

FAQs

Richmond Community School's Master Planning Process

Q. Why did RCS need to go through a Master Plan Process?

A. *A state-wide budget reduction for public education in January of 2010 led to a deficit spending occurrence that year in the Richmond Community Schools of \$1,757,000. Reductions in expenditures that year and permanent reductions for subsequent years led to a balanced budget in 2011.*

School Year 2011-12 saw 78 fewer students enroll than in the previous year which will lead to a projected decrease in funding of \$653,000 for 2012. In addition, two major grants that support our students' learning, totaling more than \$2.3 million are scheduled to end in 2012.

Q. How will the implementation of the Master Plan affect my child's learning?

A. *The adoption of this Plan will enhance the educational opportunities for your child.*

- *Increases opportunity for teacher collaboration (more class sections in the buildings)*
- *Creates less frequent transitions among grades and buildings*
- *Preserves Student Support programs*
- *Preserves creative arts and extracurricular activities for all students*
- *Enhances enrichment opportunities*

Q. If my school closes, will parents be able to select the school their child will attend?

A. *While we have not looked at district lines at this early stage, for the most part we believe students should attend the school for which they are zoned. However, we currently have a "transfer request" form and process in place to allow parents to request a school in a different zone. These requests are evaluated on a case-by-case basis and depend on space available in the requested school. More details regarding matters such as this would be considered after we receive a decision on the proposal.*

Q. How will 5th grade students interact with 8th graders in the Intermediate Buildings?

A. *If it is decided that 5-8 should be at Dennis and Test, each grade would have unique programming related to their respected grade levels. The plan is that fifth and sixth grade teachers will loop with their students in a elementary-style classroom. The key will be thoughtful attention and planning to create unique programming for the appropriate age level.*

Q. What is the research that supports an Intermediate Building (5th to 8th grade) configuration?

A. *In studies released by Hanover Research in 2010 and 2011, the common conclusion was that effective teachers and curriculum explain more in determining the quality of mid-level education than grade configuration.*

*Though research does not link specific grade configurations to student performance, it does address learning needs that support the placement of fifth and sixth grades in intermediate buildings. R. J. Harighurst noted in the **American Middle School Education** that students at this level are very concerned about getting along with age-mates in their peer group. He explained that “they form teams, committees, clubs and are much more aware of the personalities of people at this age.” The intermediate setting provides an environment more conducive to their needs than one in which they associate with younger students.*

The 5-8 configuration also appears to benefit seventh and eighth grades. A study of the 5-8 schools in Indiana, with a focus on the performance of seventh and eighth graders, found slightly higher rates on the 2011 ISTEP in math and language arts than in 7-8 schools.

This configuration places fifth and sixth graders in self-contained classrooms that loop from year to year. The current proposal provides for the learning needs of ten and eleven year old students in a much more appropriate manner. In essence, they will be taught in an elementary settings, but with many more learning resources than are currently offered in the elementary settings.

Q. When will this plan be put into action?

A. *If the Master Plan is approved, implementation will occur for the 2012-2013 School Year.*

Q. Where will the students at Garrison, C.R. Richardson and Highland go to school next year?

A. *The Plan must be adopted by the School Board before finalizing this answer. In **most** cases the following will occur:*

- Garrison students will go to Charles Elementary*
- C.R. Richardson students will go to Vaile and/or Elizabeth Starr Academy*
- Highland students will go to Crestdale and/or Fairview Elementary*

Q. When will I know where my child will attend school?

A. *We are hopeful to have that information to parents by Spring Break.*

Q. What programs will be housed at the Hibberd site?

A. *Early College Preparatory Academy, Logos and Life Skill Program students that are in 5th to 8th grade.*

Q. Will Exceptional Education Program students at the Hibberd site have the same opportunities to participate in creative arts and other extracurricular activities.

A. Students will be able to participate in extracurricular activities at Test and Dennis. Creative Arts will be offered to students at the Hibberd site.

Q. Will this Master Plan affect the Tax Rate?

A. Adopting this Master Plan recommendation will keep our Tax Rate the lowest among all Wayne County School Districts. We do not have any plans to increase our debt service with the implementation of this Plan.

Q. What will happen to the buildings that will be closed?

A. By State Law, unused facilities will be placed on an inventory list for three years. If buildings are utilized in the three year period, they must be used for educational purposes.

Q. What is the expectation of the public to respond to the recommendations?

A. You can share your feedback with the school board members. Simply fill out the form on the front page of the website. Please be aware that due to high volume, we may not be able to respond to every comment.