

## RVA Education Compact FAQ

This document addresses common questions about the RVA Education Compact. As public input is still ongoing, this FAQ will be periodically updated and expanded in weeks to come.

### *What is the RVA Education Compact?*

The RVA Education Compact is an agreement among local elected officials to establish a shared vision and work collaboratively to improve children's lives and family outcomes in Richmond. The draft Compact can be found here:

<http://www.richmondgov.com/Mayor/documents/EducationCompactProposal.pdf>

The Education Compact sets two major community-wide goals:

- **Raising RPS academic achievement** to levels matching or exceeding statewide benchmarks, and
- Implementing a concerted strategy to **reduce child poverty** by 50% by 2030 while **mitigating the impact of poverty on learning**.

The Compact also puts in place a **process** intended to facilitate concerted community action to achieve those ambitious goals.

### *Why Does Richmond Need an Education Compact?*

In the specific context of Richmond, with its severe educational challenges, high rate of child poverty (approximately 40%), and limited fiscal capacity, it is essential that local officials work collaboratively both on improving school outcomes and on improving the background conditions of children's lives. It is essential that both the City and RPS develop and implement strategic approaches to make progress in each area; that elected officials in both bodies understand the strategies being implemented; that shared accountability measures be in place; and that wherever possible, the two systems (City of Richmond and Richmond Public Schools) work together to achieve shared ends.

City residents want to see greater investment in improving schools and in fighting poverty and its impact on children. They also want to see Richmond local officials working together on these issues. Potential cross-sector partners in the business, philanthropic, and wider community also welcome the idea of a shared strategy and vision clearly articulating goals and needs for Richmond's children.

### *What are the aims of the Compact?*

The core *aims* of the Education Compact are

- To lay out a forward-looking, positive vision with shared, transformative goals for both the City of Richmond and Richmond Public Schools.
- To lay out a commitment to collaborative practices

- To provide a framework in which negotiations concerning meeting the financial needs of schools and families may take place
- To transform the annual budget discussion on school needs from an adversarial process to a healthy deliberation among parties who all view one another as on the same team and working toward the same goals
- To provide a shared strategic framework for investing in and achieving improvements in quality of life for Richmond children

### ***What is the Content of the Compact?***

The draft Compact consists of three components:

- Establishment of extensive, ongoing **collaboration** involving City of Richmond and RPS administrations as well as elected officials, including quarterly joint meetings of Council and School Board, monthly meetings of an Education Compact Team that includes community and cross-sector participation, and monthly meetings of administrative leaders in both teams.
- Establishment of **transformational goals** with respect to both academic progress (putting RVA academic progress on same or better level than statewide benchmarks) and providing holistic support services to all children and fighting child poverty, thereby contributing to the overall well-being and success of children inside and outside of the classroom. Richmond Public Schools will be the lead partner in establishing a strategy to achieve transformational academic goals, and the City of Richmond will be the lead partner in establishing a strategy to provide strong supports outside the classroom to all children and to substantially reduce child and family poverty.
- Commitment to develop a multi-year **funding strategy** to support both legs of the Compact (academic progress and fighting poverty), involving both seeking additional revenues and finding internal efficiencies.

The draft Compact is in effect a road map for how the bodies can work together over the next four years. Further refinements and improvements to the Compact will be made following public discussion including input from all elected officials.

### ***Does the Education Compact Involve the School Board or City Council giving up power and responsibility?***

No. The Compact does *not* involve any of the parties—the Mayor, City Council, School Board—giving up any of its authority or responsibilities. Rather, it involves agreeing to exercise that authority in a collaborative fashion.

To be specific, in the Compact process Richmond Public Schools will take lead responsibility for improving academic outcomes. Specific academic metrics and targets, as well as strategies for realizing them, will be defined by the School Board through its forthcoming Strategic Planning process. The final version of the academic goals will be fully aligned with that Strategic Plan.

Similarly, the City of Richmond will take lead responsibility for improving the “whole child” and for reducing poverty. The specific strategies, metrics and goals will be aligned with the strategies of the Office of Community Wealth Building and the City of Richmond’s Human Services portfolio, which is now undertaken a strategic planning process as part of Mayor Stoney’s first-year agenda.

The Education Compact Team will fundamentally play an advisory role.

### ***How was the Compact Drafted, and What’s Going on Now?***

The draft Compact proposal is the result of a series of preliminary discussions held between the Mayor’s Office, RPS Administration, School Board representatives, and Richmond City Council representatives in January and February. The draft Compact was released to the public on February 24th.

Public meetings in districts across the City are now taking place to gain feedback on the proposal. Based on this feedback, the Compact draft will be revised, for introduction as a resolution to be considered by both City Council and the School Board in May.

### ***Once the Education Compact Resolution is Adopted, What Happens Next?***

As a companion to the draft Compact, a detailed Organizational Collaboration proposal has been developed. Upon adoption of the final Education Compact Resolution, the City of Richmond and Richmond Public Schools will move forward with implementing these proposals including:

- Quarterly joint meetings between City Council and School Board
- Formation of an Education Compact Team consisting of elected officials, key administrators, and stakeholders that will take responsibility for tracking progress on Compact goals and will make policy recommendations on shared strategies to advance the goals of the Compact
- Formation of the Richmond Children’s Cabinet, an administrative work team of City and RPS officials with responsibility for implementing policy

It is the intent of the City administration to put these organizational proposals into place prior to the start of the new fiscal year on July 1, 2017.

### ***If I can’t attend a community meeting, how can I offer input and feedback on the draft Compact?***

Send an email to [askthemayor@richmondgov.com](mailto:askthemayor@richmondgov.com) and put the words “Education Compact” in the title of your email.

### ***Why should I care about the success of the Education Compact?***

The Education Compact represents an enormous opportunity to achieve systemic change in how the City of Richmond and Richmond Public Schools work together, based on the widespread consensus that past approaches have failed. Its success will make realistic the achievement of ambitious yet desperately needed improvements in the lives of our children.

