

# Denver Public Schools Shared Campus Frequently Asked Questions (Community)

## What is shared campus?

A shared campus exists where two or more schools operate within a common facility. Each school operates independently from the other, with separate principals, faculties and classroom space. The schools share common areas such as fields, playgrounds, the cafeteria, auditorium, library and parking lot.

The Board of Education will vote on a policy that addresses how shared campuses are created and governed. More information is available online at [www.dpsk12.org](http://www.dpsk12.org).

## Why is the district considering sharing school buildings?

The Board of Education, in order to improve student achievement, created a process to introduce new high performing school options throughout the city. To maximize limited resources and money and make the best use of existing space within DPS schools, these new schools will share space with existing district schools.

The district needs to make sure that money is being spent on the education of children and not on empty space. On average, DPS middle and high schools are only 60-70% full. A seat in any of our schools, whether it is occupied or not, costs the district approximately \$1,500 per year when you consider operating and maintenance costs. It is important that district facilities are put to the highest and best use to serve educational priorities.

## What are the benefits of a shared campus?

Campus sharing increases the number of academic choices in a community. A shared campus also makes more full and effective use of a school facility by bringing new resources to the existing building and school. It will also lead to the "right-sizing" of both schools – the setting of enrollment targets appropriate to maximize the intended academic outcomes of each school.

## Why is my school building being considered as a shared campus?

There are several school buildings that have been identified as having significant excess capacity and therefore are being evaluated for a shared campus. A comprehensive walkthrough was conducted to determine and confirm actual available space in these buildings.

The buildings currently being evaluated for a shared campus are:

- North High School
- West High School
- John F. Kennedy High School
- Lake Middle School
- Skinner Middle School
- Smiley Middle School
- Rishel Middle School

### **How is DPS calculating the number of seats available in a school building?**

The Adjusted Program Capacity (APC) was used as a starting place. Walkthroughs were then conducted by experienced school leaders, administrators and facilities planning staff to confirm capacity. A range of "seats available" were determined by looking at the total usable space/seats within the building minus the number of students currently enrolled.

### **Will our school be moved to another existing DPS school building?**

No. Current DPS schools will not relocate to other locations. Only new schools approved by the Board of Education will be sharing a building with an existing DPS school.

While existing schools intended for a shared campus will not be moving to other facilities, these schools should expect an adjustment in how space is currently used in order to accommodate the sharing of the facility.

### **What factors is the district using to determine where schools will be placed?**

The district is using the following criteria to determine which schools will become shared campuses:

- Space available within facilities
- Regional demographics and trends
- Enrollment and performance data and trends in potentially affected schools
- Community views
- Preferences of the new and existing schools
- Compatibility between new and existing schools
- Availability of school choices in each region
- Geographic feeder pattern
- The ability to physically separate schools within the facility

*(Criteria can be found in proposed BOE policy)*

### **Who reviews new school applicants and makes recommendations to the Board?**

The New Schools Office (NSO) has established an Application Review Team (ART) to review all new school proposals. The ART, led by the Deputy Director of the NSO, provides an assessment of applicant strengths and weaknesses against established criteria to the Superintendent who will make recommendations to the Board of Education. In addition, the District School Improvement and Accountability Council (SIAC) reviews all new charter school proposals and provides a recommendation directly to the Board of Education. For campus sharing recommendations, the NSO will make recommendations to the Superintendent who will make recommendations to the Board of Education.

### **When will we know the decision?**

The district will make its recommendations public on November 13<sup>th</sup> during a Board of Education meeting as well as seven scheduled community meetings at the schools being considered for shared campus. Members of the public can choose to speak at the public comment session scheduled for November 17<sup>th</sup>. To sign up to speak call 720-423-3211. The final decision will be made by the Board of Education on November 20<sup>th</sup>.

### **When will the new school move in?**

New schools approved for shared campus will not move in until the end of this school year. Some new schools may not even start until the 2010-2011 school year.

### **How can I learn more about the process and new school options?**

Community meetings have been scheduled for November 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> at seven schools. Parents can attend these meetings to learn more about the process and the district's recommendations. The general public can choose to speak during the public comment session during the Board of Education meeting on November 17<sup>th</sup>. Guests wanting to speak during public comment session must sign up one day in advance at 720-423-3211.

### **What will be the cost of construction on our building?**

The News Schools Office, in conjunction with the Facilities Department and school leaders, will identify construction projects necessary for the shared campus. Work will be done by the Facilities Department. Costs will be known when the final scope of work is determined.

### **What kind of construction needs will facilities undergo?**

Construction may include the physical separation of the schools within the facility such as fire doors in the halls, building playgrounds for elementary school students, renovation of shops, and creation of additional space in labs and computer rooms.

### **Will construction projects disrupt classes in the school building?**

Every effort will be made to ensure that student learning is not interrupted by construction. Maintaining student learning will be the highest priority throughout the process.

### **What new schools and/or programs is the district considering?**

A list of proposals for new schools and programs submitted to DPS through the RFP process can be found online at [www.dpsk12.org](http://www.dpsk12.org).

### **What will happen if a new school is brought onto our campus?**

Each school's program will be built around serving its students well in a strong instructional program. The management of each school's instructional team will not change. Space like the school's cafeteria, gymnasium and sports fields will be shared and need to be scheduled according to a formal agreement between the two schools. Reassignment of rooms may be needed to create contiguous space. Rooms will likely be repurposed to fit instructional needs.

### **How will after school and/or summer programs be affected if our school becomes a shared campus?**

The new schools team is aware of all programs at your school and those programs are considered a part of your school's operation and will not be eliminated by a shared campus. Programs may have to adjust to align with each school's schedule.

### **Balancing the use of space in a shared campus can be a challenge. What is the district's plan to address this issue?**

Scheduling in fully utilized facilities is a challenge regardless if one or more than one school occupies the entire facility. DPS is drawing upon experience from other cities that have shared campuses for decades and is studying best practice. Schools will be separate with their own principals, faculty and students. Schools, with the district's support, will develop and sign an agreement detailing how space in a building is used. A Building Team will be created to conduct the following activities:

- Assume responsibility for the operations
- Schedule the premises, specifically shared areas of the campus
- Mediate and resolve disagreements between schools
- Support each individual school

The district will use resources to allow schools the ability to create and maintain separate school cultures as well as physical separation. For instance, schools can use visual identity and branding so space in the building is unique to the school.

### **How will the school building be divided to support both schools' instructional programs?**

A team comprised of existing and new school leaders, New Schools Office staff and facilities staff will carefully review the needs of each school and match those needs against available rooms within the building. If necessary, renovations to the facility will be done to ensure all schools have the necessary space.

**Our school requires uniforms and has specific codes of conduct and rules. If the school that shares our campus does not have the same rules and codes of conduct, won't that undermine the culture our principal has worked so hard to build in our school?**

A Building Team consisting of school leaders for each school within a facility will be established to focus on the effective coordination on issues relevant to the schools within a shared campus. The Building Team will work collaboratively to ensure that the culture and identities of each school within the facility are maintained. Physical separation, unique entrance/exits, visual branding, careful scheduling and proactive planning by school leadership will ensure this occurs.

**If an existing school shares its campus with a new school, will that limit enrollment for both schools?**

No decisions have been made at this time as to any limitations for existing schools. However, caps on membership may be employed to foster effective use of each facility.

**Will we continue to receive enough resources to support our key programs?**

The district will evaluate the needs of each school impacted and, as a part of the annual budgeting process, will recommend an appropriate allocation of resources for all schools. The Board of Education has final approval of the district's budget.

For more information, visit our website at [www.dpsk12.org](http://www.dpsk12.org).