

## Dearborn Academy - FAQ

### **Why is Dearborn Academy moving?**

This past spring, Schools for Children decided to relocate two of its Arlington, MA programs—Dearborn Academy and Lesley Ellis School. Dearborn will move to Newton where a new facility will support the goals of growing and enhancing the program. The decision was accelerated (see below), but is in line with our strategic plans and efforts to provide long-term stability and new opportunities for all our schools and services.

### **How did the Town of Arlington's growing student population affect the timing of decision?**

Arlington's rapidly growing school population and need for new school buildings led town officials to decide this past winter not to renew Schools for Children's lease on the Gibbs building at 41 Foster Street—the home of Lesley Ellis School and, instead, use it for the town ([see article](#)).

### **Where is Dearborn moving?**

Schools for Children successfully negotiated a long-term lease on a property at 575 Washington Street in Newton. This facility formerly housed the [CATS Academy](#), a top independent prep school, which is moving to Braintree. We will spend the 2016-17 school year adapting the space to meet Dearborn's programmatic and curricular needs.

### **What will happen to the old building?**

Once Dearborn has made the move to its new home, the Lesley Ellis School will move from its location in the Gibbs School to 34 Winter Street.

### **How did you settle on the Newton facility for Dearborn Academy?**

The search for possible locations was widespread, and the Schools for Children Board studied for options for both schools, including the option of not moving at all. The Trustees carefully considered dozens of facilities and discussed options with Dearborn leadership, special education experts, and officials in Arlington and neighboring towns.

When we presented with the opportunity in Newton, the Board evaluated

the facility carefully and sought advice and opinions from the Dearborn staff and leadership, other special education experts, leadership from other special education programs, school and town officials, state education authorities, neighbors in the community, architects and many others. We also analyzed financial models and projections and carefully considered the impact of the move on the Dearborn community and on the program itself.

We concluded that Dearborn would be warmly welcomed in Newton, that the facility would not only support our program but enhance it, and that even though moving after 30 years in the same location would be a challenge to our community, it was a challenge worth taking on.

### **What benefits does the new facility offer?**

The Newton location offers many benefits to Dearborn Academy, including:

- almost 50 percent more program space than Dearborn's current home
- well-lighted classrooms
- large halls and common areas
- a full-size modern gym
- centralized heat and cooling systems
- plenty of off-street parking, and
- ample room to expand upon the range of specialized services required by Dearborn's students

The building is close to major transportation routes and primary referral sources and is almost a "turnkey" situation given the major improvements completed in the past three years.

### **What is the timeline for all of this?**

We anticipate having both schools in their new homes for the 2017-18 school year.

### **How will this affect the school's summer programs?**

Dearborn's summer programs will remain in the same location for summer 2016, but in the summer of 2017, Dearborn will hold its program in the

Newton school.

### **What's next?**

The decision to move does not affect the current school year or next year (the 2016-17 school year). Everything will remain in place until school ends in the spring of 2017.

Until then, Dearborn will be working with an architect to design and renovate the building to meet Dearborn's unique needs. We'll also be creating a transition team of Dearborn leadership, staff and families to make the transition a smooth one for everyone.

### **How will this move affect students and families?**

We recognize that for some families, this relocation could mean a significant change in routine or convenience—for others, the new location will mean greater convenience. Dearborn will work families individually to determine the potential impact of this move on its students and offer support. Please let us know if you have concerns. Families and students will also be invited to learn about the move, visit the new space, and asked to participate in brainstorming ways to make this shift be a positive one.

### **How can I support this move?**

Dearborn greatly appreciates the support of friends and families as we undertake this major relocation. If you would like to make a gift to Dearborn Academy, please email or call us, especially if you'd like your gift to honor an individual who has inspired you. As part of Schools for Children, Dearborn Academy is a Massachusetts 501(c)(3) nonprofit and all gifts are tax deductible. You can also make a gift online. Thank you for your support!

### **Additional questions**

If you have any additional questions please call or email Ted Wilson (781.641.2424, x1001, [twilson@schoolsforchildreninc.org](mailto:twilson@schoolsforchildreninc.org)) or Howard Rossman (781.641.5992, x3028, [hrossman@dearbornacademy.org](mailto:hrossman@dearbornacademy.org)).