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Friday February 06, 2015

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STATE: John Marsden buys Macedon Grammar

[*Matt Crossman*](#)

| 18:39:PM 29/01/2015

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John Marsden will open a secondary school, including a specialised performing arts stream, at the site of Macedon Grammar.

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WEB EXCLUSIVE

Author and alternative education pioneer John Marsden has plans to open a secondary school, including a specialised performing arts stream, at the former site of Macedon Grammar.

Mr Marsden told Star Weekly he had completed the purchase of the 32-hectare Bailey Road site from Macedon Grammar School's founder, Dr Alan Rose.

Macedon Grammar closed in December last year after being handed a 'show cause' notice by the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority.

Administrators Worrells held a creditors' meeting last month, revealing the school's debt was more than \$1.2 million.

Mr Marsden, the founder and principal of Candlebark School near Romsey, said he hoped to open a new school at the site in time for 2016.

"We came to terms a few days ago," he said on Thursday.

"The plan is to open a full secondary school with a regular stream and a specialised stream for students wanting to do dance, arts, music, writing and so on."

Mr Marsden said the new school, which he hopes will one day have about 200 students, will be a Victorian first.

"Outside of the Victorian College of the Arts, I am not aware of any other school that offers this kind of specialisation," he said.

"The arts never used to be looked at as a serious career, but nowadays creativity is such a valuable asset it has to be taken more seriously."

Mr Marsden said the new school would follow the Candlebark philosophy, giving students a broad range of experiences often outside the classroom.

He said the Macedon Grammar site – which has about 15 classrooms, a library, gym, swimming pool and sports facilities – was well equipped.

"The buildings are in beautiful condition," Mr Marsden said.

"It's sad to see a school that was looked after so well have to close. But it will live on in a new form."

Mr Marsden said Dr Rose was very positive about Candlebark's plans.

“We would love to say we will open halfway through this year, but realistically it will probably be the start of next year.”

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