



## **Dora Kennedy French Immersion – Robert Goddard Montessori**

Collocation Town Hall | June 11, 2025

### Questions & Answers

#### **CO-LOCATION RATIONALE AND PROCESS**

##### **Why is the district proceeding with a co-location plan that was attempted 10 years ago and failed?**

The current Dora Kennedy building is beyond its useful life and will soon serve as a swing space for another school. The district lacks the funding to renovate the building and has no alternative space available that wouldn't overburden transportation. Co-location was determined to be the most viable and equitable long-term option.

##### **Can the district consider building a new school for Dora Kennedy or using a similar solution to Phyllis, Wheatley, or Springhill Lake?**

The current capital budget is allocated through 2030. A new building is not feasible at this time. Co-location is a solution that maximizes resources while maintaining academic standards for both programs.

#### **STUDENT AND STAFF TRANSITION**

##### **How will the district ensure students are emotionally supported through the transition and feel welcome in the new space?**

Both principals are developing transition activities, school tours, and orientation events. Branding updates will reflect both school communities, and shared space use will be collaboratively planned. Emotional support and student engagement will be central to the transition strategy.

##### **Will staff from Dora Kennedy be retained during and after the move?**

Yes. The intention is for all staff, including educators and support personnel, to move with the school. Leadership emphasized the value of staff continuity for program success.



**What is the timeline for DKFI to fully move into the co-located building?**

The transition planning period will begin in April–May 2026. At that time, both schools will coordinate packing, logistics, and internal preparations. A move management vendor will be engaged in March 2026 to support the process. The target date for DKFI to be fully moved into the new campus is July 15, 2026. This timeline ensures that staff have adequate time to prepare before the start of the school year. Even if modular construction is still being finalized, the move will proceed as scheduled, with materials temporarily staged in areas such as the gym to support a smooth and timely transition.

**Will teacher or staff turnover increase due to the move, and how is the district planning to mitigate that?**

Each year, we intentionally work with Human Resources to ensure that we hire candidates with credentials to support our signature programs. Both schools have minimal turnover rates, for which we are extremely grateful. Additionally, the principals are meeting with their teachers to determine their plans as a result of the collocation. As of today, it was reported that no teachers have expressed their desire to not transition in SY26/27.

## **BUILDING USE AND SPACE PLANNING**

**How will the building be structured to account for differences in age groups, such as younger elementary students and middle schoolers?**

The academic teams are considering how to group grades within the building to reflect developmental needs. Feedback will be incorporated into space planning and addressed in future community meetings.

**How will the two schools be physically and programmatically separated within the shared building?**

The principals and their teams have begun preplanning the assigned classroom configurations to support each school's needs. As they approach the move-in date, spaces/classrooms will be confirmed and assigned accordingly.

**Where will DKFI middle school lockers be located?**

As of today, lockers will be assigned to the DKFI middle school students in the middle corridor of the school.



**How will shared spaces like the cafeteria, gym, and media center be scheduled and maintained to effectively serve both school communities?**

Both school communities will have shared spaces that are strategically assigned according to the master schedule and programs/events, as reflected on a mutual building usage calendar.

**What facility improvements or additions are planned to accommodate the larger student body?**

In the summer of 2020, Robert Goddard Montessori School underwent significant renovations to improve air quality, safety, and the learning environment. Upgrades included a complete replacement of the HVAC system, all exterior windows and doors, and ceiling systems. The project also featured new LED lighting throughout the building, a modern sprinkler fire protection system, and enhanced storefront hardware such as panic devices and secure locking mechanisms. Additionally, before Dora Kennedy is moved in, the existing one-story, 10-classroom modular will be replaced with a new two-story modular expansion that includes elevator access. This modular expansion will add 18 new classrooms, bringing the campus total to 66 classrooms and increasing total student capacity to 1,448, allowing for 450 additional students.

**Will DKFI still be able to grow as a French Immersion program if space is limited in the co-located facility?**

Enrollment is determined through the lottery system and the early entrance seat availability according to the specifications of the program. This is monitored annually to ensure that staffing is aligned to support the needs of the students and the signature program.

## **TRANSPORTATION AND TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT**

**What is the transportation plan, and what are 'hub stops'?**

Due to a countywide driver shortage and broad student boundaries, PGCPS is piloting hub stops to streamline service. This is a trial effort, and parent feedback will determine its viability. The district will remain transparent and adjust plans as needed.

**Will bell schedules be staggered more significantly than 15 minutes?**

Bell times may not be staggered because we expect rideshare opportunities with Robert Goddard.



**What improvements are being considered to make drop-off and pick-up safer and more efficient? Will car line procedures be unified between the two schools?**

Both principals will collaborate on arrival/dismissal procedures.

## **BEFORE AND AFTERCARE SERVICES**

**Will there be a shared before-and-aftercare program? How will aftercare programs accommodate demand from both school communities?**

According to MSDE, the Accreditation and Licensing Office can have two Vendor-Managed Child Care Programs (VMCCP) at the site. Both principals will work with each specific before-care and after-care program to secure licensing locations in the building.

## **PROGRAM AND EQUITY**

**Will extracurricular activities be shared between the schools or remain separate?**

Middle school sports teams will remain separate. Extracurricular programs will also remain school-specific, unless mutual interest leads to collaboration in specific areas.

**How will the district preserve DKFI's identity as a French immersion specialty school in a shared space?**

Principal Spence will work with our district partners to ensure there is adequate branding and insignia that externally and internally to maintain its identity as a French Immersion specialty program.

**What educational benefits are expected from this move?**

Each school has already participated in the collocation of other specialty programs in their respective buildings without any expressed compromise. This collocation will provide opportunities to collaborate with each community and foster a universal culture where students can learn from each other while maintaining the integrity of their signature programs.



**What is being done to ensure equal access to resources and fairness in space allocation?**

Both school communities will have shared spaces that are strategically assigned according to a master schedule and programs/events, as reflected on a mutual building usage calendar, to maintain transparency, equity, and intentional collaboration.

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND TRANSPARENCY**

**What is the district doing to address feelings of exclusion or disrespect regarding the communication process?**

PGCPS and School Leadership acknowledge the concerns and are committed to rebuilding trust through continued engagement. A Frequently Asked Questions document, regular town halls, and ongoing updates will help ensure transparency and responsiveness.

**Can community engagement continue even after the schools are co-located?**

Yes. Feedback mechanisms such as surveys and PTA forums will continue. Leadership will explore ongoing data collection and meetings to support accountability and continuous improvement post-transition.

**How can I continue to share questions or concerns about the co-location?**

PGCPS and school leadership welcome your continued questions and feedback. You can submit questions at any time using the online question form [here](https://forms.gle/ZRx1v49TKoaZKCtx9). Additionally, future town halls are being planned, and PGCPS is committed to addressing community input through updated FAQs and presentations, which will be shared on the school websites. Thank you for staying engaged in this important process.

**What community engagement or accountability measures are planned during and after the transition?**

There will be opportunities planned by both school leaders to engage the community during and after the transition. District partners will be invited to participate in the community forums to address any concerns and to monitor the implementation of the collocation plan.