

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY RESPONSES TO THE CITY AUDITOR'S DRAFT AUDIT
REPORT OF RICHMOND PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

The School Board, City of Richmond

March 15, 2007

We are pleased to have this opportunity to partner with City Council and City administration in this effort to make Richmond Public Schools (RPS) as effective and efficient as possible as we implement best practices to move RPS forward in reaching our goals of increasing student achievement and moving the district from "Good to Great."

We have reviewed the City Auditor's draft audit report on Richmond Public Schools. We are in concurrence with 53 of the 58 recommendations. There are 5 recommendations that we have either (1) proposed and alternative action plan, (2) need further clarification or (3) have a difference in opinion. It should be noted that RPS has already implemented several of the recommendations to include the following:

We were required to submit a level funded budget for FY08. To comply with this mandate, the School Board's FY08 approved budget reflects reductions in staffing, services and programs in order to fund changes in employees' salaries and benefits, increased energy costs, services for special needs students and compliance with contractual obligations (e.g., tuition to specialty schools).

Richmond Public Schools' administrative cost is less than 3 percent of the budget and more specifically, the percentage of our budget allocated for Central Administration is 1.2 percent which is less than the state average.

Other reductions in administrative staffing will be realized as we consolidate, close and build new larger schools. The School Board has already closed three schools (the old Armstrong, Whitcomb Court, and Patrick Henry schools) Patrick Henry was re-opened to accommodate the displaced students of Norwell elementary caused by the flooding in the Battery Park neighborhood.

In the near future this Board will begin public hearings on closing up to five facilities for the 2007-08 school year. We will also begin discussions on closing two to four schools for September 2008-09 school year.

It should also be noted that some of the recommended savings opportunities (\$3.8 million) will not be realized until funding for replacement of the aging bus fleet is appropriated. The 2007-08 supplemental appropriation request includes funding to replace twenty six buses.

As noted in the draft audit report, the School Division must be given adequate time to study and implement the recommendations. The 2007-08 approved budget request includes \$5.3 million of savings opportunities that are consistent with recommendations in the City Auditor's Draft Report.

We look forward to the opportunity of conferring with the City Auditor to explore the savings opportunities identified in the areas of custodial outsourcing, vehicle replacements, deadhead miles, and telephone upgrades.