CORA VAN OLSON/P&D

Yankton's new Trailhead Learning Center officially opens its doors for students on Monday. The $32 million, state-of-the-art facility was years in the planning process, and offers a centralized early-learning facility to Yankton's newest and youngest students.

Trailhead Learning Center Opens New Journey For Yankton Education

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The Yankton School District (YSD) is set to start on a new and exciting journey.

On Monday, Aug. 18, the nearly $32 million Trailhead Learning Center (TLC), a state-of-the-art facility dedicated to early education, will welcome its first students.

As the sign in front of the new structure declares, the TLC is "where the journey begins."

Melanie Ryken, who is ready to blaze a new trail as the first-ever principal of TLC, told the *Press & Dakotan* that she feels "incredibly humbled and proud" to take on the challenge of leading YSD's new early childhood development center.

"To say it's an honor of a lifetime is an understatement," Ryken said. "I will do my very best to inspire our staff and youngest learners. I am especially looking forward to being a small piece of that positive foundation and guiding influence for our earliest learners as we all — students, parents (and) staff — build something special together."

YSD Superintendent Dr. Wayne Kindle described Ryken as "a veteran school leader who has a wealth of experience" in leading early childhood education.

"Our students and staff are in wonderful hands with her leadership," Kindle said.

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