



Richmond Public Schools

The New Direction

During the past five years, Richmond Public Schools have made notable advances in the quality of education offered our students. Through the use of standardized instructional practices in all schools, frequent monitoring of school and department progress, and the provision of directed support; our schools have significantly increased the percentage of students demonstrating competence by state and federal standards.

Over the past months through work sessions, a retreat, and consultations with professional leaders and members of the community, the Richmond School Board has determined that in order to extend our successes, we need to embark on a new direction for city schools. This new direction will allow us to address factors currently limiting our students' academic success, as well as provide a stronger foundation for their future success in life.

After considering the many factors at work in our district, the Board has settled upon the concept of "Developing the Whole Person" as holding the most promise for our students and community.

Developing the Whole Person is a holistic view of education. Combining the mental, ethical, and physical dimensions of a person, it is the recognition that our graduates' success, and therefore our success, depends on academics and more. Whether at work or university, a successful graduate is one who is prompt, appropriately dressed, communicates effectively, has a positive attitude, and is ready to contribute individually and in teams. These are the type qualities we will seek to imbue in our students during their school careers.

A key element in how we will chart our new direction is a Personalized Education Plan (PEP) which will be developed for each student. It will allow us to use information technology to combine student goals, assessments and achievements to form a complete picture of the path necessary for the development of each child. The plan will inform parents, teachers, and administrators as to progress and how to best deploy resources efficiently and effectively.

The academics directed by the PEP are to be increasingly relevant and rigorous. Built on the foundation of knowledge required by the Standards of Learning, they will include elements to enhance creative and critical thinking. Technology will be integrated into the academic program where its use will enhance learning.

As our children come to us with widely varying goals, preferences and abilities, we will seek to offer a variety of programs to cater to these differences. We expect that our parents and students will have the opportunity to choose from focused programs such as

career and technical training, foreign language immersion, arts and sciences specialty, a government and public service track and other educational tracks tailored according to demand.

Outside of the classroom we will provide athletics for all students through expanded inter and intramural sports. To encourage our students to stay in school, we will offer programs to make them aware of post graduation opportunities and motivate success through field trips and internship programs.

We realize that Developing the Whole Person is an expansive and audacious goal. We will not be able to achieve it without support from the community. Taking as a model our current successful partnerships, we will create a system to coordinate non academic services and enrichment activities provided by public and private organizations.

By adopting an approach which addresses our students' needs systematically, by bringing to education the productivity gains that information technology has brought to other sectors, by making more efficient our operations and redirecting our resources, and by capitalizing on the community's willingness to help; we can deliver a superior type of education to our students.

Over the coming months as we further define our new direction we will be asking for your comments, support, and assistance. We are ready for the next step and hope you are as well.