

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Birches Academy Expands Space in Salem

Public K-8 charter school to grow its footprint by 12,000 square feet on a path to building ownership

Salem, New Hampshire, February 14, 2024: The Birches Academy of Academics and Arts Chartered Public School, located at 419 S. Broadway in Salem, has leased an additional 12,000 square feet of space in the building they've been at since 2012, bringing the total square footage of the school to 36,000 square feet. This is a first step on a pathway to purchasing the building as the school's permanent home.

The Birches Academy is an arts-integrated, STEAM-focused, tuition-free charter public school serving students in grades Kindergarten - 8. Founded in 2012 and originally open to 88 students in grades 1-8, in the school's twelve years of operation it's expanded to over 235 students in a wider range of grade levels, and it earned recognition by the US Department of Education being named a National Blue Ribbon School in 2022. Expanding space by a third will allow for further expansion in student population to around 300 students, widening the possibility of a Birches Academy education to all New Hampshire students.

"The Birches Academy strives to offer a deep curriculum rooted in the arts while also driven by the goal to develop thinkers who have the STEAM skills relevant to what the world needs. We meet our students where they're at, and we're working tirelessly to graduate students who can compete successfully as citizens who can change the world. As we're at capacity and have a robust wait list, we're excited to lease additional space to not only serve our existing families but also to be able to welcome more families into our educational environment to advance our mission," said Christopher Smith, Dean of School.

Members of the Birches Board of Trustees and school administration are in the planning stages, including working with town and state agencies to ensure that all health and safety requirements are met and also designing engaging learning spaces to support

and extend the curriculum. The school anticipates the first stage of the expansion to be complete by the start of the 2024-2025 school year.

“From the very founding of The Birches Academy, we’ve put a relentless focus on long-term sustainability. We’ve grown steadily in both students and scope of curriculum, attracting top administrators and teachers. Adding space within our current facility supports our future goals of expanding our unique voice and instrument music programs, our art studio, our Spanish classes and student clubs and activities, while continuing our core focus on traditional academics,” said Christie Storniolo, co-founder and chair of the Board of Trustees.

The Birches Academy admissions for grades 1-8 are available via a wait list; class sizes are 25 per classroom including a lead teacher and assistant teacher. Kindergarten students are admitted via lottery, with preference given to siblings of enrolled students. The fall 2024 lottery has been held and all grade levels are currently at capacity, but families interested in any grade level can add their children to the waitlist at any time.

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About The Birches Academy

A National Blue Ribbon School, The Birches Academy of Academics and Art is a publicly funded chartered public school in Salem, NH. Open since 2012, the school serves over 235 children in grades K–8 from over ten communities in southern New Hampshire. Its mission is to provide a learning community that supports excellence in core academics, STEAM and the arts while cultivating each child's individual qualities and strengths. Learn more at www.birchesacademy.org

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