

# A school being built in Pewaukee is altering the education landscape



MICHAEL SEARS / MSEARS@JOURNALSENTINEL.COM

The planned Christian Education Leadership Academy is under construction at Ryan St. near Highway 16 in the City of Pewaukee. The school is scheduled to open in fall 2015 and eventually could serve 400 students in kindergarten through eighth grade.

## Benefactors back Christian school

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What if you could build a school from scratch, incorporate everything you thought necessary to launch children on a path to highly productive adulthood, and not worry about the price tag?

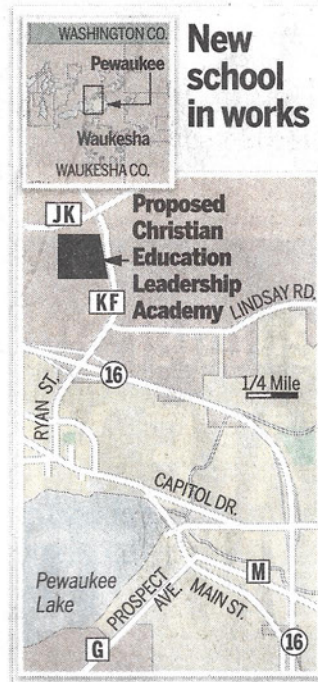
That never happens in education.

Unless a benefactor underwrites the cost because he's committed to the idea of creating a very specific type of school — which is exactly what's happening in Waukesha County.

Meet Brian Nahey, the CEO of Pewaukee-based Venturedyne, a firm that owns and manages industrial manufacturing companies. And meet Christian Education Leadership Academy, the Pewaukee-based private, religious school Nahey and his wife, Nancy, aim to establish.

CELA is scheduled to open in the fall of 2015, with plans to eventually serve 400 students in kindergarten through eighth grade. An event to celebrate its construction was held Tuesday at the school site, near the intersection of Ryan St. and Highway 16 in the City of Pewaukee.

Plans call for a large building — 170,000 square feet, about the size of a large department store. The planned amenities are impressive: recording studios,



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## EDUCATION

# Christian values are part of plan

large common spaces for students and teachers, conference areas for visiting educators, a 25,000-square-foot athletic facility featuring an indoor tennis court; batting cages, a golf driving range and an 850-seat chapel designed to serve as a fine arts center.

"We're looking at having an incredible impact," Nahey said. "We are going to try new ways to educate."

Nahey bought the property site and is paying for its development and construction as a donation to the school, but he declined to disclose even a ballpark figure for costs.

Why would a single family invest so much into one school?

Nahey said he has a good reason: He's long been motivated — as a child, and as a parent — by the idea of a private school dedicated to creating smart, well-prepared leaders with Christian morals such as respect and responsibility, service and faith.

Other high-profile players involved include Michael Uden, the dean of Concordia University Wisconsin's School of Education, and Andrew Neumann, head of the fast-growing HOPE Christian School voucher network in Milwaukee and a public charter school network around the country.

Uden said the vision for CELA was in keeping with the vision at the Mequon campus of Concordia University, affiliated with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, and

its school of education. The school could provide new opportunities for collaboration, he said.

For example, a yearlong residency program could have Concordia students serve as interns at the school, or Concordia might offer special scholarships to attract strong candidates as the school's future leaders.

The idea is that CELA will experiment with new ways to educate, without being bound by the rules of public schools, or limits on funding for resources. With capital expenses covered, fundraising and tuition fees can go toward staff salaries and scholarships, Nahey said.

"Whatever the cost is to do it right, we are donating as our commitment to making this a success," he said.

Nahey thinks the school could be a model to other public and private educators because it will have a focus on technology and a focus on sharing best practices.

"We hope to have space where the community can come in," he said.

He said he does not envision the school applying for public funding to accept students through the statewide voucher program because he wanted it to operate free of government rules.

The school is now recruiting staff and teachers.

### On the web

For information on the Christian Education Leadership Academy, go to [celaedu.org](http://celaedu.org).