Kenowa Hills, Davenport enter degree deal

Middle College program to start in the fall

BY MONICA SCOTT

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GRAND RAPIDS — Kenowa Hill High School students will have an opportunity to receive both a diploma and an associate’s degree from Davenport University through a Middle College program that begins this fall, the principal announced Thursday.

Early/Middle College High Schools are generally five-year high schools located on a state public university or community college campus where students may attend as early as ninth grade, according to the state Department of Education.

The schools provide students with both a high school diploma and an associate’s degree or as many as 60 college credits which are transferable to most state colleges and universities.

“This is a great opportunity for our kids,” said Katie Pennington, principal of Kenowa Hills High School, which has 1,109 students. “Our rising juniors will be able to earn an associate’s degree from programs through Davenport’s colleges of business, technology and health. At completion, they will have the choice of getting a job because they should have skill or attending a four-year institution as a junior.”

Wyoming Public Schools is also close to finalizing a Middle College program that would begin next school year with Grand Rapids Community College.

The programs would be the first in West Michigan. At this time, Davenport officials could not confirm what specific courses from the university’s Colleges of Business, Technology and Health professions would be offered through the program.
Pennington said officials will meet with parents and students next week about the program. She said they need a minimum of 12 students but based on preliminary feedback anticipate a good first group.

“There is something to be said for phasing in that college experience, even for the smartest, most capable kids,” said Pennington, who said students would take course at the high school and on Davenport’s campus. “Looking at it through the lens of parents, this is also a huge savings for college.”

The school districts say the per pupil dollars received from the state will cover the cost.

She said the way the program is mapped out there should be no conflict with students meeting the rigors of the Michigan Merit Curriculum to obtain a diploma. She said the sophomores in the program won’t begin taking college-level courses until their junior year.

Wyoming’s program will begin with 50 students and they will take two college classes over the course of next school year. The number will increase each year. The students will take their classes at Rogers High School, not on GRCC’s campus.