



The Freedom Institute
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Freedom Institute Expanding to Ave Maria with New High School Campus Opening Fall 2026

Ave Maria, FL — Driven by strong student outcomes and a growing demand for a different kind of high school experience, the Freedom Institute will open a new high school campus in Ave Maria in Fall 2026, located at 5078 Pope John Paul II Boulevard. Supported by strategic partnerships with Barron Collier Companies and Ave Maria Development, the expansion brings Freedom Institute’s proven, values-driven education model to one of Southwest Florida’s most vibrant and fast-growing communities.

This announcement builds on Freedom Institute’s January declaration of its intent to expand into Ave Maria, supported by a \$1 million matching grant from The Dekko Foundation. Since that time, momentum has continued to build, with strong community interest and aligned partnerships helping transform that vision into reality.

“We are incredibly grateful for the partnership of Barron Collier Companies and Ave Maria Development, and we feel truly blessed to become part of the Ave Maria community,” said Christopher Marker, CEO of the Freedom Institute. “Ave Maria is a remarkable place, rooted in strong values, family life, and a shared vision for the future, and it’s an honor to bring our high school program into such an extraordinary community.”

A Distinctive High School Experience in a Beautiful Setting

Freedom Ave Maria will be a 10,000+ square-foot high school learning environment offering students a unique and inspiring daily experience. Students will arrive each morning into a thoughtfully designed academic space overlooking the center town circle, surrounded by the beauty and energy of the Ave Maria community.

The campus will reflect Freedom Institute’s commitment to a classically informed, future-focused education, pairing rigorous academics with concierge-style support for each student’s next steps.

“As students arrive on campus each day and look out across this beautiful learning community, they’ll be reminded that they are part of something meaningful,” Marker said. “This space was designed to inspire excellence, purpose, and vision.”

Preparing Students for College, Career, and Life

As a high school program, Freedom Ave Maria will offer the same award-winning model that has driven success at Freedom Naples, including:

- Personalized academic pathways
- Concierge-level college and career guidance
- Internships, apprenticeships, and career exploration
- Civic leadership and character development
- Early access to dual enrollment, including opportunities for free college credits as early as freshman year

The program is designed to prepare students not only for college and career, but for life equipping them with the skills, habits, and character needed to thrive in an ever-changing world.

The Freedom Institute looks forward to connecting with families and members of the Ave Maria community as well as the business community to develop partnerships to offer real-world learning opportunities for the students through internship and mentorship programs.

Community Support Fueling Momentum

The previously announced \$1 million The Dekko Foundation matching grant remains a central component of the expansion effort. All community contributions are matched dollar-for-dollar, doubling the impact of every gift and accelerating the development of both Freedom Ave Maria and Freedom Naples.

“Educational excellence is essential to building strong, thriving communities,” Marker added. “Together, we’re creating something that will serve Ave Maria for generations to come.”

For more information about the Ave Maria expansion or how to participate in the matching fund, visit www.givebutter.com/freedominstitute or <https://freedominstitute.net/ways-to-give>. You can also contact Eva Aspegren at 239-913-9599.

About the Freedom Institute of Collier County

The Freedom Institute is an innovative high school program offering personalized and flexible learning pathways that build critical thinking, financial literacy, and the foundations of engaged American citizenship. Through an AI-enhanced curriculum, a blend of high school and college courses, and real-world experiences—including internships, college and career preparation, and job placement—students gain the skills, knowledge, and values essential for economic freedom and workforce success. The Institute’s American Dream Conversations at Freedom series brings civic, business, and thought leaders directly to students to share lessons about life, liberty, and the pursuit of excellence.

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The Freedom Institute is proud to partner with Barron Collier Companies and Ave Maria Development as we expand into beautiful Ave Maria.