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## Overview

### Q1. What is the plan for Robert F. Kennedy Elementary School?

**A.** As part of the District's strategic buildings plan to have new or like-new buildings for all students by 2030, the City and District are investing \$75 Million in a rebuild of Robert F. Kennedy to a Pre-K through Grade 8 school. The school will be constructed at the site of the current Robert F. Kennedy Elementary School.

### Q2. How was Kennedy identified for this investment? How is it funded?

**A.** The District is in the process of a district-wide capital plan with a goal of having enough seats in new or like new schools by 2030. As part of that plan and in response to community listening sessions and the District's Turnaround Action Plan, key goals of the capital plan are to expand access to high quality pre-kindergarten and to reimagine the middle school experience by expanding the number of schools with Pre-K through grade 8 options. Projects in the capital plan have been approved by the City Council, Providence School Building Committee, and Rhode Island School Building Authority. Kennedy was identified as a priority for the next phase of construction based on the quality of its current facility, current enrollment, and the ability to use the existing site for a Pre-K through 8 school.

### The Transition Plan during Construction

**Q1. Where will Kennedy students go during construction? What is the timeline for construction and for the move into swing space?**

**A.** Kennedy students will temporarily relocate to a swing space for two school years, Fall 2025 through Spring 2027. The swing space the District has identified is Esek Hopkins Middle School at 29 Bainbridge Avenue, Providence, RI 02909.

**It is important to note that Kennedy Elementary and Hopkins Middle School are not merging.** The two schools will co-locate and will run as two separate schools, with separate staff members, schedules, and entrances. More information on how colocation will work is provided below.

**Q2. Will families be able to see the Hopkins Middle School building prior to students moving in?**

**A.** Tours will be available to Robert F. Kennedy families of Esek Hopkins Middle School in late Spring as well as late Summer.

**Q3. How will co-location work?**

**A.** The District is taking several steps to support a safe and successful co-location:

- *Separate staff members and leadership teams:* Each school will retain their staff and leadership teams.
- *Separate start and end times:* Start and end times will continue as is: Kennedy - 9:05-3:25pm; Hopkins – 7:45-2:30 pm.
- *Separate spaces:* The schools will largely remain separate with Kennedy primarily occupying the first two floors and basement with Hopkins primarily occupying the third floor. While the school will share some common areas (e.g., cafeteria, gymnasium), these spaces will be scheduled to ensure different groups of students are using them at different times. While start and end times will be staggered, the schools also have the ability to have separate entrances and stairwells.

**Q4. What work is planned for the Hopkins building to ensure it is ready to welcome Kennedy students in Fall 2025?**

**A.** The District has conducted walk-throughs with members of the school teams for both Kennedy and Hopkins. Based on those walkthroughs, the current plans will house Kennedy Elementary on floors one and two for swing space while the Hopkins 7th and 8th grade classes will occupy the third floor. In addition, improvements will be made to the building to prepare it for swing space including:

- Repairs to ceilings and floors in classrooms and hallways.
- Improvements to restrooms to ensure they are age appropriate.
- Improvements for accessibility on the basement level.
- Fenced in play space for the school's earliest learners and pavement and sidewalk repairs.

**Q5. Is Hopkins the closest swing space facility that there is for students who live around Kennedy? Is there another option other than Hopkins?**

**A.** Yes, Hopkins is the closest swing space and only one of two that are available for next year. The other identified swing spaces are:

- Narducci Early Learning Center, the former Windmill school at 110 Paul Street, home to Kizirian Elementary School through Summer 2026
- The former Spaziano building at 85 Laurel Hill Avenue, home to Fogarty Elementary School students through Summer 2026

- A portion of the former Lauro Elementary at 99 Kenyon Street, anticipated to be home to Asa Messer Elementary through Summer 2027

### **Q6. Does the Hopkins building have outdoor space for students?**

**A.** Yes, the school has an athletic field immediately adjacent to the school. Additionally, the District plans to add in a fenced in play area for the school's youngest learners.

### **Q7. What will happen to the recreation center during construction?**

**A.** The recreation center is an important community asset used by the school during and after the school day. We are working closely with the City of Providence and City Council on a plan that works for Kennedy families and the community.

In the coming weeks, we expect to have more information on when the building will be offline during construction. We are working with the City of Providence to determine what other options are available to support students and the community when the building is offline. When the building is offline, one option under consideration is having recreation center staff members at Hopkins to support after school programming. We are still assessing the feasibility of this and other options, and welcome parent input.

### **Q8. Will students receive transportation while the school is in swing space?**

**A.** The same transportation policy will be in place while the school is in swing space. That is, at the elementary level, if a student lives a mile or more from their school, they are eligible for yellow bus transportation in addition to students who qualify due to an individualized education plan or other special circumstance. Students who currently live less than a mile from the current Kennedy facility but more than a mile from the Hopkins facility will be eligible for transportation.

## **The future Robert F. Kennedy PreK-8 School**

### **Q1. Why start construction now?**

**A.** The sooner construction begins, the farther the dollars go. In addition, Rhode Island has time-limited state funded bonus incentives that expire in June 2029. With these bonuses, the state pays up to 90% of construction costs. This reimbursement rate makes these buildings possible and without it the District would not be able to have all students in new or like-new buildings by 2030.

### **Q2. What are the benefits of a PreK-8 school model?**

**A.** The PreK-8 model keeps students together with trusted adults for longer, helping them through the transition to middle school grades with maximal stability, and leading to stronger academic outcomes. Older siblings are able to stay with younger siblings for longer. In addition, in Providence, adding PreK-8 schools will expand the number of middle grade options from the current structure of just six large middle schools to more smaller schools, closer to home.

### **Q3. Will Pre-K - 8 schools have the same start and end times?**

**A.** Unified PreK-8 schools will have the same start and end times, allowing the school community to have an aligned schedule and for families to keep siblings together. While Kennedy is at Esek Hopkins, the two schools will have separate start and end times.

### **Q4. Will class sizes increase in the new PreK-8 model? How many students will be at the future Kennedy PreK-8?**

**A.** Class sizes will remain the same, with approximately three classes per grade at the elementary level and four classes per grade at the middle school level. Given the additional grades, the size of the school will be larger with a projected capacity of ~725 students.

**Q5. Will parents and staff be able to provide input into the facility construction plans?**

**A.** Yes! The design process, which will continue throughout Spring 2025 and into Fall 2025 will include multiple engagement sessions for feedback and tours of other new buildings throughout the District.

Engagement sessions will be communicated with families through ParentSquare. The builders and architects will be present at scheduled sessions to gather feedback on project plans and implement potential changes. We take community feedback seriously.

**Q6. How are you going to incorporate safety measures with children that are much older than the younger children?**

**A.** In designing these buildings to be purpose-built for the PreK-8 model, the District can plan for important separations between each level. There will be separate bathrooms, entrances, and play spaces for younger and older students, with these levels staying largely separately throughout the day.