



## **Colin L. Powell Academy Construction Update Meeting | February 9, 2023 Questions & Answers**

### **Do they have applicants for the principal position already? Have they started the interview process?**

The PGCPs Operations staff is handling the staffing process. As such, the Blueprint Schools team does not know the status of the principal position other than that the job listing has been posted.

### **Has there been a discussion about the corner at Swan Creek and Asbury and the visibility at that corner?**

Yes, we have received the video and message regarding the concerns, and they have been forwarded to the Department of Public Works and Transportation, who will address the concerns.

### **What will be the hours of the school's hours?**

The hours will be determined in the coming weeks with considerations from the PGCPs Office of Transportation and leadership from the feeder schools.

### **When will Colin Powell begin accepting students in the building? Would it be for the 24-25 school year?**

Colin Powell will open at the end of November this year, with the student body populated from the entirety of Potomac Landing ES and Isaac Gourdine MS.

### **Will the buses enter from Fort Washington Rd or Swan Creek?**

Currently, the preferred bus route is being worked on by Transportation to have buses enter the site from E. Swan Creek Road.

### **How do you ensure that students are not singled out and potentially bullied for having an IEP and working with the Special Education teacher? At my student's current school, the other students are not aware that the special education teachers are actually special education teachers. They just refer to them as teachers' support.**

The Office of Special Education holds training across the district for teachers and staff and for students when it comes to the topic of bullying. In the current middle school model, information on student IEPs is entirely confidential. Similarly, when a special education teacher has to be in a classroom, they are not singled out as special education teachers. As you noted, they are labeled as teacher support or simply a second teacher. As it relates to the academic resource class, the course will be on every IEP student's class schedule and occasionally include general education students, further ensuring that no student is singled out.

### **How will the school be staffed, opening later in the quarter?**

PGCPs HR is in the process of determining a staffing plan.

**If a child hasn't been diagnosed yet but is in the process of being diagnosed and their IEP is updated to recommend the autism program, will they automatically be placed in the program?**

Yes, the IEP team, which includes a parent representation during the eligibility process, will look at the recommendations and updated diagnosis and make the decision on whether the student should be placed in the autism program. Please note not all students with autism need to be in an autism program. Recommendations and decisions are made on a case-by-case basis.

**What does car rider pick-up look like? Will parents be able to walk to the school and pick up their children, or will parents have to wait in the car?**

There will be new sidewalks in and around the school site, meaning that students and parents will be able to safely walk to and from the school if they would like. As it relates to the car-rider policy, pick-up and drop-off procedures will be communicated by the school's administration prior to move-in.

**If they are a student at Colin Powell, do they get the first openings for the autism program?**

Admission into the autism program is based not only on need but also on boundaries. The Office of Pupil Accounting and School Boundaries has developed boundaries for the new school. So, special education students that need an autism program and fall into the correct boundaries will be admitted to the program at Colin Powell.

**When is the school expected to open?**

November of this year.

**Since the school will open midyear, what school does a student with autism or special needs attend until Colin Powell opens? Also, will there be any transitional period for them as well, i.e., bus transportation, etc.?**

The current middle school autism program for the southern area is at Isaac Gourdine MS, which will be transferred to Colin Powell. The current elementary school autism program for the southern area is at Fort Washington Forest Elementary School. There is none at Potomac Landing. So, elementary students in the autism program at Colin Powell will receive some kind of transitional period and guidance when moving into the new school. The Office of Special Ed is currently determining what the transition will look like and will share this information prior to the school year.

**I see that they have added very bright lights in the parking lots, has there been any consideration to adding tall trees for the residents behind the schools? Will these lights stay on all night?**

Unfortunately, we are uncertain of the timing/schedule of the lights. As a part of the illumination plan that has to be submitted to the county, consideration is being made to ensure that the lights are directed inwards, illuminating the school and site instead of the surrounding neighborhoods. The lighting will meet county requirements. As for trees, there will be trees planted around the site, but their maturities will vary.

**Are there before and aftercare options available?**

At this time, we are unaware of the childcare options. Once more information becomes available, it will be shared with the community.

**Will the whole staff transfer from those schools (Isaac Gourdine and Potomac Landing) as well?**

Yes, as of now, the plan is for all staff at Isaac Gourdine and Potomac Landing to transfer with the students to Colin Powell.

**I asked about the school bell the last time. Is there any update on the sound issue? Where will the kids have recess at?**

There are various areas on the campus for the students to have recess. On the elementary side of the school, there will be a gated playground. Additionally, the campus will have a soccer field, baseball field, basketball courts, and a patio area outside of the dining commons. As for noise, the school will follow current county noise ordinances.

**Will a bus be provided by students who live in Fort Washington?**

Decisions on buses are currently being determined by the Office of Transportation and will be communicated at a later date.

**Will the naming committee be reconvened to determine the school colors and mascot? This will be important information to have as soon as possible so we can coordinate uniforms at the start of the year.**

The school colors and mascot are currently under consideration. The idea is to have the decision be led and determined by the students, which is currently being coordinated by the leadership teams at both schools.

**How many students are expected in November? How many K-5 students and how many middle school students can the building house?**

In November, we expect there to be approximately 1,000 to 1,100 students in the building. However, we are not certain how many will be K-5 and how many will be 6-8. The overall capacity of the school is 2,000 students.

**Will all the current 6<sup>th</sup>-grade students, including autism program students, from Issac Gourdine, attend the new school? If not, how will I know if my child was selected?**

Letters will be sent to all impacted families to let them know if their child is within the boundaries to attend the autism program at the new school or if they will be transferred to a different school.

**Is the November starting time unique to Colin Powell, or is that the projection for all of the future schools that are being constructed?**

The November opening is unique to Colin Powell due to schedule delays caused by stormwater management work.



**Will Colin Powell absorb the Autism program currently held at Fort Washington Forest, or will both schools have the program?**

Yes. The Fort Washington Forest autism program students will be relocated to Colin Powell. Fort Washington Forest will no longer have an autism program.

**Is there an ESL program?**

Unfortunately, we do not know the exact program offerings at this time. The school administration will be able to share more at a later date.

**What's happening to Isaac Gourdine's building? Will all students from Isaac Middle go to Colin Powell, or will Isaac Gourdine remain open?**

Isaac Gourdine as a school program will be absorbed by Colin Powell. The Isaac Gourdine building and campus will close. Use of the campus moving forward will be determined by the PGCPs Department of Capital Programs.

**When will Isaac Gourdine's students be transferred over to Colin Powell? Is it November 2023?**

Yes, Isaac Gourdine students will move into the Colin Powell building in November 2023.

**The existing principals will no longer be the principals at the new school, or is the job announcement for a principal over the two existing principals?**

We do not know the specifics at this time. All we know is that there is an advertisement out currently for the principal position. All staffing decisions are being made by PGCPs HR.

**I don't know if the question has been asked, but how to find out bus stop info for our house address?**

Please visit the PGCPs Office of Transportation website at [www.pgcps.org/offices/transportation](http://www.pgcps.org/offices/transportation) and use the "Search for Bus Stop" tool.

**What I understand is that the school is focused on autism for the students with IEPs. What about students with disorders like dyslexia, dysgraphia, and dyscalculia? Will those students work with the same teachers from the present schools?**

Yes. Students with specific learning disabilities or special needs comprise about 30% of the PGCPs system. As such, there are three (3) special education programs that are currently in place throughout the county. The first is an elementary school program focusing on general education and students with conditions like dyslexia by providing evidence-based learning interventions to support them. There is a similar program on the middle school level that provides resources for students in the general education program who have been diagnosed with dyslexia, dysgraphia, and other learning disorders.

**Is there a plan for ECC students who will be advancing to elementary school and who qualify for the SPED programs at Colin Powell and who are in the boundary to have the option to stay at their new elementary school, or will they leave that school when Colin Powell opens?**

Entry into the Colin Powell special education programs is largely based on boundaries. Parents can use the school finder tool on the Office of Pupil Accounting's website to see if their address falls within the Colin Powell boundaries. Additionally, households impacted by the boundary changes will receive letters in the mail.

**Will Rose Valley Elementary be a feeder school as well?**

Yes, but starting in the 2024-2025 school year.

**How long will teachers and staff have in order to prepare for the transition? Is there a structured timeline for a transition prior to students' arrival?**

The school administration will develop the transition timeline. The school will be ready for occupancy on November 8th. The first day of school at Colin Powell will be November 27th.

**When will the schedules for the students in K-8 be determined?**

We believe the students' schedules will remain the same when they transition to the new building. However, all final scheduling decisions will be made by the principal and school leadership.

**Do we have a specific open date in Nov? Before Thanksgiving?**

November 27th.

**Would you please very shortly readdress the question about reconvening the naming committee to address the school colors and mascot, please?**

We will not be reconvening the naming committee. Regarding the school colors and mascot, we intend to have students lead the effort and vote to decide on the mascot and colors from options presented by school leadership and the Board.

**What will the transition from the feeder schools to Collin Powell look like? For example, virtual to in-person or in-person to in-person.**

The transition will be in-person to in-person. Students will begin the school year at their current schools (PLES and IJGMS) and then be moved into the new building on November 27th.

**Will there be a time soon that the staff from both schools will start holding some activities together so they can start blending into Colin Powell and no longer be two individual schools and staff?**

We assume this will be the first mission of the new principal to have some event or activity to allow the two student bodies to interact and connect. However, we do not know any specifics at this time.

**Are the sizes of the Autism programs expanding at Colin Powell? Meaning will more students be accepted into the Autism program than the number of students currently placed at Ft. Washington Forest ES and Isaac Gourdine MS?**

Not necessarily. The autism programs are not expanding but relocating to Colin Powell. That said, the Office of Special Education is aware of the need for spaces in autism programs throughout the school district and, as a part of its strategic plan, is working on developing and opening additional autism programs on all school levels throughout the district.

**The State of Maryland has the Maryland Anxiety Center. Do you know if the school will provide specialists that use techniques like the Barton or Orton-Gillingham systems? Will the school provide decoding techniques or other strategies for children with dyslexia, dysgraphia, or dyscalculia?**

One of the things we are doing in the county is ensuring that our methodologies and curriculum are aligned with the science of reading. The District provides teachers with the language essentials for teaching reading and spelling, known as letters. This program is accredited by the International Dyslexia Association. Additionally, the District has a variety of reading interventions that are based on the Orton–Gillingham strategy and align with that methodology. The District has also convened a dyslexia committee and is working to involve other stakeholders such as parents and teacher representatives, in that committee to ensure that we have the appropriate screening methods and tools to provide students with adequate support. There is also an online tool for students called Text Help, which is a reading and writing online platform that is aligned with the District's system and is personalized to each user to provide them with strategies and support.

**Will there be an ESL program at the elementary level?**

The Department of Academics is currently working this out and will provide information on ESL programs at a later date.

**How many resource officers will the elementary and middle schools receive?**

We do not know at this time. The Office of Safety and Security Services will be on to discuss this at a future meeting.

**It's my understanding that there will be one principal and an assistant principal over elementary and another assistant principal over middle school. Is this correct? If so, when will these assistants be chosen? Will there be job announcements for the assistant principals?**

This is our understanding at this time. However, the exact process and staffing decisions are under consideration by PGCPHS HR, who will be on at a later date to address staffing questions.

**Which specialist would be working for the children that already have the transition from Rose Valley to Isaac? Changing schools will likely cause special education students anxiety and stress. How will the school mitigate that? Will the school provide a strategic plan for behavioral therapy or provide psychological help?**

The PGCPHS Department of Student Services has been engaged in the discussions on the transitions for the new Colin Powell Academy. Student Services is determining how best to



assist and guide both general and special education students through the transition process to ensure the least amount of stress as possible.