



SCHOOL BOARD OF THE CITY OF RICHMOND
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

School Board Selects New Superintendent to Lead Richmond Public Schools

Richmond - The Richmond Public School Board has appointed a veteran education administrator as its new superintendent.

Dr. Yvonne Brandon was elected by a unanimous vote today to take the helm of the city's 24,000 pupil school district. Brandon was selected after a rigorous and competitive recruitment process yielded 20 highly qualified candidates from around the nation.

In August 2008, Dr. Brandon was appointed as Interim Superintendent, replacing Dr. Deborah Jewell-Sherman, who accepted a position at Harvard University. Dr. Brandon is a graduate of the prestigious Broad Superintendents Academy, a non-profit foundation dedicated to building the capacity of urban school superintendents to promote change and achieve excellence.

Dr. Brandon has amassed a series of accomplishments during her interim appointment, including a continued increase of accredited schools, the implementation of a strategic spending plan to address budget challenges, and academic initiatives such as elementary foreign language immersion and Performance Learning Centers for students at-risk of dropping out.

With her permanent appointment, Dr. Brandon faces numerous challenges, such as declining enrollment, struggles with fiscal oversight, and problems—from low graduation rates to high disciplinary actions—endemic to many urban school systems. Yet Dr. Brandon emphasized her readiness for the tasks ahead. "I have learned from experience and colleagues around the nation to take risks, to have high expectations, [and] to view adversity as motivation."

Applying her 30 years of education and administrative experience, Brandon also understands the need for community engagement and solutions outside of traditional academia. "The public school system must do a better job of reaching out to every stakeholder so that we approach our challenges with fresh solutions," she noted.

Unafraid to challenge the status quo, Brandon is prepared to introduce a Chief Financial Officer with private sector business experience – a change that she believes will build higher accountability. She is also creating a new management team to fill four interim positions, and building an effective working relationship with a new governing board. “Working together, we will increase efficiency and accountability, build confidence in the school system, and craft a long-range strategic plan to move the system beyond its current benchmarks of success,” Dr. Brandon stated.

Prior to her appointment as Interim Superintendent, Dr. Brandon held several leadership positions in Richmond Public Schools, including: Deputy Superintendent, Associate Superintendent, Director of Instruction, and Principal. As an educator who has worn many hats and risen quickly through the ranks of RPS, Dr. Brandon is seen by many as a rising star in urban education.

Dr. Brandon received her bachelor’s degree in biology from Randolph-Macon College; a master’s of education in guidance counseling from Virginia State University; and her doctorate in education supervision and administration from Nova Southeastern University.

“Dr. Brandon’s unique qualifications and experience in urban public education rose to the top of a very impressive list of candidates,” noted School Board Chair Chandra Smith. “Through multiple interviews and a lengthy screening process, both the board members and the volunteers on our 14-member search committee realized that she had a unique combination of skills and capabilities that RPS needs to transform our school system.”

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