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## Community school opening

By Jill Gosche, [jgosche@advertiser-tribune.com](mailto:jgosche@advertiser-tribune.com)

Students who do not succeed in a traditional classroom setting or those who wouldn't attend a traditional school have a new option for education in Tiffin.

North Central Ohio Educational Service Center is opening North Central Academy, a community school at 67 St. Francis Ave., as of Sept. 8, and today is the official enrollment date.

"I feel a burden to help kids be successful," said Director Kelly Stahl. "Kids need to know somebody cares, and we have a committed staff to care about these kids."

Stahl said last year, NCOESC sponsored an alternative school in Fremont. There were so many students who wanted to remain with the program, and they wanted to be able to enroll in it, she said. But with an alternative school, she said, school districts must send students.

"They couldn't stay," she said.

Jim Lahoski, superintendent of the NCOESC, and others wrote a grant for Tiffin's academy. Lahoski said the Public Charter School Program grant was for \$450,000 over two years, and the NCOESC was one of 10 entities to receive the award.

Stahl said she is not looking to take students who are happy with traditional education away from schools.

The school is for students in grades 6-12, the day is 8:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. and students do not have to wear uniforms. It is accepting students who live in a 30-minute driving distance and is a blend between online instruction, small group work and individual work with teachers and staff, she said.

"We're going to be able to differentiate the instruction based on student need," she said.

Stahl said the academy has the capacity for 60 students, but officials have a plan if they fill the spaces. They will find a building and move the academy, she said.

"We will grow with the kids if the enrollment is there," she said.

Stahl said the school will have state assessments, just like a public school, and teachers must be highly qualified. The academy has one teacher for every 15-20 students. It already has hired one teacher, is in the process of starting to look for another and has two aides, she said.

The academy has full-time guidance counselor. Because it is located adjacent to the NCOESC offices, it has access to special education services, along with speech and occupational therapy.

"It's really nice because it's just right across the drive," Stahl said.

The academy also is going to work with students who are deficient in credits. It can help them get back credits and get them where they need to be, she said.

It is to provide classes for students' parents and has a separate space apart from the two rooms for full-time students to accommodate those in alternative school.

Stahl said the academy will be returning next year.

"As long as there is a need for this school by the students, we will continue," she said. "I am extremely excited to be part of this."

On the Web:

North Central Academy:

[www.northcentralacademy.org](http://www.northcentralacademy.org)