

# Watervliet school board enthused about new LMC degree opportunities

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WATERVLIET — Watervliet schools officials are supportive of a new program to allow a handful of district students to earn a high school diploma and a two-year college degree at the same time.

The school board Monday night voted to endorse the Fifth Year Early/Middle College Program that starts in the fall.

It's a partnership between Lake Michigan College and the Berrien Regional Education Service Agency.

Watervliet schools Superintendent Kevin Schooley said that based on early estimates, the program would be available to about 60 high school students throughout the county – including four or five from Watervliet High School.

Those in the program would start in their junior year of high school and take classes at their high school and LMC for three years.

They would have to attend a fifth year of high school, but during that fifth year they would mostly be at LMC, Schooley said.

At the end of the fifth year, the students would graduate from high school and get their diploma. At the same time, they would get an associate degree from LMC.

The program has some restrictions in what degrees will be offered.

There would be minimal cost to the district. It would have to pay an estimated \$5,300 to \$6,900 annually to RESA to help defray the costs of a program administrator.

The \$7,391 in state aid per student would be given to LMC, Schooley said.

There would be no cost to the students, he added.

“I think it's going to be good for our kids,” Schooley told the school board. “It could provide some with a wonderful start to a college career.”

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