

# Richmond Community Schools

## 4<sup>TH</sup> GRADE MOVE TO THE MIDDLE SCHOOL

### Questions & Answers Document (Updated 03/12/19)

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1. *Just wondering why an elementary school is used as a childcare center that takes away from space needed for elementary school aged children? Shouldn't the space be used only for school aged children?*

The *Richmond Early Learning Childcare Center* is comprised of before, during and after-school childcare, three and four year old tuition-based preschool, State-funded preschool (i.e. Great Start Readiness), and Federally-funded and supported preschool (i.e. Head Start and Early Childhood Special Education). These students are just as much a part of the elementary as the K-4 students.

During the 2013-14 schoolyear, the Board of Education approved the development *Richmond Early Learning Childcare Center* in an effort to increase preschool enrollment in the District. There are now approximately 100 preschool students, about the size of a grade-level, which utilizes the *Richmond Early Learning Childcare Center*. Almost all of these students are residents of Richmond Community Schools.

*Reference: Q20*

2. *Is this going to be a permanent move or will the fourth graders be moved back to the elementary?*

If enrollment trends continue to indicate increases, it is unlikely that the 4<sup>th</sup> grade would move back to the elementary school, given the current limited space at the elementary school, without the District choosing to eliminate or reduce programs for students.

While most of the elementary grade-levels have four sections, some grade-levels are now approaching the discussion to add a fifth section in order to keep class sizes low within the financial restraints of the district. If this happens, the couple “extra” classrooms that have resulted in 4<sup>th</sup> grade moving to the middle school would be easily utilized with adding a 5<sup>th</sup> section.

*Reference: Q19*

3. *Will students be walked to lunch?*

Fourth grade teachers will walk their students to lunch at the middle school.

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*Reference: Q17*

4. *Will students, either during normal class time, specials, or lunch periods, be using restroom facilities that older children will also be using?*

**In the hallway where the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms will be located, those restrooms would be designated 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade restrooms. However, the restrooms by the Cafeteria, Gymnasium, and Main Office are designated for the entire building to use.**

*Reference: Q17*

5. *I don't think that all assemblies, programs, or after school functions are going to be appropriate for 4th graders and 8th graders - has this been considered? Will some of these events be staggered or kept separate?*

**The building administration, as they do now, would determine whether to have an all school assembly or grade-level specific assemblies. After school functions would be reviewed by the building administration and advisors as to whether it would involve the entire school or select grade-levels.**

6. *Since this move is only a 'quick fix' to manage the students we have right now, will Richmond community schools be attempting to go for a school bond to account for any growth in the future?*

**The District will be contracting with a company that specializes in enrollment projections, which is based on the economy, housing market, enrollment trends, and birth/death rates. The report would then be presented to the Board of Education to determine whether a bond is needed to finance building additions or new facilities. Any future additions or new facilities requires a couple of years of planning, especially as it relates to using voter-approved bond funds. Over the last five year, the District has focused on utilizing its resources, physical and financial, in a fiscally responsible manner.**

*Reference: Q16*

7. *Will the students still get blue tickets with the Friday drawings and be involved in the True Blue assemblies? Even if it's not at the elementary school, it would be nice to have something similar for them at the middle school.*

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Each building staff has developed their own *Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports* (PBIS) to promote the behavior we are expecting from students. While the middle school has their equivalent to “Blue Tickets” called “SHINE Tickets,” the middle school PBIS program has been running longer than the elementary program.

*Reference: Q15*

8. *Since the 4th grade move will involve getting playground equipment, can recess be added for the 5th graders too?*

**Other than the time students must be back in the building and how long recess is (e.g. 15 minutes), the decision to have or not have outside recess is a classroom teacher’s decision. 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers have the option of taking a regular recess break, but based on the current playground equipment at the middle school, they choose not to go outside, but to have “Brain Breaks” within the classroom.**

*Reference: Q14*

9. *I asked this question at the meeting but I want to make sure it doesn't get lost. How is child care going to be handled? It would make me uncomfortable to drop my child off at the elementary school for child care, to then have them walk to the middle school in the morning rush. There is no crossing guard in the crosswalk that they'd have to cross. That parking lot is crazy enough in the morning I don't really want my kid walking around unsupervised. And then after school who is going to make sure my child made it back to child care?? If it matters at all what the parents think, I would feel much safer with a childcare set up in the middle school. I'd like to drop off and pick up at the same school they'll be staying at all day.*

**Childcare will remain at the elementary schools. If registered, age 3-12 year old students may attend before and after school childcare at Will L. Lee Elementary School. In the AM, a school bus will pick up middle school childcare students from the elementary school, around 7:30am, and transport them to the middle school. AM childcare staff will be responsible for getting the students on the bus.**

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At the end of the day, middle school students attending afterschool childcare will get on an assigned childcare bus and be transported to the elementary school. Childcare staff will be there to get the middle school childcare students off the bus and walk them to the childcare room at the elementary school.

*Reference: Q7 and Q9*

10. *When will the next parent meeting be?*

The next Informational Parent Meeting regarding the 4<sup>th</sup> grade move to the middle school will be held in the Staff Lounge at Will L. Lee Elementary School during Parent-Teacher Conferences on:

Thursday, February 28, 2019 from 12:00-3:00pm, and  
Thursday February 28, 2019 from 5:00-6:30pm.

In an effort to try to accommodate parent's schedules, parents may attend any one of the meetings, at any time. There will not be a formal presentation, but an opportunity for parents to ask questions and have an informal conversation with the Superintendent and available building administrators.

*Reference: Q11*

11. *Can the 4th and 5th graders be treated like elementary school students and have ability to participate in ALL activities of the elementary, including field day, assemblies focused on their age level, not adolescence?*

All activities planned in the building are reviewed and approved for age-appropriateness by the principal of the building. If there are opportunities to run joint elementary school and middle school events, the administrators of both buildings will work together to do so.

12. *Where will pick up and drop off be? Will they be separated from the older kids? Or just let off the bus or out of the vehicles and left to fend for themselves to get to their area? Also with the afternoon. Same question.*

Beginning with the 2019-20 school year, the buses will *Drop-off* and *Pick-up* for middle and high school students will change from the driveway between Richmond High School and football field to the driveway in front of the middle

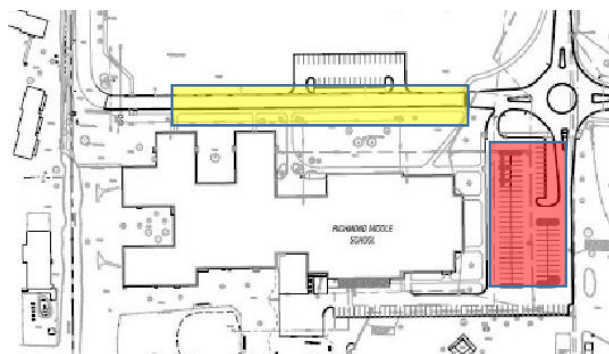
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school, as indicated in yellow below. High school students will now walk from the middle school to the high school. The buses will block the road way to ensure will be able to get on and off the buses safety and allow high school students to cross using the walkway. At approximately 7:40am, the buses will transport the K-3 students to the bus loop at the elementary school.



The parents of grade 4-8 students who choose to drive their students to and from school will now use the parking lot on the east side of the middle school gymnasium to drop-off and pick-up their child, as indicated in red on the map above, rather than the roadway in front of the middle school.

*Reference: Q5, Q10, and Q24*

13. Will they have a separate area for breakfast time and way to get to the cafeteria safely?

Breakfast at the middle schools, just as it is in the elementary school, is offered before school for all students in the cafeteria. Students will enter the middle school from either Door #1 (Main entrance) or Door #8 (Gymnasium entrance) to go to the cafeteria for breakfast.

*Reference: Q10*

14. Will the PTO work with the 4th and 5th grade classrooms/teachers/support staff?  
*Having it limited to the younger grades means shorter times for parents to be involved and more turnover of parents. The activities may become affected.*

The District would encourage the elementary PTO and middle school PTA\* to work together, when possible, to promote programs and activities for all

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students. Working together allows parents at the elementary level to feel more comfortable in joining the middle school PTO when their child attends the middle school.

With that said, other than approving events within the school, each PTO is their own entity (e.g. 501(c)(3) organization) and has their own bylaws to follow, independently from the District. The District and building administrators will do everything they can to make sure events between the two schools are combined, when appropriate and it makes sense.

*\* On January 14, 2019 it was listed as PTO and changed to PTA on January 15, 2019.*

*Reference: Q10*

15. *Will my fourth grader be able to attend an after school child care program?*

**Yes. See Question #9 for more detail.**

16. *Bloomfield Hills moved their 4th grade to the middle school in 2017, in order to anticipate problems before they happen, can there be a conversation with them about their process and what went well, what didn't, etc.?*

**District representatives will be reaching out to other Districts, including Bloomfield Hills to discuss their experiences.**

*Reference: Q8*

17. *What is going to be done about morning care...I do not want my 4th grader walking to the middle school in the morning, while still dark outside by himself.*

**See Question #9.**

*Reference: Q7*

18. *Will the 4th graders have separate doors to walk into so they do not have to interact with the 7th and 8th graders?*

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All middle school students will enter Door #1 or Door #8 at the middle school. While during instructional classes and lunch, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students will be separate from the rest of the student body. However, there will be opportunities for all students at the middle school to interact.

*Reference: Q7*

19. *After school clubs, like the Green club and robotics will they still get to take part in these?*

**After school programs and clubs, such as Robotics and Green Club, will be available for 4<sup>th</sup> Graders to participate in at the middle school.**

*Reference: Q7 and Q10*

20. *When I was at the meeting I would like the 4th grade to be able to participate in field day not help, they deserve that.*

**This is a building decision left up to the building administrators and the organizations that support and help run Field Day. While the middle school does not have a Field Day, they have other events for students to participate in that are not available at the elementary school.**

*Reference: Q7 and Q10*

21. *Would like follow up to the question asked about a separate bus drop off and a separate entrance for the 4th graders.*

**See Question #12 and Question #18.**

*Reference: Q10*

22. *Before the November 12th school board meeting, when was this possible move last discussed?*

**In January 2017, moving 4<sup>th</sup> grade to the middle school was discussed during the Fiscal Year 2018 Budget (FY18) process as an idea for the Board to consider. At that time, the discussion revolved around moving 8<sup>th</sup> grade move to the high school and 4<sup>th</sup> grade move to the middle school. This was brought up as a**

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discussion in order to maximize courses offered at the high school as well as addressing the limited classroom space at the elementary school needed in the near future.

During the Fiscal Year 2019 Budget (FY19) discussion, space was also brought up, but would need to be addressed in the FY20 Budget, which is why the Board directed the Superintendent to hold an *Informational Parent Meeting* in December, 2018 to begin the process of moving 4<sup>th</sup> grade to the middle school.

*Reference: Q6*

23. *Did the school board members consider any other options besides the 3 that Mr. Walmsley presented at the November 12th meeting?*

The Board of Education considered the options that were discussed in the PowerPoint presentation, which is available on the *4<sup>th</sup> Grade Move to the Middle School* website. Moving Preschool out of the elementary school was not discussed at a Board meeting, but reducing the number of preschool programs offered was mentioned. Information was provided to Board members in a communication from the Superintendent regarding moving the preschool programs out of the elementary school.

24. *Is there anything being done to address the space issue for the future? Ex. Addition to elementary school, or new building. Is moving 4th grade back to the elementary the goal for the future?*

With the 4<sup>th</sup> Grade move to the middle school, it opens a few additional classrooms for future growth. However, the District will be looking at long-term enrollment projections to see if the need to add additional classrooms and instructional spaces are necessary within the next 3-5 years, as the current vacant classroom space continues to reduce within each building.

*Reference: Q4*

25. *Since my now 3rd grader is in her last year of elementary already will she still have a clap out? It's a big deal for the kids.*

**Yes. The elementary administrators have committed to holding a "clap-out" for the current 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders.**



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*Reference: Q3*

26. *I was at the meeting Monday afternoon that Mr. Walmsley was speaking at and the idea of using the AUD for preschool had been mentioned. I think this is an awful idea however. My question is; what are the plans for this building? It seems to be a waste of the districts money to keep it. Would it not be beneficial to sell this property and use those funds to offset the costs of relocating the 4th grade?? I am not pleased with this decision but I understand that there is no other immediate option, I think that if this community can come together we can all make this an easy transition.*

**The idea of using the Roosevelt Civic Auditorium (e.g. the AUD) for Preschool was proposed by an individual who attended the December *Informational Parent Meeting*. The AUD does not have the classroom capacity, nor is it appropriate for preschool students.**

**The Board of Education considered a proposal to “rent” the AUD as well as selling the property and the old bus garage which is next to the AUD. This past November, the Board of Education entered into a *Building Use Agreement* with Dominion Church to lease the AUD. This *Building Use Agreement* provides a small revenue stream for the District, while shifting the maintenance expenses to the church. At the end of the *Building Use Agreement*, the District will again consider all of its options for the building.**

*Reference: Q2*

27. *I have no questions. I just wanted to say this is the right move for our school. I went to Richmond schools and I attended 4<sup>th</sup> grade at the middle school. There were never any problems and I think our children will benefit from this move as well. Thank you for all of your hard work.*

*Reference: Q12*

28. *I don't agree with this at all. My child should not be in a school with 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders when she is a 4<sup>th</sup> grader. Unacceptable. And my kids are schools of choice.*

*Reference: Q118*

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29. *Has thought been given to having staggered start times at the middle school? This would mean keeping the 7:50am start time for 4<sup>th</sup> (possibly 5<sup>th</sup>)? It was brought up in the meeting, I'd like to know what was decided.*

**The District has considered staggered start times. However, there are many variables that affect a staggered start time between buildings or programs within a building, such as transportation, AM/PM supervision, staff shared between programs within a building and between buildings, breakfast and lunch times and personnel, etc. At this point, the start times for all three buildings will remain the same.**

*Reference: Q23*

30. *Will transportation be at the next parent meeting on February 28<sup>th</sup>? Just curious if there has been a discussion on bus placement for drop off and pick up from the school. I as a parent would rather have high schoolers cross the road instead of younger children to load and unload from the buses? Also, will staff be outside every morning and afternoon as students arrive and are dismissed as they are at the elementary school when you move 4<sup>th</sup> grade over?*

**Transportation is not scheduled to be at the February 28<sup>th</sup> meeting. The Transportation Director and the Superintendent have discussed the new drop-off and pick-up location for students (see Question 12).**

**Along with the building administrators, staff will be assigned to before-school and after-school supervision as needed to ensure the students safety.**

*Reference: Q24*

31. *During the meeting we were told that we would know what 4<sup>th</sup> grade teachers our children would have so they could begin as soon as possible managing the transition. When will we be notified?*

**The District has committed to identifying what teachers have been assigned to 4<sup>th</sup> grade (and 5<sup>th</sup> grade). As announced on February 9, 2019 Mr. Gillespie, Mr. Hooks, Ms. Malburg, and Mrs. Munro have been given 2019-20 tentative teaching assignments as 4th Grade Teachers at Richmond Middle School. Mrs. Churchill, Mr. Clendennin, Mrs. Gillespie, and Mr. Jarsma have been**

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given 2019-20 tentative teaching assignments as 5th Grade Teachers at Richmond Middle School.

These are tentative assignments as things could change between now and the start of school, such as a teacher resigns or retires, scheduled conflict require the District to reassign teachers.

Actual student-teacher assignments are made and finalized over the summer and will be communicated to parents in the *Welcome Back* packets mailed the week of August 19, 2019.

*Reference: Q25*

32. *Will the 4<sup>th</sup> grade be going to the Lee School for Library or will the middle school library be stocked with reading level appropriate books?*

4<sup>th</sup> grade will have a scheduled library time at the middle school as they currently do now at the elementary school. The District is currently assessing the reading collection at the middle school and will be investing in new age and reading-level appropriate book to add to the middle school library collection.

*Reference: Q26*