

# ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

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## Construction skills charter school is OK'd

BY ROBERT KELLY

*Of the Post-Dispatch*

A new charter school will open in the fall in East St. Louis. The School Board unanimously approved a charter for the school in a meeting Wednesday evening.

The Tomorrow's Builders Charter School will have about 100 high school students who otherwise would be in danger of dropping out of school, said Paul Seibert of Charter Consultants, a private company that will help run the school.

The School Board had twice previously rejected the plans for the charter school. But board members voted 7-0 Wednesday to grant a charter after Seibert said supporters of the school

were able to address concerns the board had expressed about staffing and curriculum.

The school will teach construction trade skills in addition to offering courses geared toward completion of a high school diploma, Seibert said. The school is projected to have one faculty member for each 15 students, which should give teachers time to work individually on each student's specific needs, he said.

He said he anticipated no problems in hiring enough teachers to fully staff the school by the time it is scheduled to open in the fall.

The Emerson Park Development Corp., a neighborhood association in East St. Louis, also will help run the new charter school, which will operate out of a remodeled building owned by

the association in the 1200 block of North 13th Street.

The minimum age for students at the school will be 16, Seibert said. They will be students who have struggled in a traditional school setting and yet who have expressed an interest in learning construction skills, he said.

Superintendent Nate Anderson of the East St. Louis district recommended that the charter school be approved.

Tomorrow's Builders will be the second charter school in the district. Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville also operates an East St. Louis charter school geared to students who had academic problems in the district's regular schools.

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