



RICHMOND HEIGHTS LOCAL SCHOOLS



SPARTAN CONNECTION

NEWSLETTER FROM THE DESK OF THE SUPERINTENDENT, DR. RENÉE T. WILLIS
FEBRUARY 2022 | **SPECIAL EDITION: QUALITY PROFILE**



LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

DEAR RICHMOND HEIGHTS LOCAL SCHOOLS FAMILIES, STAFF AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS,

I'm proud to share with you our latest Quality Profile, designed to highlight the achievements of our district and students. As you all know, the last two school years have been anything but conventional, but we have maintained our mission: to prepare all learners to navigate an ever-changing global community by offering a robust learning environment and innovative programming. Some of the ways in which we've continued to pursue our goals in recent months are through a new school and new tools. Learn more about these initiatives in the ensuing pages.

Celebrating School Boards



School Board Recognition Month

I'd also like to take this opportunity to recognize our school board. School board members are truly our unsung heroes. They are elected by our community for their understanding of our district's unique value and culture. They give selflessly of their time to create and monitor district plans and make sure students have the tools and skills to reach their full potential.

The pandemic has made the last year one of the most challenging in history for school boards across America. It's important that we remember that our school board members are just like you and I, and that more goes into their decisions than any of us realize.

For all of their thoughtful and focused leadership, and their work to keep students learning and growing, I say thank you. Without our board, Richmond Heights Schools would not be what they are today.

Richmond Heights School Board

- **Nneka Slade Jackson, President**
- **Frank Barber, Vice President**
- **Linda Pliodzinskas**
- **Dr. Hugh A. Turner**
- **Jacky C. Brown, Sr.**

We know we couldn't do what we do without the support of our community, so thank you for partnering with us to provide the best education possible to our students and allowing us to be an integral part of the Richmond Heights community. I've never been prouder to be a Spartan and can't wait to see what's next!

Renée T. Willis, Ph.D.

Superintendent | Richmond Heights Local Schools



After graduating from Richmond Heights in 2016, Sidney Spencer attended The University of Alabama. She currently works as a news reporter for 44News in Evansville, Indiana.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS



Mayor Kim Thomas



City Council President Bobby Jordan



School Board Member Jacky C. Brown, Sr.

LOCAL LEADERSHIP

Richmond Heights Local Schools looks forward to working with the City of Richmond Heights' new mayor, Kim Thomas, as well as new city council president, Bobby Jordan.

Additionally, we would like to welcome new school board member Mr. Jacky Brown.

PARTNERSHIPS

- Amatrol
- Center for Arts-Inspired Learning
- Component Repair Technologies (CRT)
- FlexJet
- Manufacturing Growth Network
- Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship
- Parker Hannifan
- Richmond Heights Education Foundation
- T&G Flying Club

SPARTAN CONNECTION

Special Edition: Quality Profile



Thanks to the foresight and visioning work of our leadership team, the Upper School is home to the Cuyahoga County Public Library — Richmond Heights branch. The library offers the opportunity for our school district and community to come together to provide a safe and welcoming learning environment. When public schools and libraries engage in collaboration, community members reap the benefits.





UPPER SCHOOL

The 21st Century Community Learning Center or Upper School was funded by the unprecedented passing of a 12.08 mills levy.

With 88,000 square feet, the school was designed with the concept of aviation in mind thanks to its proximity to the Cuyahoga County airport. It uses a mixture of curved metal panels and light brick to evoke feelings of lightness, movement and flight.

It is home to the following:

- **Cuyahoga County Public Library—Richmond Heights branch**
- **Multipurpose cafeteria with seating for 400, a stage with professional lighting, and built-in audiovisual equipment**
- **Gymnasium that supports school teams and the city's youth basketball program with multiple courts ideal for tournaments which can bring revenue to the city and district**



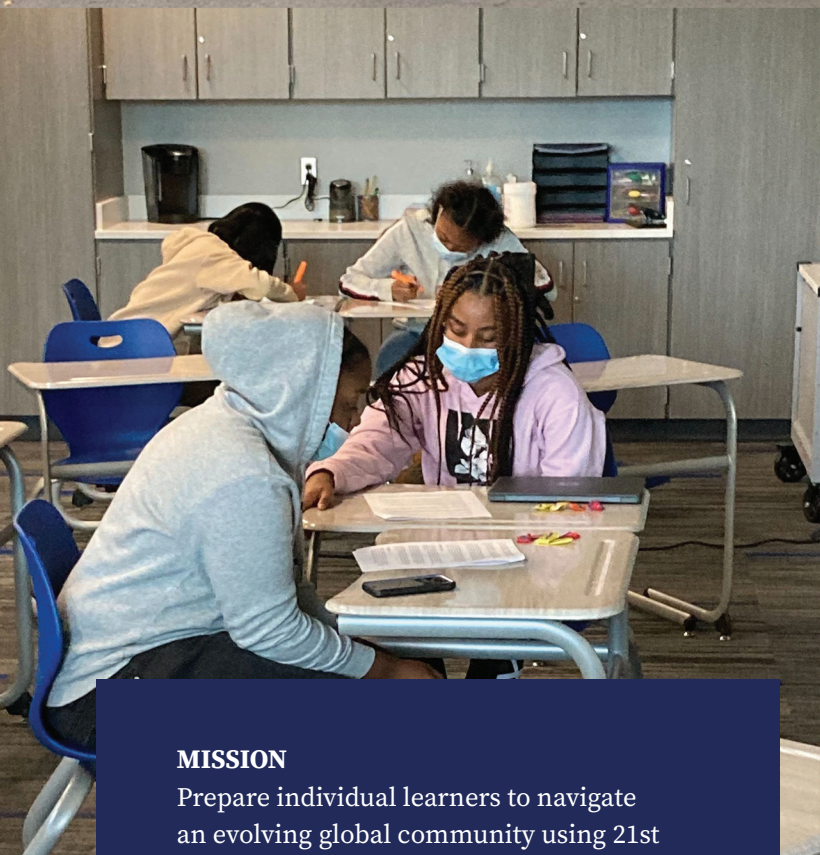
School by day, community center by night

The only auditorium in the city, Richmond Heights has hosted various community events and groups, including the Women League of Voters Candidate's Forum.

"It's the crown jewel of this community and has become a catalyst for a renaissance in Richmond Heights, which is on its way to bigger and better."

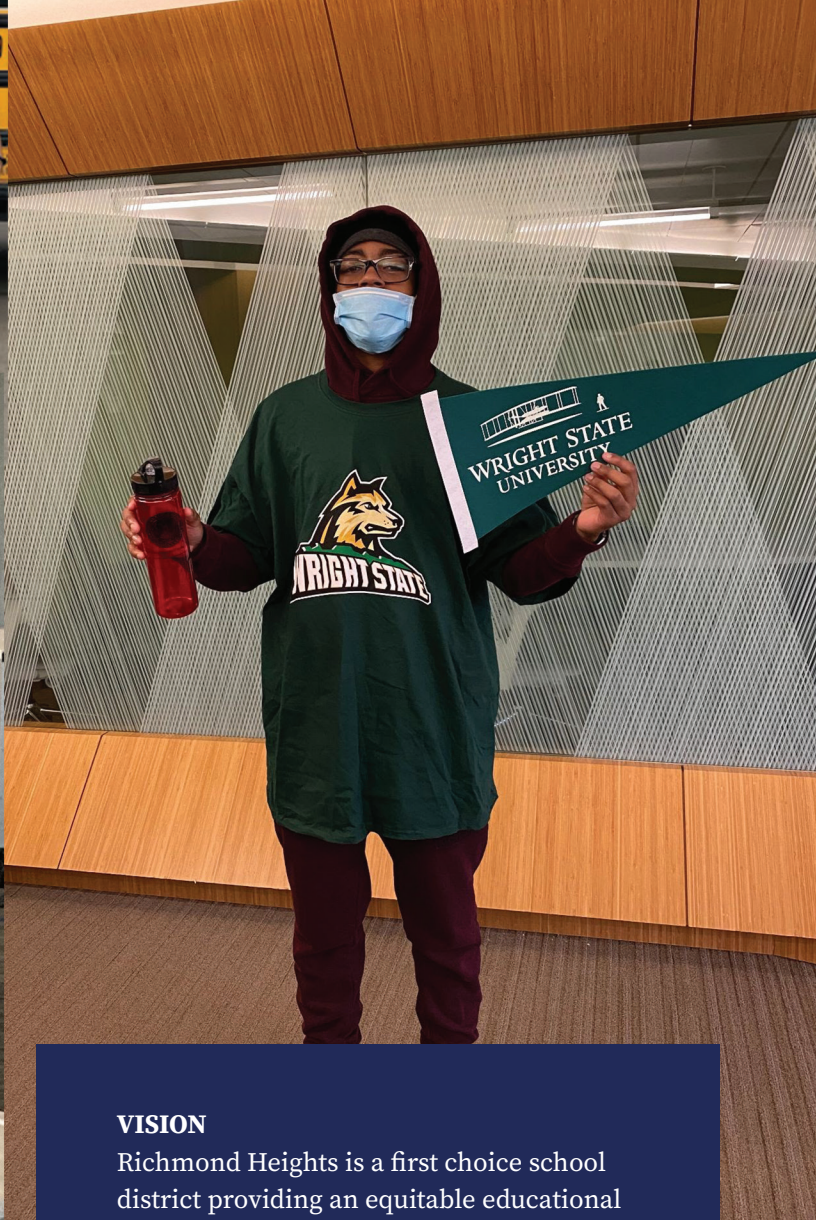
Dr. Renée Willis

Superintendent at Richmond Heights Local Schools



MISSION

Prepare individual learners to navigate an evolving global community using 21st century competencies.



VISION

Richmond Heights is a first choice school district providing an equitable educational environment that promotes safe, respectful, responsible relationships where pride in self, school and community flourishes.



DISTRICT FACTS

LOCATION

Located southeast of Cleveland, Ohio, Richmond Heights Local Schools is the only school district located in Richmond Heights, a city of 10,000.

ENROLLMENT

827

STUDENTS
ENROLLED

15:1

STUDENT TO
TEACHER RATIO

STUDENT ATTENDANCE IS

93%

WHICH EXCEEDS STATE
ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENT

DISTRICT INCLUDES:

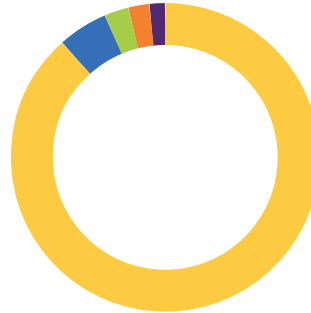
Lower School (grades prek-6)

- All students have access to Chromebook
- Arts programming provided by the Center for Arts-Inspired Learning

Upper School (grades 7-12)

- Accredited by the internationally recognized Cognia
- Three face-to-face AP classes in addition to 11 more through a blended learning platform
- Cuyahoga County Public Library—Richmond Heights branch

DIVERSITY



88.5% Black, Non-Hispanic

5.1% Multiracial

2.6% White, Non-Hispanic

2.2% Asian or Pacific Islander

1.5% Hispanic



13.9% Students with Disabilities



72.3% Economic Disadvantage



28% Transient



1.9% English Learners

FUN FACTS



Mascot: Spartan

Colors: Royal blue, white



*Alumni
Spotlight*

Lugenia "Lulu" Glass, class of 2017, earned her Bachelor of Arts in Communications from Bowling Green State University in 2021, and recently started her career as a centralized claims adjuster for Progressive Insurance Company.



LOWER SCHOOL

- One-to-one with all students having access to Chromebooks
- Arts programming provided by the Center for Arts Inspired Learning
- Five Star Step Up To Quality Preschool
- STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Math) Lab learning space
- Resolution passed by board committing to no more than 20 students per classroom for students in grades prek-3
- Recognized by AVID, a national program that provides academic support to prepare students for college eligibility and success
- Flexible, movable furniture recently added, allowing for more collaboration and creativity
- Cleaned up and renovated courtyard provides outdoor learning space
- Intramural basketball team recently established to help foster interest in athletics as students progress through school
- The district has received funds from the federal American Rescue Plan that are to be used for the replacement of the current elementary school HVAC system which currently contains antiquated boilers and window air conditioning units. The new system will provide for a central air and heating system that allows for fresh air filtration.



MAKER'S SPACE

INNOVATIVE CURRICULUM

MAKERSPACE

Makerspaces are designed to help students build critical thinking and problem-solving skills by taking classroom concepts and turning them into real-world applications.

Equipment

- 3D printers
- CNC machine
- Garment printer
- Sewing & embroidery machine
- Vinyl printer/cutter
- Design software/computers
- Laser engraver/cutter
- Milling machine

Projects

- Entrepreneurship Club: Developed in partnership with the Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship, students build business plans and use Makerspace equipment to implement that plan.
- Summer School: Students learned to sew and started a store. With the help of Cosmic Bobbins, a local screen printing company, they printed Spartan T-shirts that are being sold to students and community members.

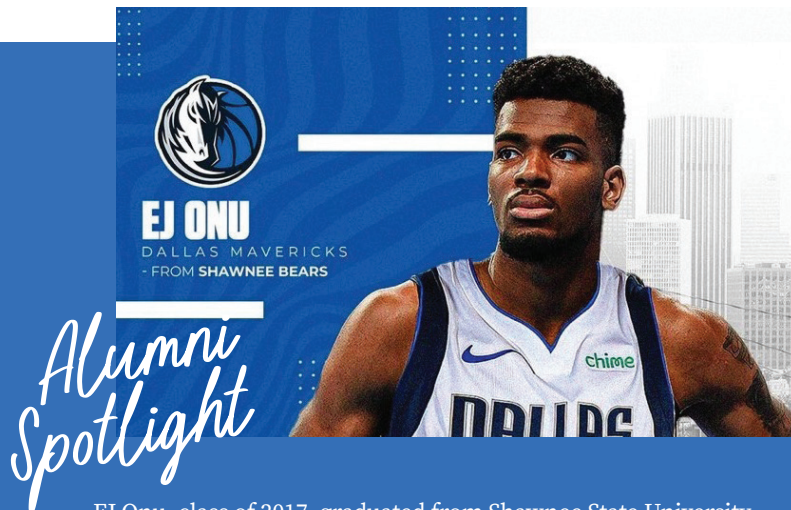
SUMMER SCHOOL

In an effort to keep students learning this past summer, Richmond Heights provided unique, project-based summer school. Students participated in the following:

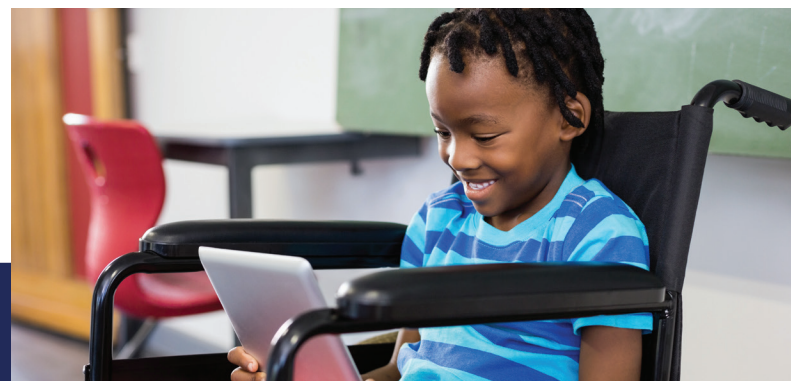
- Social justice project — Students selected an issue at the state, local or federal level, then conducted research, developed an action plan and honed their presentation skills by giving a report of their findings and recommendations.
- Small business development — Students learned how to develop a business plan.
- Friday Field Experiences — Each Friday, students went out into the community to learn a new skill or simply have fun. Trips included visits to Cuyahoga Valley National Park, Young Chefs Academy, and a bowling and skating party.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

We believe that students with disabilities should be educated to the maximum extent with their peers in general education classrooms. Our services include: specialized instruction, modifications in curriculum, and accommodations as appropriate to access the general education curriculum. Eligibility is determined through an Evaluation Team Report by school staff and families according to state and federal definitions and regulations. If a student qualifies under one or more of the 14 categories an Individualized Education Program (IEP) is developed. During the 2020-21 school year, the co-teaching instructional model continued at the elementary and secondary schools. There have been many positive academic and social-emotional results from our inclusive practices for our students with disabilities.



EJ Onu, class of 2017, graduated from Shawnee State University in 2021 where he was a two-time NAIA All-American basketball player and was part of the 2021 NAIA national championship team. Today, he is pursuing his dreams of playing in the NBA. After initially signing a deal with the Dallas Mavericks, he is currently playing in the NBA's G League.



DISTRICT FACTS

STAFF

9

Number of Administrators

26

Support Staff
(classroom and cafeteria aides,
secretaries, grants personnel)

1

Psychologist

5

Security/Hope Squad

11

Operations Department

12

Number of Buses

54

Teachers

1

Nurse

1

Counselor

1

Athletic Director
(part-time)

8

Bus Drivers

6

Food Service
(Outsourced to Chartwells)

ACTIVITIES

UPPER SCHOOL:

- Debate Team
- Entrepreneur Club
- Culinary Club
- Rise Up
- Diversity Club

LOWER SCHOOL:

- KINGS (Kind, Intelligent, Gentleman Scholars)
- PEARLS (Positive, Educated, Ambitious, Respectable, Lady Scholars)
- Chess Club
- Student Ambassadors
- Positive Vibes Club

SPORTS:

- Cross Country (boys/girls)
- Football (Fall '22)
- Volleyball
- Basketball (boys/girls)
- Baseball/Softball
- Track (boys/girls)

A Well-Rounded Experience



Josiah Harris, who committed in 2021 to play basketball for West Virginia University, said he's thankful for the Richmond Heights administration for seeing him as more than just an athlete. He enrolled in College Credit Plus while being a full-time student at Richmond Heights. He earned his associate of arts degree in his junior year, prior to his high school diploma, which he will receive this May.

Athletics Key Part of Richmond Heights Journey

Congratulations to our 2021 boys basketball team, who made it to the state championship. Despite falling short, Spartan basketball coach Quentin Rogers — known affectionately by his players as Coach Q — was named Co-Coach of the Year by the Ohio Prep Sportswriters Association for Division IV.



FINANCES

Richmond Heights Schools To Consider Replacing District Property Tax With an Income Tax

The Richmond Heights Board of Education is considering a proposal made at the Dec. 30, 2021, board meeting by David Conley, president of Rockmill Financial Consulting, to study the development of a taxation policy to restructure the district's taxing methodology.

As part of the proposed structure, the district would eliminate some, or all, of the district's existing property taxes and replace them with either a traditional or earned income tax. The benefit of the shift in taxation could be lowering the overall tax cost of the schools to current residents, especially senior citizens, and those on fixed incomes.

The new tax structure would potentially create additional income tax revenue from renters moving into the district in the future, to lower taxes for existing residents.

The district, in partnership with Rockmill, is conducting additional research and analysis before having further board discussion.

The Role Economic Development Plays in School Districts

When new development takes place in a community, it is standard practice that city officials, the local school board, and the developer have a seat at the table to ensure equitable funding for taxpayers and local government entities.

Although this was not the case in the instance of the Belle Oaks project, Richmond Heights Schools remains committed to being a collaborative community partner so that we receive our fair share from future economic development in order to continue providing the best education possible to our students.



Richmond Heights Local Schools earned *Ohio's Auditor of State award* in 2020 for clean and accurate recordkeeping, which recognizes the district's efforts to protect taxpayer dollars.

Richmond Heights Lead Plaintiff in School Voucher Lawsuit

A lawsuit was filed in early 2022 by advocates and nearly 100 school districts across Ohio declaring the state's school voucher program unconstitutional.

Richmond Heights Schools is a lead plaintiff in the case, arguing that vouchers are being used by primarily nonminority students, even though the program was meant to assist economically disadvantaged minority pupils.

The district has testified on this issue before the state legislature, and will continue to fight for fair and equitable funding for every student.

How Can I Get Involved?

Join a Feb. 23 online forum, led by school district leaders from four of the plaintiff districts. This is an opportunity for the public to learn more about the importance of vouchers to public school funding, the plaintiff's motivation for filing suit, the substance of their claims, the desired relief, and next steps for concerned citizens. The forum will begin at 7 p.m.

Register online at <https://chuh.net/coalition/lawsuit/>.

MAKER'S SPACE

INNOVATIVE CURRICULUM

EARLY COLLEGE EARLY CAREER PROGRAM

Through the Manufacturing Growth Network and its Early College Early Career program, select high school juniors are participating in workforce development, paid on-the-job training and are earning college credit. As part of this initiative, Richmond Heights Schools is also working with Amatrol to purchase equipment and curriculum so that students can earn an industry-recognized manufacturing certificate.

Additionally, the district is working toward a paid pre-apprenticeship program through a partnership with Component Repair Technologies, Inc. of Mentor, which specializes in turbine engine component repairs for the aviation, industrial and marine industries.

POST-SECONDARY OPPORTUNITIES

Richmond Heights Secondary School offers three face-to-face AP classes, and its blended learning model gives students the chance to participate in 11 other AP courses. And — they are one of only 40% of schools in the nation to offer AP Computer Science.

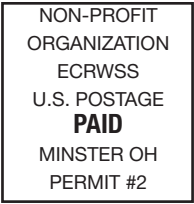
LANGUAGES

American Sign Language is a course offering. Additionally, students can choose to learn any foreign language taught virtually by certified teachers.

AVIATION CLASSROOM

Richmond Heights' aviation program introduces students to aviation careers as early as seventh grade, with a formal curriculum beginning in ninth grade. Thanks to the Expanding Opportunities for Each Child grant, the district expanded its resources in the aviation-designated classroom last year. They purchased 10 flight simulators, which give students hands-on experience while learning flight navigation from a virtual private pilot. The classroom also offers drones so students can earn their FAA Part 107 Small Unmanned Aircraft Certificate. Additionally, six students and two staff members participated in Discovery Flights led by T&G Flying Club, which provided students the opportunity to log flight time toward a private pilot license. All of these endeavors will continue throughout 2022.



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