

Heart of America.



## HEART OF AMERICA AND PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS CELEBRATE COMPLETION OF NATION'S LARGEST DISTRICT-WIDE LIBRARY TRANSFORMATION

*The celebration marks another milestone in this first-of-its-kind partnership; surprise expansion announced*

**Upper Marlboro, MD (April. 9, 2026)** [Heart of America](#) (HOA), a nonprofit organization dedicated to transforming learning spaces for underserved students since 1997, [Prince George's County Public Schools](#) (PGCPS) in Maryland, and Pull Up Fund today celebrated the completion of a first-of-its-kind, multi-million-dollar initiative to transform libraries across 47 schools throughout the district.

The initiative represents one of the most comprehensive public-private partnerships in the country dedicated to reimagining school libraries at scale. The transformed spaces are modern, flexible, and technology-enabled, supporting literacy, collaboration, and student success. They also integrate advanced learning tools and include more than 27,000 new, culturally relevant books across the district. The initiative also included a [redesigned](#) Bonnie F. Johns Educational Media Center, a professional development hub that was transformed to inspire and empower educators across the district.

During the celebration event at Frederick Douglass High School library, partners also made a surprise announcement: the initiative will expand to include one additional school, Surrattsville High School, bringing the total to **48 transformed libraries**.

"This moment represents what's possible when we reimagine what students deserve," said Jill Hardy Heath, President and CEO of Heart of America. "This initiative wasn't just about updating spaces; it was about creating environments that reflect students' potential, spark curiosity, and support the way they learn today. Together with PGCPS and Pull Up Fund, we've demonstrated what system-level transformation can look like."

The Frederick Douglass High School library reflects the community-centered design approach that guided the broader initiative. The space features a refreshed layout with flexible, collaborative work areas, a vibrant color palette inspired by the school's identity, and design elements that integrate the International Baccalaureate learner profile with quotes from Frederick Douglass in multiple languages. New resources, including 3D printing technology, mobile learning tools, and flexible, tech-enabled instructional equipment, support hands-on exploration, digital learning, and adaptable instruction.

"Literacy is life-changing and it remains a fundamental civil right for every child we serve," said Interim Superintendent Dr. Shawn Joseph. "This partnership isn't just about books, it's about providing the tools for our students to unlock their own brilliance and author their own stories of excellence."

At the center of the celebration was a panel discussion featuring librarians, educators, and students from across PGCPs, highlighting the initiative's impact on teaching, learning, and student engagement.

The redesigned libraries introduce flexible layouts, updated furnishings, enhanced technology, expanded access to digital tools, and collaborative spaces that support both academic and creative exploration. The initiative also engaged students, educators, and community members in the transformation process, reinforcing a sense of ownership and pride.

“Our library media centers have transformed into vibrant hubs for literacy, learning, innovation, and exploration, fostering student engagement and continuous learning,” said Coquette Petrella, Instructional Supervisor of Library Media Services.

The project was made possible through a partnership with Pull Up Fund, whose investment helped bring the district-wide vision to life and expand access to resources for students across Prince George’s County.

With the addition of a 48<sup>th</sup> school, Heart of America and PGCPs are continuing their commitment to ensuring every student has access to a learning environment that supports their success and signals what is possible for their future.

**Learn more in the HOA and PGCPs library transformation initiative [Media Kit](#).**

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### **About Heart of America**

Heart of America is a 501c3 nonprofit that transforms learning spaces and helps bridge resource gaps. Our work focuses on the whole student, knowing that the physical spaces where young people learn are just as important as *what* they are learning. Since 1997, we’ve worked towards education equity by renovating nearly 1,400 spaces in classrooms, libraries, STEAM labs, college/career centers, school gymnasiums, and community centers, and more. We have provided current resources, including over 4.4 million books, and infused over \$14.3 million in technology. <https://www.heartofamerica.org/>

### **About Prince George's County Public Schools**

Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPs), one of the nation's 20th largest school districts, has 200 schools and centers, more than 132,854 students and nearly 20,000 employees. The school system serves a diverse student population from urban, suburban and rural communities located in the Washington, DC suburbs. PGCPs is nationally recognized for college and career-readiness programs that provide students with unique learning opportunities, including dual enrollment and language immersion. PGCPs’s mission is to ensure all students graduate with the skills and knowledge to thrive in a globally competitive world. <https://www.pgcps.org/>

### **About Pull Up Fund**

Pull Up Fund proudly supports the youth of Prince George’s County. We are pulling up communities around the county and connecting them with resources to help them thrive. Prior Pull Up Fund grants have supported an array of different issues including increasing access to mental

health services, supporting youth development initiatives, and providing resources for individuals returning to the community after incarceration. <https://pullupfund.org/>

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