

## Goddard doubles down in region

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A private chain of child care centers says it expects to double its presence in the Seattle region by adding six new locations in the next two years.

Franchisees have signed two new agreements with King of Prussia, Pa.-based Goddard Systems Inc. to establish facilities in Redmond and Bothell, which are expected to open within a year. Already Goddard operates three centers in Seattle's Eastside communities, as well as one in Vancouver, Wash.

"We think there is a lot of room for expansion in the Seattle area. It is an educationally oriented market and quite affluent, as well," said Goddard CEO and President Joe Schumacher.

Goddard has 362 facilities in 37 states and serves infant, pre-kindergarten and school-age children up to 6 years old. Each Goddard school is operated by independent franchisees. Since the start of 2009, Goddard has added 46 new schools.

Shauna Barison and Teresa Nichols are co-owners of a Goddard school in Redmond that opened in 2008, and signed a sale agreement for their second property in Redmond a year ago. The purchase of a former King County fire station for slightly more than \$1 million will occur if the duo can secure a permit to retrofit it.

"We have maintained a wait list of several hundred families for the last two years, so we started talking about opening a second school," said Nichols, a retired public school administrator from the Hoquiam School District.

Nichols and Barison charge customers nearly \$1,500 per month for infants and less for older children.

Goddard's second new franchisee in the region will open in Bothell after a suitable location is found, according to Goddard.