

# Southern Lakes College Academy Launches for Students Ready to Start College Early

*Students turn high school into the first two years of college, saving thousands of dollars in college costs.*

ELKHORN, WI, UNITED STATES, May 6, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Families in Wisconsin now have a new public high school option designed for students who are ready for more academic

challenge, greater opportunity, and a faster path to college success. Southern Lakes College Academy (SLCA) is officially launching as a tuition-free public charter high school serving students in grades 9–12.



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Students can begin earning transferable college credit in a cohort of motivated learners while still in high school, with a clear plan and support every step of the way.”

*Kelly Demerath, principal of  
Southern Lakes College  
Academy*

SLCA is the next evolution of the proven EDGE program, which helped students begin college coursework on Gateway Technical College’s campus while in high school. As the program expanded rapidly in size, reach, and outcomes, school leaders recognized the need for a distinct identity and a standalone charter school built specifically around the early college model.

Southern Lakes College Academy now provides that dedicated pathway.

“SLCA changes what high school can be,” said Kelly Demerath, principal of Southern Lakes College Academy.

“Students can begin earning transferable college credit in a cohort of motivated learners while still in high school, with a clear plan and support every step of the way.”

At Southern Lakes College Academy, students complete real college coursework taught by college professors tuition-free through [partnerships with Wisconsin colleges and universities](#), including Gateway Technical College and University of Wisconsin campuses.

Depending on their pathway, students may make substantial progress toward an associate

degree or the [first two years of a bachelor's degree before high school graduation](#). Some students may earn 60+ transferable college credits—potentially saving families thousands in future tuition costs.

Unlike traditional AP tracks, limited dual-credit offerings, or self-directed online options, SLCA provides a structured early college model with:

- Personalized academic planning
- Ongoing advising and check-ins
- College readiness support
- Clear transfer-focused course pathways
- Full-time and part-time enrollment options

Students remain connected to their home high school communities, allowing many to continue participating in sports, clubs, activities, and graduation traditions while taking college classes through SLCA.

Southern Lakes College Academy builds on a proven foundation first established through the EDGE program at Career & College Academy.

Originally developed within CCA as an early college pathway at Gateway Technical College for motivated students ready for greater academic challenge, EDGE quickly grew from a small cohort into a thriving program serving advanced and motivated learners from across the region. As that demand expanded, school leaders created Southern Lakes College Academy as a dedicated charter high school focused entirely on helping students begin college in high school—with the same experienced leadership, strong student support, and trusted partnerships that helped make EDGE successful.

Southern Lakes College Academy is currently accepting inquiries and applications for upcoming terms, including summer and fall enrollment opportunities.

Families can request an individual Explore SLCA Meeting or register for a virtual information session on Monday, May 11 at 6:00 p.m. Visit [southernlakescollegeacademy.org](https://southernlakescollegeacademy.org) or call 262-741-9452 to register or request a meeting.

#### About Southern Lakes College Academy

Southern Lakes College Academy is a tuition-free public charter high school serving academically ready students in grades 9–12 who want to begin college while still in high school. Through structured support, personalized planning, and partnerships with Wisconsin colleges and universities, SLCA helps students earn transferable college credit, join a cohort of motivated learners, make meaningful progress toward a degree, and graduate with a head start on their future. Students may participate full-time or part-time while remaining connected to their home high school. Learn more at [southernlakescollegeacademy.org](https://southernlakescollegeacademy.org).

## About Career & College Academy

Career & College Academy is a tuition-free public charter high school focused on hands-on career pathways. Through personalized support, small class sizes, and partnerships with employers and colleges, CCA helps students build skills, gain experience, earn credentials, and explore future pathways while completing high school requirements. Students graduate with more than a diploma—leaving with direction, confidence, and a head start on what comes next. Learn more at [careercollegeacademywi.org](https://www.careercollegeacademywi.org).

Dr. Kelly Demerath

Southern Lakes College Academy

+1 262-741-9452

[demeke@elkhorn.k12.wi.us](mailto:demeke@elkhorn.k12.wi.us)

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