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Education board approves charter school

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The controversial plan to open a public charter school in Delano has been resolved. On Tuesday, the Kern County Board of Education voted 5-2 in favor of the Paramount Bard Academy's application to open a charter school in August.

The approval is subject to a memorandum of understanding between the Superintendent of Schools and Paramount Bard Academy.

The memorandum will address the expulsion policy, transportation will be offered for kids on both east and west sides of Delano and the charter's board will be expanded to include members from both Delano schools and the county board, said Brent Malicote, the new school's principal.

The first order of business will be student recruitment, Malicote said.

"The goal is to have as many kids apply as possible from all socioeconomic groups in Delano," said Malicote, who described the positive vote for the innovative school as a "banner moment."

The Delano school districts were always willing to return to the table to discuss the charter school, said James Hay, director of human resources in Delano Joint Union High School District.

With the memorandum, most of the Delano districts' concerns would be addressed, Hay said after the board's vote.

"We're cautiously optimistic," said Hay, a 25-year education veteran in Delano.

The charter hopes to attract 40 graduate students for a one-year Master of Arts in Teaching program run by Bard College.

The charter will hire 12 teachers for the first year, beginning in the next two to three weeks, Malicote said.