

Kenaki Academy offers micro school**Slug:** LANNWS-08-19-23 MICRO SCHOOLS**Print depth:** 24.93 (3714 characters)**Start date/time:** Aug 18, 2023 09:57 AM**Section tags:** nc-lan
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nc-lan/news/education**Authors:** hjones@thelancasternews.com**Byline:** By Haley Jones
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Students at Kenaki Academy can experience a different type of education setting, known as a micro school. The school, which had about 30 students last year, is a fully accredited K-12 learning program, aimed at personalizing the children's academic experience.

"I thought I made it up," owner Connie Funderburk said. "Actually, I thought I just fell into it, and I was like, this is brilliant! The more I started researching different ways to do things, I found out that it's a concept that's been going on around the country for a long time."

A micro school is defined as a school with a class size of 15 or fewer students with mixed-age level groupings, according to Funderburk. Micro schools also vary in their day-to-day schedule, giving students the opportunity for shorter, more compact school days rather than the traditional seven- to eight-hour day.

Kenaki Academy has six teachers: Funderburk, who is black-belt certified; Teresa Parks Funderburk, who has a master's degree in special education; Sensei CJ Hylton; Angela Maree; Chris Mokken and Samantha Small. They teach grades K-5 through 12.

Funderburk also said that classes can be taught using a flipped classroom approach, allowing children to do more than sit in a chair and listen to lessons. Kenaki Academy students go on field trips, play outside and do hands-on learning lessons daily.

"Micro schooling is seen as being in between homeschooling and private schooling and is designed to offer a full year of education," Funderburk said. "Its growing popularity stems from a general dissatisfaction of how schools often structure their content."

Funderburk opened the school in 2017, but just celebrated its ribbon-cutting this month at an event that also marked her 20th anniversary as a martial artist.

“(The school) just kind of grew out of necessity,” she said. “The necessity is changing so tremendously with the workforce in our city. Of course, COVID is a big part of the story, but so many people are doing nontraditional jobs or ... their child is doesn’t learn in a traditional environment.”

One of the largest misconceptions about micro schools that Funderburk hears is that a child enrolled in a micro school will not get the normal “high school experience,” like playing sports, going to prom or having a typical graduation.

“I have a kid right now who’s one of the star football players of AJ High School,” Funderburk said. “This kid went to prom, did all those things that are still so important to the high school experience.”

Kenaki Academy pulls its curriculum from ACE: School of Tomorrow, which is a form of homeschool curriculum. Funderburk said parents are also active participants in their child’s schooling experience, and often choose the curriculum they want their child to learn.

“Why are we walking around campus going to classes that don’t serve you, or serve a purpose in the life that you want to live,” Funderburk said.

Micro schools are also a great place for students with learning differences or who have challenges with paying attention, Funderburk said. At her school, students are allowed to take mental breaks, step away from the lesson and come back or have a few minutes of alone time until they are ready to start again.

“Those are the kinds of accommodations that we can make that just set up the child for success ... very individualized,” she said.

Kenaki Academy’s first school day is Monday, Aug. 21, and enrollment is still open. Tuition is roughly \$3,000 a year, and most parents are on a weekly pay schedule. After-school day care is also available for younger students, for an additional cost.

Kenaki Academy is located at 677 Lancaster Bypass East, Lancaster. For more information, call 803-396-2040, ext. 2.

Child images

LANNWS-08-19-23 MICRO SCHOOLS 1



LANNWS-08-19-23 MICRO SCHOOLS 2



LANNWS-08-19-23 MICRO SCHOOLS 3



LANNWS-08-19-23 MICRO SCHOOLS 4



LANNWS-08-19-23 MICRO SCHOOLS 5



LANNWS-08-19-23 MICRO SCHOOLS 6

