GRCC holds classes on the downtown Grand Rapids campus as well as several additional locations throughout Kent and Ottawa counties.

#### About Wyoming Public Schools

The Wyoming Public School District serves a student population of approximately 4,700 students. WPS staff consists of more than 500 employees, including teachers, administrators, secretaries,

para-educators, food service, maintenance and custodial staff, bus drivers, mechanics, and community education personnel.

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