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Maharishi Academy Cuts Enrollment New Headmaster Arrives

By Sam Bonacci, Monadnock Ledger-Transcript Staff

ANTRIM—The Maharishi Academy of Total Knowledge has reduced its expected first-year admission to 40 students and appointed its first headmaster.

“We’re planning on starting with 40 students,” John Boncheff, director of expansion at the academy, told the *Monadnock Ledger-Transcript* yesterday. “The truth is, we don’t have the number of students we need, but there are a large number of people calling us now.”

The school cut back student expectations for the second time since announcing in October that it would open the doors to the all-boy boarding school this fall. The first reduction came in February when expectations dropped from 200 students in its first year of operation to 75 students.

“One of the things we’re realizing is there are a large number of families and students who want to see the school in operation,” he said.

There has been an increase in the number of calls about admission to the school and Boncheff does not see any problem with getting 40 students for the first year.

“We’re getting about two phone calls and applications a week now,” he said. “People who are calling us now are not really calling to find out about the school, they are calling to say they are going to come.”

The school will be located on the site of the former Hawthorne College. The site is still undergoing construction, which involves tearing down some of the existing buildings.

Renovations on Scarborough Hall and the gymnasium have already begun, said Boncheff. “We’re going to have to move very quickly on this,” he said. “We think we can make it happen.”

Once the school is open and operating there will be increased interest, he said, noting plans to increase enrollment.

In February, Boncheff projected the eventual number of students at 400.

It was announced Tuesday that Alan Colby will be the school’s headmaster. Colby has worked for 16 years as the principal of the Maharishi School of the Age of Enlightenment in Iowa. The school in Iowa is a pre-kindergarten through 12 co-ed day school.



ALAN COLBY

Colby holds a master’s degree in world religions from Boston University, as well as a master’s in higher education administration from Maharishi University of Management.

He has experience teaching, including two years at a boarding school and six years at the Maharishi School in Iowa, according to a written statement from the school.

“Maharishi Academy is fortunate to have tapped an administrator of Mr. Colby’s caliber and experience,” said Boncheff. “His qualifications are impeccable.”

Under Colby’s leadership, said Boncheff, the Iowa school has consistently scored in the top 1 percent of the nation on standardized tests and more than 95 percent of the graduates are accepted at four-year colleges.

In 2007, a team from the school won the world Destination Imagin-Nation competition.

Other candidates for headmaster were examined, but the academy’s board felt that he was the best fit for the position, said Boncheff. “We felt that he could very much bring that standard of excellence here, and of course he’s also very, very familiar with what we’re trying to do.”

The all-boys boarding high school will incorporate non-religious Transcendental Meditation into the curriculum, along with unique teaching methods.

Total tuition and fees for a [boarding] student for the 2008-2009 school year are \$38,250.

The school will be the first consciousness-based Maharishi boarding school for boys in the United States, according to the statement.

“This is the kind of education that prepares your brain to succeed,” said Colby. “It’s not just facts and figures in your memory—it’s the coherent functioning of your nervous system.”

When Colby arrives in two to three weeks, after the Iowa school completes its year, hiring school staff will begin. There are about 50 people who want to work at the academy, said Boncheff, adding that the school’s leaders wanted Colby to interview prospective staff members.

The school plans a visitor’s day for June 17. All are welcome to attend. Those wishing to make reservations may call (603) 588-0400.