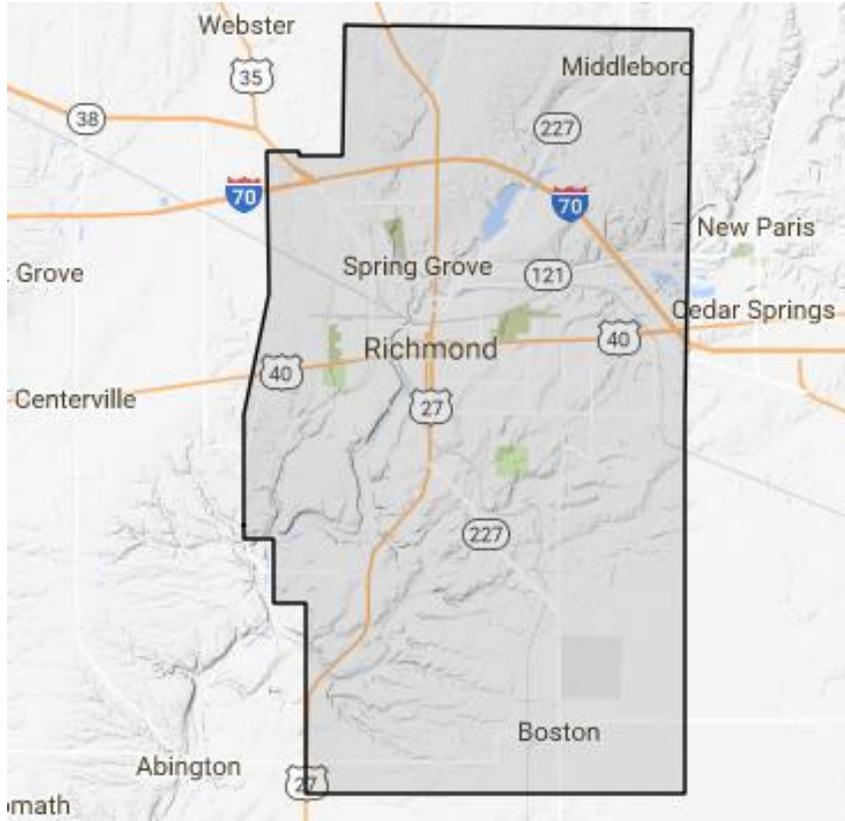


**Richmond Community Schools
Educational Specifications Visioning Study
Executive Summary
May 24, 2017**



<https://www.maptechnica.com/school-district-map/IN/Richmond+Community+School+Corporation/unsd/1809510>

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Disclaimers:

- This study was focused on “instruction” not “construction.” The purpose of the committee was to focus and develop options (not recommendations) to be considered by the Board of School Trustees in the following areas (instruction being the main focus aligned with all other areas)
- This study and report does not contain any personal opinions or editorial comments from the facilitator, Dr. James M. Halik, regarding the issues presented and outlined. It should be noted that all contents and comments reflect the feelings from individual unidentified committee members.



Purpose and Process

Mr. Todd Terrill, Superintendent of Schools, assembled a 60-member broad-based study committee that included students, parents, patrons, teachers, and administrators representing the school district. For over 140 years, education has been a civic priority in Richmond, Indiana. Richmond Community Schools continues to receive widespread community support for the many academic and extracurricular programs that prepare their young people for lives in a rapidly changing world. The district serves approximately 5,000 students pre-kindergarten through grade twelve with one high school, three intermediate schools, and six elementary schools.

This study was focused on “instruction” not construction.” Stephen Covey reminds us “to begin with the end in mind.” Remember, process is as important as the outcome; and the purpose of the committee was to process, focus, and develop options (**not recommendations**) to be considered by the Board of School Trustees in the following areas (instruction being the main focus aligned with all other areas).

Primary Focus:

- Instruction (equality, facilities, performance)
- Brand (what do people think and/or say about you)
 - Appearance of buildings
 - Needs vs. wants
- Absolutes (HVAC, roofs, spaces)

Committee members were strongly encouraged to serve the community as a “think tank” and brainstorm ways to improve facilities as they relate to instruction and to identify inequities, detractors, and areas needing improvement throughout the school district with a focus on Richmond Community High School. The committee would have been remiss had they not discussed the all of the areas listed above. Members were asked to set aside politics, remain open-minded, and cautioned about their personal psychological contracts. All ideas were encouraged regardless of their popularity or political correctness. Committee members were encouraged to engage in open conversation that was not stymied by the status quo, past practice, and/or tradition.



Purpose and Process Continued

Dr. James Halik, President, Compass-Keynote Consulting, LLC and Consultant to Fanning Howey Architecture and Engineering facilitated a workshop regarding the “study process” for the Board of School Trustees on April 5, 2017. Also, a similar workshop was facilitated for all of the Administrators on April 13, 2017. As a result of the first two meetings, a Richmond Community Schools community broad-based educational specifications visioning committee was formed.

The committee met from 4:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. on May 8, 2017, May 15, 2017, and May 16, 2017. The first committee meeting began with PowerPoint presentations on the current state of education in Richmond Community Schools by Corey Hartley, Director of Elementary Education and Mike Shunneson, Director of Secondary Education. These presentations provided an overview of programs in all school buildings and served as a foundation for the educational discussion that took place. Participants were given a tour of Richmond Community High School at the beginning of the second committee meeting.

During the committee meetings on May 15, 2017 and May 16, 2017, committee members were divided into five subgroups, each with equal representation from staff, students, and the community. The task assigned to each group was to discuss the three Primary Focus areas (Instruction, Brand, and Absolutes) and identify solutions to the detractors discovered during the previous meetings.

As a reminder, this study and report does not contain any personal opinions or editorial comments from the facilitator Dr. James M. Halik, regarding the issues presented and outlined. It should be noted that all contents and comments reflect the feelings from individual unidentified committee members.



Committee Members

<u>Last Name</u>	<u>First Name</u>
Amyx	Josh
Baker	Stephanie
Blinn	Chris
Brady	Carole
Brazil	Laura
Bryant	Richard
Cartee	Josh
Christian	Emily
Claghorn	Dawn
Daggy	Bruce
Davis	Morgan
Deloney	Tajjym
Derengowski	Suzanne
Etherington	Rachel
Harlin	Sharrie
Hartley	Corey
Hazelbaker	Bridget
Heiny	Pat
Hensley	Rusty
Hill	Jeremy
Hobbs	Sheila
Hopkins	Deidra
Kelly	Amanda
Kirk	Cynthia
Landess	Rod
Laudermilk	Cassie



Committee Members Continued

<u>Last Name</u>	<u>First Name</u>
Markward	Elizabeth
Marsh	Eric
McDaniel	Adam
McDermott	Kelley
Mopps	Stacy
Munger	Ruthanne
O'Brien	Jennifer
Phillips	Kirsten
Polk-Meek	Karrienne
Price	Marc
Quinn	Phil
Reynolds	Chuck
Rhoades	Tammy
Rinehart	Rhonda
Robinson	Dixie
Ronne	Tre
Scalf	Karen
Schuerman	Rae Ann
Shunneson	Mike
Terrill	Todd
Tidrow	Rob
Vandervort	Nicole
Vargas	Jessica
Wampler	Scout
Woolpy	Rae



Executive Summary Subcommittee Members

Carole Brady	Parent
Morgan Davis	Student (Senior)
Sharrie Harlin	Community Member
Scout Wampler	Student (Freshman)



Executive Summary

The Richmond Community Schools broad-based committee members were divided randomly and equally into five subgroups. Each subcommittee was given the identical assignment: To discuss the following areas (instruction being the primary focus aligned with other areas):

Primary Focus:

- Instruction (e.g. equality, facilities, performance)
- Brand (what do people think and/or say about you)
 - Appearance of buildings
 - Needs vs. wants
- Absolutes (e.g. HVAC, roofs, spaces)

The committee's responsibility was to identify potential options that the Board of School Trustees might want to consider during the master planning process as a means to improve and strengthen the school corporation. The administrators remained present throughout the process to answer questions and provide clarification for committee members. The following pages summarize the conclusions and options for the Board to consider.



Instruction

Classrooms

- Flexible instructional spaces
- Small instruction spaces for specialized purposes
- Better utilize our outdoor spaces for instructional purposes
- Adaptive for alternative programs
 - Separated areas
 - Leveled programs
- One size does not fit all
 - Adaptable to alternative furniture
 - Alternative arrangements/settings
 - Adaptable to small groups rather than whole group lecture
 - Timeout areas for behavior modification
 - Great for out-of-the box spaces
 - Adaptable spaces that respond to continuing changes in teaching and learning
- Free style learning
- Future ready classrooms
 - Project based
 - Culturally diverse
 - Conducive to learning

Technology

- Charging stations for laptops
- 1:1 Initiative
- Up-to-date technology and infrastructure
- Better access
- Flexibility
- Ability to grow



Instruction Continued

- Tools for learning that are adaptable for student or teacher led instruction
- Digital citizenship
- STEAM (science/technology/engineering/art/mathematics) availability
- eLearning and Instructional coaches are necessary
- Robotics
- Coding

Furniture

- Flexible
- Building specific
- Standing desks
- Tables and chairs
- No desks with attached seats

Safety

- District-wide emergency alerts via technology

Other

- Commons areas (especially the high school)
- Safe and private spaces for counseling of students
- Areas for supervised freedom
- Visual screens for displaying information throughout
- Every square foot is utilized for learning
- Accommodate “magnet” focus
- Easy to clean and maintain
- Equitable access for all students (general education and children with disabilities)
- Larger spaces



Brand

- Proud of where we have been and excited about where we are going
- Recess should be required every day and more time outside
- Play grounds for fifth and sixth graders
- Sell Richmond as a positive place with high quality academics
- Need a “visual” representation of our Mission
 - Workplace/career certifications
 - Performing arts
 - Athletics
 - Diversity
 - Digital learning opportunities
 - Flexible pathways
- Our “brand” should be student led
- Celebrate our diversity/multicultural population
- Celebrate our post-secondary successes
- Nostalgia and memories – how do we draw “older” citizens into our “brand”
- Thinking of “alternatives” as being options, not just for “trouble”
- Remove barriers (social, emotional, socioeconomic)
- Focus on being cutting-edge
- Build on community pride
- Value education through quality facilities
- Think innovatively
- Good vs. great
- Address poverty issues head-on
- Promote success of trade programs offered
- Promote PRIDE
- Focus on positive relationships
- Promote our arts programs, athletic success, and career education



Brand Continued

- Community involvement and use of facilities
- Promote our “historic importance”
- Our small town feel – real life opportunities
- Welcoming feel – but secure environment
- Broadcast and promote our career pathways
- Utilize signage and all avenues of communication
- Need a modern feel – a place students, staff, and community want to be
- Minimize isolation
- Awareness is important
- We want your child
- Tell our story – parents need to know our programs and services – keeping the public informed
- Focus and promote our class offerings
- Diversity
 - Find your niche
 - Choice
 - Meet the student where he/she is
 - A place for all kids (students)



Absolutes

Security

- Main entrances handicap accessible at the high school
- Cameras at all school entrances
- Guest entry procedures need to be evaluated
- Fencing
- Focus on physical safety and emotional safety
- Better signage
- Consistency throughout the district
- Identification technology at all entrances
- Faster turnaround for volunteer background checks

Instruction

- Need to expand pre-school (prekindergarten)
 - Early exposure to build passion and drive
 - Early equal access and exposure to technology
- Life skills facilities needed
 - Dignity
 - Private spaces
- Parent and community involvement

Seating and Furniture

- Building specific
- Adjustable standing desks
- Tables and chairs rather than desks with fixed seats
- Need flexible seating
- Need comfortable seating
- Detached seats
- New teacher desks



Absolutes Continued

Facilities

- Restrooms need updated
- Staff need restrooms
 - Automatic sinks and toilets
 - Hand dryers
 - Additional water fountain stations
- New clinics for the safety of children and ones that can be easily cleaned
- Roofs are leaking
- Upgrade lighting throughout and utilize motion sensors
- Centralized printing areas for students and staff
- Consider alternative energy sources
- Evaluate all usable spaces
 - Look at usable space for alternative uses
 - Larger spaces for collaboration
 - Larger classrooms with space for personal space
- Lockers are old and some are dilapidated
- Need to take care of sound, lighting, and electrical issues
- High quality facilities for all courses and programs, especially:
 - Physical education
 - Athletics
 - Fine arts
 - Performing arts
 - Science
- Finishes that are cleanable and acoustically sound
- Storage is a concern throughout the buildings and classrooms
- Civic Hall need seats, carpet, and lighting
- Intercom system upgrades
- Windows that open and close
- Private offices for counselors and teachers
- Shared classrooms with separate teacher work spaces that promote collaboration



Absolutes Continued

- Clustered special education classrooms
 - Tiernan does not have an elevator
 - High school main building is in need of upgrading
 - Career Center
- More natural lighting
- Elevator upgrades
- Designated testing environments
- Intermediate schools lack recreational activities and spaces
- Signage communication is lacking
- Purposeful placement of offices, conference rooms, classrooms etc.
- Flooring should be building specific
 - Gyms
 - Hallways
 - Classrooms
- More display cases in hallways and common space areas
- Office space at the Career Education Center could be better utilized and designed
- Wiring issues and power sources need improved
- Need to upgrade the chalkboards and provide more board space
- Traffic flow needs improved inside and outside
- Traffic flow for bus drop-off and pick-up

Brand

- Need to build better relationships with the community
- Build and foster local business support
- Build relationships with students, teachers, parents, and community
- Community use of our facilities
 - 24/7
 - After school clubs
 - Services available
 - Community resource centers
- Increase pride and honor in what we do



Absolutes Continued

- Keep and/or attract people back to Richmond
- Marketing for current and new businesses for internship opportunities for our students

HVAC Systems

- Awful need for repair or replacement
 - Rooms throughout the district are either hot or cold
 - Get rid of the window air conditioning units

Technology

- Upgrades are necessary
- Wi-Fi is inadequate, need better infrastructure
- Power for laptops is needed
- Increase bandwidth
- Expand on-line opportunities
- Change the computer labs to collaboration stations



Conclusion

It should be noted that every attempt was made to keep this study and report nonbiased and extra effort was given to assure that what is presented is pure in content. The author and process facilitator, Dr. James Halik deliberately refrained from offering a personal opinion and refrained from adding any editorial comments. It should be noted that all contents and comments reflect the feelings from individual, unidentified committee members.

The committee discussed many valuable thoughts for the Board of School Trustees to consider. Please keep in mind, it was not the mission of this committee to create and present “recommendations” to the Board. The focus of this committee was to generate discussion so that a strategic long-range facility master plan could be established regarding instructional equality as it relates to school facilities.

The study committee was divided into five sub-groups. Each group was asked to evaluate three “Primary Focus” areas of concern for this district:

- Instruction
- Brand, and
- Absolutes

As each relates to the school districts:

- Culture (traditions)
- Core Values
- Vision
- Mission, and
- Goals

It would be fair to say that the consensus of the study committee was to plan for the future now in order to avoid coming back to this process again in a few years. Something worth noting that was said is *“Richmond schools were built for the future in the 1920’s and 1930’s, the community was brave enough to build what we have now, so we need to be brave and build once again for the future.”* It was said many times by a number of committee members that we need to do this right the first time and that there is a sense of urgency for a number of reasons as outlined in this report on pages 9-16.

The high school quickly became the focus of discussion. Once the committee members toured the school it was easy for them to visualize and identify immediate needs outlined specifically on pages 13-16 under the title “Absolutes.”



Conclusion continued

Though there was no consensus of the committee, there was a lot of conversation about:

- Security
- Instruction
- Seating and Furniture
- Facilities
- Brand
- HVAC, and
- Technology

The topic of “competition and brand” was discussed at length during this study process. The committee emphasized the need to focus on the brand of the school district and that every effort should be made to retain all current students and attract students who might choose to receive their education from an alternative to public school. A question asked was “*are we truly all Red Devils.*” Parents have many choices now that include home school, private school, catholic school, parochial school, virtual school, and other public schools. A patron on the committee is quoted saying “*the appearance of our schools has curb appeal, however, when you pass through the doors it is a different picture.*”

It was the belief of many members of the committee that Richmond Community High School has a lot of space that is not utilized efficiently. Some spaces are too small while others are too large. It was noted that the lighting and acoustics in many of the spaces was inadequate. Patrons who attended the high school ten, twenty, and thirty years ago shared that nothing had change. One patron is quoted as saying “*this classroom we are in and this school overall is dismal.*” A point of warning from committee members was that there is a lot of unused space at the high school. “Do we need to renovate spaces we do not use? We should identify spaces we do want and renovate accordingly!”

Many complained that the heating and cooling system at the high school was inefficient and ineffective. It was noted that most classrooms are either cold or hot without a way to regulate the temperature appropriately. The lack of good natural lighting in some of the classroom spaces was noted.

It was believed by the majority of the steering committee members that the Board of School Trustees should consider the many options presented and prioritize prior to entering into any school renovation or new construction. The committee appreciates the gravity of the board’s need to balance fiscal responsibility with the needs of the district. It was discussed that thriving schools foster thriving communities and that schools are a reflection in numerous ways of their community.

