

just the **FAQs**

answers to frequently asked questions

Chesterfield County
Public Schools

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updated July 2008

Design for Excellence

- ▶ In India, 100 percent of 2006 college graduates speak English.
- ▶ In 10 years, the number one English-speaking country in the world will be China.
- ▶ The U.S. Department of Labor estimates that today's students will have 10 to 14 jobs by the age of 38.
- ▶ Many current college majors didn't exist 10 years ago. Degrees now are available in new media, organic agriculture, e-business, nanotechnology and homeland security.

For additional surprising facts, watch "Did You Know 2.0" on www.youtube.com.

Chesterfield is a wonderful place for children to learn and grow, and families continue to choose Chesterfield County in part because of the public school system. Because change is one thing we



can all count on, today's children look forward to a different future than their parents and grandparents did. They must be educated differently to be prepared to succeed in a technological, global economy.

What is the Design for Excellence?

Chesterfield County Public Schools has a responsibility to prepare children to succeed in the 21st century. The Design for Excellence six-year strategic plan illuminates the path to achieving the School Board's vision of every school as a thriving, dynamic and inspiring educational environment that produces self-directed learners with 21st-century skills and traits.

The Design for Excellence calls for high academic achievement for every student. The plan evolved from the efforts of more than 200 community and school representatives who worked in innovation teams to seek research-based methods for moving the school system forward. The Design for Excellence is not a checklist. It is a dynamic approach to continuous improvement and vision achievement. The plan identifies areas for change and improvement, sets goals and determines ways to achieve those goals.

Chesterfield County Public Schools understands that to be prepared for their futures all children should have access to everything it has to offer, that they should be constantly challenged and that each child should always be expected to perform at his or her highest possible level. When more is expected of children, children achieve more.

Public education must prepare children to be productive adult citizens ready to enter the 21st-century workforce and earn a living wage. Today, that preparation is similar to preparing for college. The workforce now requires much of the same knowledge and skills as the pursuit of higher education.

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What are the goals of the Design for Excellence?

Goal 1. Academic excellence for all students

Goal 2. Safe, supportive and nurturing learning environments

Goal 3. Knowledgeable and competent teachers and administrators

Goal 4. Community investment in schools

Goal 5. Effective and efficient system management

Practical steps have begun to achieve each goal. More comprehensive action will be undertaken over the next six years, as described in the plan.

How will academic excellence and achievement for all students be accomplished?

To ensure academic excellence for all students, students will be taught 21st-century skills, including technology, digital-age literacy, global connections, inventive thinking and effective communication. World language instruction already has been instituted in some elementary schools.

The plan includes high expectations that all students will achieve and that achievement gaps will be closed. By the 2008-2009 school year, for example, every student will enroll in algebra in middle school. All children will be encouraged to challenge themselves, and parents will be encouraged to learn to be effective advocates for their children.

What measures will create safe, supportive and nurturing learning environments?

Chesterfield County Public Schools continues to provide physical safety for its students in and around school buildings and on school buses.

Each child can reach his or her full potential. School staff members are building good relationships with students and their parents and creating positive discipline techniques. A safety net is being developed for students. Everyone around a child, from parents, to his or her teachers and other teachers, to administrators in a school, is responsible for helping a faltering child. Failure is not acceptable.

A supportive learning environment is one that promotes healthy lifestyles for students and staff members. Unhealthy drinks and snacks in vending

machines in Chesterfield County schools already have been replaced by healthier choices.

What does it take to develop a knowledgeable and competent workforce?

Teachers are learning to work together in professional learning communities that recognize, study and adopt successful teaching methods to enhance teaching and student learning.

Within these learning communities, employees also may become more knowledgeable about cultural differences — race, ethnicity, age, gender or any other distinction — that affect their relationships with each other and with the children of Chesterfield County Public Schools.

How can the community be involved?

Community investment may mean school partnerships with businesses, organizations and individuals that can fill a school's needs, whether for supplies or for mentoring and tutoring. It also may mean finding ways for teachers and parents to share discipline and teaching methods so they can provide a consistent learning atmosphere for a child at school and at home.

How will the school system work effectively and efficiently?

A report by the Chesterfield County internal auditor and another by Standard and Poor's demonstrate that Chesterfield County Public Schools uses tax dollars efficiently and effectively, but the school system plans to become even more efficient and effective. The fifth goal was added to implement recommendations from a curriculum management audit by Phi Delta Kappa and a communication audit by the National School Public Relations Association. Policy development, internal and external communication and planning are part of Goal 5. Implementing comprehensive action plans in these areas will knit together educational initiatives and strengthen Chesterfield County Public Schools. Setting higher standards for tomorrow will prepare Chesterfield students to succeed globally.

Where can I get more information?

The full plan is online at chesterfield.k12.va.us. Click on "Design for Excellence" on the right side of the screen. To comment, send an e-mail to SixYearPlan@ccpsnet.net.

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