

Jan. 24, 2025

Dear Seven Hills Families,

I'm writing with an important update about campus unification and the 2026-27 school year, the year during which the new Lower School will be under construction. Rather than being in modular instructional units, **the Lotspeich first through fifth graders will join their classmates on the Doherty Campus for the 2026-27 school year.** As per our ongoing plans, all pre-kindergarten students will be in the expanded Taft Early Childhood Center on the Hilldale Campus starting that year, and we will continue to have kindergarten on both campuses.

As I met with parents, teachers, and administrators and considered our options for this construction year, this plan emerged as the best way to provide our students with a joyful and engaging school year. For me, the decision came down to three major factors:

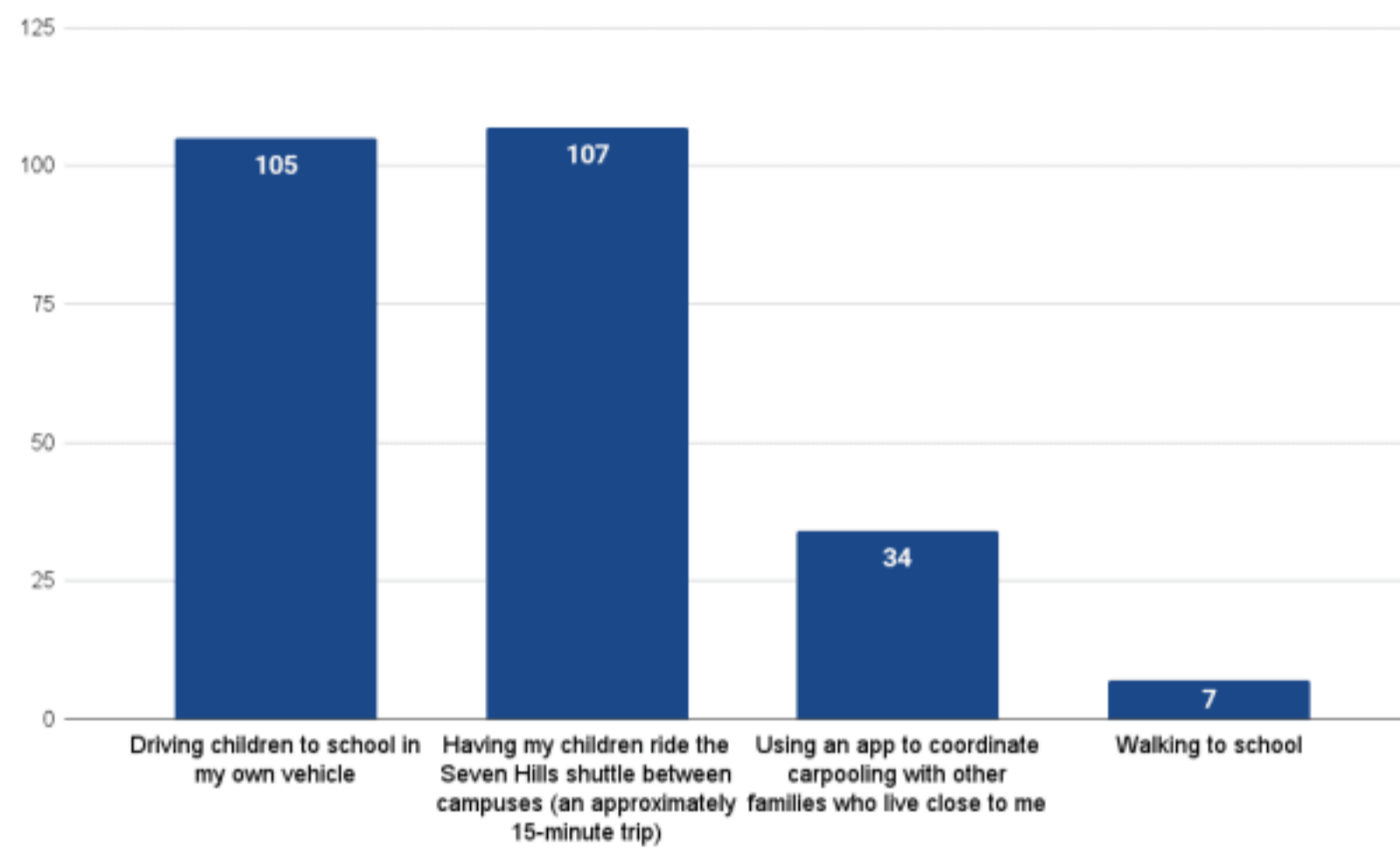
- Modular units would present our Lower School students and faculty with a series of shortcomings and limitations: they would be housed in the parking lot next to an active construction site, present difficulties with getting young students to and from external bathrooms, restrict students' freedom of movement, and lack important amenities such as a Lower School library, playgrounds, and outdoor spaces.
- Conversely, the Doherty Campus offers everything that we would miss in the modular units: purpose-built classrooms, common spaces, a Lower School library, playgrounds, playing fields, and freedom of movement. Fortunately, with the PreK students unified on the Hilldale campus, we have plenty of classrooms at Doherty to house the 1-5 graders.
- Most compellingly, this plan allows us to unite our first through fifth graders a year earlier than we otherwise would. They will make new friends, form a new shared identity, and have a celebratory last year on a fully enrolled Doherty Campus. The following year, they and their teachers will move into our new Lower School on the Hilldale Campus as a unified group of classmates and friends.

I first shared this idea with our community back in November, and I would like to thank the teachers, parents, and administrators who have helped to troubleshoot and develop this plan. In particular, thank you to the Lower School parents who completed our recent survey, attended this week's town hall, or met with me one-on-one.

COMMON QUESTIONS

Transportation

While there has been a lot of enthusiasm among families for this approach to 2026-27, there have also been some understandable concerns centering on transportation, schedules, and the dynamics of navigating two campuses. In our recent survey, families expressed a strong interest in using school shuttles to navigate the campuses, as well as in carpooling (which could be made easier through a school-based app):



Shuttles and Schedules

Addressing transportation needs and coordinating our shuttles and the start and end times of our divisions will be key to making this year a successful one. As I mentioned at the town hall, we have drafted a series of schedules and other logistical documents to ensure that parents, teachers, and students have a manageable and supported experience during 2026-27:

DRAFT SHUTTLE SCHEDULE BETWEEN LOTSPEICH & DOHERTY

MORNING			AFTERNOON		
Departure Location	Departure Time	Approx. Arrival Time & Location	Departure Location	Departure Time	Approx. Arrival Time & Location
Doherty (Bus #1)	7:45 a.m.	8 a.m. (L)	Doherty (Bus #1)	2:50 p.m.	3:10 p.m. (L)
Lotspeich (Bus #1)	8:05 a.m.	8:20 a.m. (D)	Doherty (Bus #2)	2:50 p.m.	3:10 p.m. (L)
Lotspeich (Bus #2)	8:20 a.m.	8:40 a.m. (D)	Lotspeich (Bus #1)	3:25 p.m.	3:45 p.m. (D)

Specials and Instructional Time

Another question that has arisen involves specials and instructional time. We will continue to offer classes such as music and art, Spanish, science, drama, and physical education during 2026-27. While allocating time for the shuttle will shorten the school day, we will be deliberate about building a school schedule for the year that continues to prioritize all of the academic, social, and enrichment experiences that we know are important for young people.

SCHEDULE FOR GRADES 1-5

	Doherty (Current Year and 2025-26)	Lotspeich (Current Year and 2025-26)	2026-27*
Start Time	8:30 a.m.	8:30 a.m.	8:45 a.m.
Dismissal	3:15 p.m.	3:15 p.m.	2:45 p.m.**

*Early Care and After the Bell will continue to be available on both campuses.
 **Optional activities available until 3:15 p.m.

As a reminder, you can find materials related to unification on the [Veracross Parent Portal](#).

Thank you again for your feedback, partnership, and support as we move forward with campus unification. I believe that by bringing our 1-5 graders together on the Doherty Campus in 2026-27, we will be providing them with the best possible experience during the year that their new Lower School is being built. Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions or if you would like to talk more.

Best,
Matt

Matthew Bolton, Ph.D.
Head of School



The Seven Hills School
 Hilldale Campus: 5400 Red Bank Road, Cincinnati, OH 45227
 Doherty Campus: 2726 Johnstone Place, Cincinnati, OH 45206

513.728.2400
<https://www.7hills.org>
<https://gostingers.com/>

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