

# Design for Excellence 2020

An updated strategic plan is in place for Chesterfield County Public Schools. The Design for Excellence 2020 prepares students for success in the 21st century and guides the daily work of the school system.

## Background

The original Design for Excellence was adopted in December 2007, then modified in June 2008 and June 2009. That plan contained five goals addressing student goals and employee goals. The new Design for Excellence 2020 continues to address expectations for students and employees in accordance with Virginia Standards of Quality,

Goals in the Design for Excellence 2020 state the School Board's expectations for achievement outcomes for all students in three areas: knowledge, skills and values. Subgoals specify what students should know and be able to do in the disciplines and reflect the skills and attitudes required by the state as well as School Board and community expectations. The goals and subgoals are designed to lead to the fulfillment of the mission and vision.

Goals and subgoals were identified through an innovation team process. Innovation teams included community members, parents, teachers, administrators, students and other interested citizens. Teams analyzed future trends and reviewed the system's key measures of success. Innovation teams met weekly to analyze the current performance of students, community expectations, legal requirements and future needs. Finally, the innovation teams drafted goals and subgoals. School Board officials and community members commented on the proposals, which were revised before being adopted June 28. The goals and subgoals are the primary focus of the Design for Excellence 2020. School system staff members are now reviewing and modifying key measures of success to provide accountability for the goals and subgoals.

Here are the vision, mission, goals, subgoals and guiding principles adopted in spring 2011 by the Chesterfield County School Board:

## Vision

Chesterfield County Public Schools will provide an engaging and relevant education that prepares every student to adapt and thrive in a rapidly changing world.

## Mission

Chesterfield County Public Schools, in partnership with students, families and communities, emphasizes and supports high levels of achievement through a global education for all, with options and opportunities to meet the diverse needs and interests of individual students.

# Goals and Subgoals

Goal 1: All learners will acquire, analyze, synthesize and evaluate information to solve meaningful problems and to achieve success as productive, thriving global citizens. Students will learn through active engagement, collaboration and exploration of personal interests, talents and ambitions across disciplines. Student learning and achievement will be measured and reported using clearly defined standards and performance assessments that measure student progress toward personalized learning goals.

- 1.1 Learners will develop into independent, strategic readers, writers, thinkers and communicators across all fields of study, using diverse formats and media.
- 1.2 Learners will understand science, technology, engineering and mathematics as integrated fields of study that emphasize questioning and inquiry, develop analytical thinking and focus on problem-solving and design.
- 1.3 Learners will experience an interdisciplinary approach to the study of social sciences to become productive world citizens and gain an understanding of the interdependence and interrelationships of cultures.
- 1.4 Learners will be prepared to effectively communicate and interact in a multicultural, multilingual world.
- 1.5 Learners will develop their unique talents or interests in the arts for integration into all fields of study.
- 1.6 Learners will make healthy lifestyle choices and maintain a mentally healthy and physically active lifestyle that sustains and promotes personal, family and community health.
- 1.7 Learners will explore career opportunities, develop workplace readiness skills, understand personal finance, appreciate technical and business education and value initiative and engage in innovation.

Goal 2: All learners will demonstrate the 21st-century learning and technology skills and knowledge that will prepare them for success in school, postsecondary education, work and life in a global society.

- 2.1 Learners will apply knowledge across disciplines to investigate and solve real-world problems.
- 2.2 Learners will understand and apply 21st-century interdisciplinary themes that are vital to success in communities and the workplace. These themes include
  - digital-age literacy
  - inventive thinking
  - communication and collaboration
  - global connections
- 2.3 Learners will ethically use 21st-century tools to develop skills essential to everyday life and workplace technology, including the abilities to think and problem solve.

Goal 3: Working in partnership with school and family, all learners will understand, model and embrace the important attitudes and attributes necessary to be responsible global citizens.

- 3.1 Learners will initiate, engage in and celebrate service, volunteerism and the spirit of giving in order to become responsible citizens and servant leaders in their school, community, country and world
- 3.2 Learners will make positive contributions to their schools, families, work and the greater diverse global community through opportunities provided by business and community partnerships.
- 3.3 Learners will develop characteristics and practice duties and responsibilities of citizenship and the core values of respect, responsibility, honesty and accountability.

## **Guiding Principles for Employees**

### Guiding Principle: Student Engagement

Learning is our core purpose.

#### General Expectations

Members of the Chesterfield County Public Schools community work together to encourage and develop high student engagement with the curriculum. Positive relationships between student and teacher increase student motivation and engagement. It is primarily the teacher's responsibility to engage students using systematic teaching strategies. Schoolwide initiatives promote student engagement by creating a culture involving students in school activities and their classroom work. Parents and others also influence student engagement by their expectations of students.

Preconditions for student engagement include a student-teacher relationship based on a teacher who takes an interest in students and cares that they learn. Preconditions also include a stimulating and comfortable classroom, positive core values instruction, classroom routines that are well taught and practiced and student mastery of basic technical and social skills.

There are well-understood teaching strategies that support student engagement. These include high rigor and relevance, personalization of learning including well-differentiated instruction, active learning strategies and a focus on reading, including vocabulary and comprehension strategies.

Reference: International Center for Leadership in Education

#### Rigor and Relevance

While achieving academic proficiency is an important goal toward achieving academic excellence and closing achievement gaps, it is only the starting line for students in Chesterfield County Public Schools. The ability for all students to learn in rigorous, relevant and real-world settings needs to be the finishing line. By teachers incorporating rigorous and relevant instruction and assessment, students will become highly engaged in learning, prepared for the future as 21st-century collaborators, communicators, creative thinkers and critical problem-solvers.

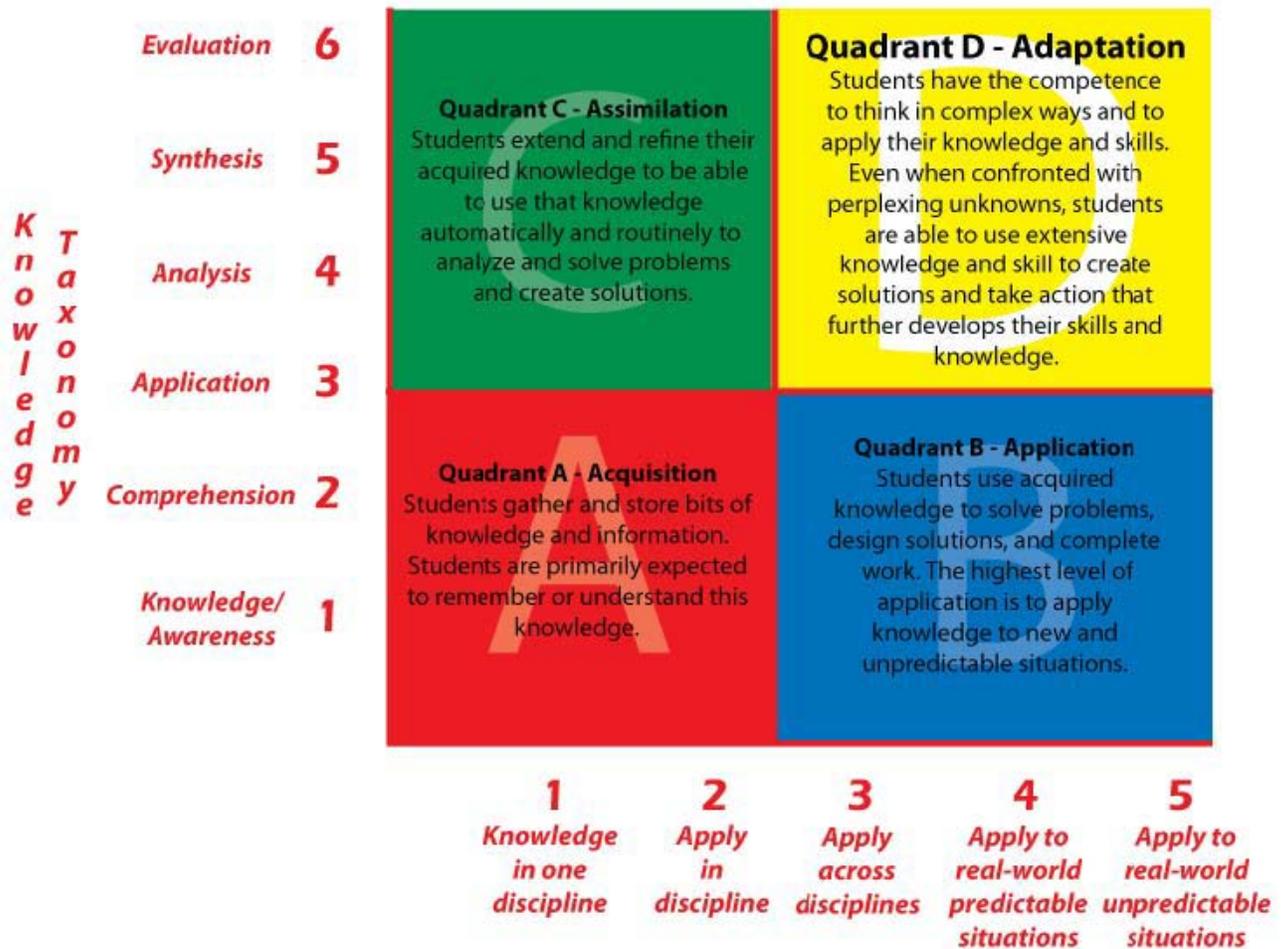
During the 2009 Curriculum Academy, Chesterfield teachers and administrators were introduced to a model for rigor and relevance from the International Center for Leadership in Education. The center's rigor/relevance framework is a graphic tool that supports teachers in developing and teaching rigorous and relevant lessons and designing authentic assessments for students. Curriculum specialists in Chesterfield

have used this tool to design highly rigorous and relevant lesson plans for teachers in all curriculum areas.

To engage students in rigorous and relevant lessons, all Chesterfield teachers must first understand the two dimensions of the framework — rigor and relevance — as defined by the International Center for Leadership in Education:

- Rigor refers to academic rigor — learning in which students demonstrate a comprehensive, in-depth mastery of challenging tasks to develop cognitive skills through reflective thought, analysis, problem-solving, evaluation or creativity. Rigorous learning can occur at any school grade and in any subject.
- Relevance refers to learning in which students apply core knowledge, concepts or skills to solve real-world problems. Relevant learning is interdisciplinary and contextual. Student work can range from routine to complex at any school grade and in any subject. Relevant learning is created, for example, through authentic problems or tasks, simulation, service learning, connecting concepts to current issues and teaching others.

The rigor/relevance framework is a tool developed for teachers to design engaging curriculum, plan for instruction and develop authentic assessments. The rigor/relevance framework is based on the two dimensions of rigor/critical thinking (vertical dimension) and relevance (horizontal dimension):



**Application Model**

The vertical dimension represents the knowledge taxonomy, a continuum based on Bloom's taxonomy, which describes the increasingly complex ways in which students think:

- Level 1: knowledge or awareness
- Level 2: comprehension
- Level 3: application
- Level 4: analysis
- Level 5: synthesis
- Level 6: evaluation

The low end involves acquiring knowledge and being able to recall or locate basic knowledge. The high end labels the more complex ways in which individuals use knowledge, such as taking several pieces of knowledge and combining them in both logical and creative ways.

The horizontal continuum, known as the application model, is one of action. The five levels describe putting knowledge to use. While the low end is knowledge acquired for its own sake, the high end signifies using that knowledge to solve complex, relevant, real-world problems and to create unique projects, designs and other works for use in real-world situations.

The rigor/relevance framework defined by the International Center for Leadership in Education has four quadrants. Each is labeled with a term that characterizes the learning or student performance at that level:

- **Quadrant A:** When instruction and expected student learning is in quadrant A, the focus is on teacher work. Teachers expend energy to create and assess learning activities — providing lesson content, creating worksheets and grading student work. In this scenario, the student is a passive learner. Students gather and store bits of information and are primarily expected to remember or understand this acquired knowledge.
- **Quadrant B:** When instruction and expected learning move to quadrant B, the emphasis is on the student doing real-world work. This work involves more real-world tasks than quadrant A and generally takes more time for students to complete. Students use acquired knowledge to solve problems, design solutions and complete work. The highest level of application is to apply appropriate knowledge to new and unpredictable situations.
- **Quadrant C:** When instruction and expected learning falls in quadrant C, the student is required to think in complex ways — to analyze, compare, create and evaluate. Students extend and refine their knowledge so that they can use that knowledge automatically and routinely to analyze and solve problems and create solutions.
- **Quadrant D:** Learning in quadrant D is demanding and requires the student to think and work. Roles have shifted from teacher-centered instruction in quadrant A to student-centered learning. Quadrant D requires that students understand the standards being taught but, equally important, also requires that they understand and conceptualize relevant applications for the content being covered. Students have the competence to think in complex ways and apply knowledge and skills that they have acquired. Even when confronted with perplexing unknowns, students are able to use extensive knowledge and skills to create solutions and take action that further develops their skills and knowledge.

Instruction in highly successful schools enables students to know what to do when they don't know what to do. To gain that competence, students need to acquire depth of knowledge and a rich set of skills, then be taught how to apply their skills/knowledge to unpredictable situations in the world beyond school. All teachers can use the rigor/relevance framework when planning and designing instruction. Teachers are encouraged to use these best practices to engage students in more rigorous and relevant instruction and engage students in quadrant D learning:

- Brainstorming stimulates thinking and allows students to generate vast amounts of information, then sort that information in an engaging learning process.
- Community service involves learning opportunities in which students do unpaid work that adds value to the community.
- Compare-and-contrast learning activities require analysis to identify similarities and differences.
- Cooperative learning places students in structured groups to solve problems by working cooperatively.
- Creative arts are artistic products or performances that can also be used to develop skills in other curriculum areas.
- Demonstration involves direct observation of physical tasks, such as the manipulation of materials and objects.
- Games are exciting, structured activities that engage students in individual or group competition to demonstrate knowledge or complete an academic task.
- Group discussion is any type of verbal dialogue among students used to explore ideas related to an instructional topic.
- Inquiry engages students in posing questions around an intriguing investigation, making observations and discussing them.
- Instructional technology means a multimedia computer application that provides a choice of learning paths and enables tailoring of programs to student questions or interests.
- Internship is a formal placement in an employment situation for additional learning while the student is still in school.
- Literature is reading to discover use of language, acquire information about people, history, cultures and society and develop skills of analysis, inquiry, logic and recall.
- Note-taking/graphic organizers involve organizing logical notes for reference and using graphics, diagrams and symbols to represent information.
- Presentations/exhibitions are oral presentations by students requiring them to organize ideas and express them in their own words.
- Problem-based learning introduces concepts through use of problem-solving skills on a real problem or investigation.
- Project design requires students to integrate their skills and knowledge to create their own literary, technological or artistic work, as individuals or in a group.
- Research means students locate and retrieve information from several sources, such as library references, textbooks, other individuals and electronic databases via the Internet.

- Simulation/role playing replicates the way skill or knowledge is used outside school, ranging from role playing to computer-generated reality.
- Socratic seminar combines the elements of teacher questions, inquiry and discussion around key topics, with the teacher asking probing questions as needed.
- Teacher questions stimulate significant student thinking in response to thoughtful queries about connections with new information.
- Writing makes students organize their knowledge and reinforces concepts in any form from a one-paragraph test question response to a multipage research report.

Although each strategy is described separately, the strategies are rarely used independently. When creating instructional units or lessons, teachers may select several strategies. Quadrant A, B, C and D lessons have been developed to support the Standards of Learning and can be found throughout the school system's curriculum frameworks available here: [curriculum frameworks](#).

### Relationships

Students do their best work when they feel that teachers have an interest in them or care about their future. All of the characteristics that we know about building relationships are essential to contributing to highly engaged, rigorous and relevant instruction. Each student brings a unique set of characteristics to the classroom: different background knowledge, a unique learning style, a variety of interests and varied parental support and expectations. Students show increased effort in classroom activities when teachers take an interest in students as individuals, get to know them by name and talk with them not only in the classroom but also during other activities in the school.

When students fail in the classroom, it is often the lack of personalizing learning that is the source of failure. There are many differentiated practices and strategies that contribute to overall personalization. Teachers can create more engaging classrooms by getting to know their students and using examples during instruction that relate to students' backgrounds, cultures and experiences. As learning becomes more personalized, students will make connections to the learning and teachers will become facilitators in supporting learning.

The core values of respect, responsibility, honesty and accountability offer a framework for building the strong positive relationships that are vital to the education process. Students are more likely to make a personal commitment to engage in rigorous learning when they know teachers, administrators, parents and other students care about how well they do. Students are willing to continue making the investment when they are encouraged, supported and assisted. Building good relationships complements rigor and relevance. For students to engage fully in challenging learning, they must have increased levels of support from the people around them. (Jones, 2008)

Printed with permission from the International Center for Leadership in Education

### Guiding Principle: Community of Learners

Effective teaching is the most essential factor in student learning, and effective leaders support learning.

#### General Expectations

Chesterfield County Public Schools is a community of learners committed to providing a sound and challenging learning environment for all employees and students,

regardless of sex, race, color, age, religion, disability, national origin or socioeconomic status. A community of learners requires data analysis, professional learning communities built around the needs indicated by the data analysis, professional growth and performance plans to support the needs of adult learners, professional development designed to support the process, leadership development and cultural competence to ensure that everyone has a voice.

#### Data Analysis

A community of learners begins by thoroughly analyzing student achievement data broken into subgroups. For schools, in addition to looking at tests that indicate how well students know the material and comparing student scores, this involves teacher-made tests, diagnostic assessments, assignments, portfolios, grade retention, high school completion, reports of disciplinary actions, enrollment in advanced courses, performance tasks, participation in postsecondary education and other evidence of student learning. Data on individual tests can be analyzed to learn how far students advanced in one year as well as particular strengths and weaknesses associated with the focus of the test. These data are typically evaluated to show differences in learning among subgroups of students. The analysis of student achievement data helps monitor progress for individuals, subgroups, schools and the school division. The goal is to continuously improve student achievement. Further analysis of student achievement results — strengths and weaknesses — helps determine adult learning priorities.

Data analysis in schools and departments involves evaluating information that is related to actions, goals and strategies and the extent to which schools and departments have successfully completed annual goals and expectations. Needs identified from the data analysis help determine professional growth goals, professional learning community strategies and professional development needs.

#### Professional Learning Communities

Professional learning communities are built around the needs identified through data analysis and the goals of schools, departments and the school division. Small groups of educators, school system employees and community members work together in professional learning communities to improve teaching and learning or to meet the goals and strategies of individual departments, schools or the school system.

In professional learning communities, individuals learn in supportive, reflective communities of colleagues. The learning is deeper, more complex and more meaningful because it is based on the actual results and actions of the participants. Learning is concrete and specific, rather than abstract and theoretical. In professional learning communities, participants are engaged in job-embedded, results-driven, standards-based learning built on a shared vision of educational excellence and high achievement.

#### Professional Growth and Performance Plans

Professional Growth and Performance Plans form the foundation of a system to annually evaluate employees at every level. The plans include professional growth and performance evaluation, providing an opportunity for employees to self-evaluate and make suggestions for their own professional development. The plan is driven by departmental goals, individual needs and student learning needs. There are four Professional Growth and Performance Plan formats:

- The Professional Growth and Performance Plan for Teachers (PGPP-T) outlines a process that acknowledges and accepts developmental differences among teachers, encourages positive change and supports improving teaching and learning. The professional growth component outlines an annual process for all teachers and is based on student academic progress, the school improvement plan, a reflection on performance standards and their indicators and the teacher's previous performance evaluation results. The performance evaluation component consists of a process for examining teacher performance according to seven standards.
- The Professional Growth and Performance Plan for Administrators (PGPP-A) meets mandates established by the Virginia legislature in the 1999 Educational Accountability and Quality Enhancement Act. The Professional Growth and Performance Plan is an annual process that provides structure for performance accountability and professional growth. The PGPP-A provides options for professional growth for administrators in different stages of experience or performance and promotes collaboration between administrators and their supervisors. It provides targeted assistance and support for administrators who need improvement.
- The Professional Growth and Performance Plan for Classified Employees (PGPP-C) provides an annual structure for professional growth and performance accountability. The PGPP-C differentiates needs based on experience and performance. The purpose is to establish a comprehensive system for developing, evaluating, retaining and recognizing high-quality classified staff members in all schools and offices.
- The Professional Growth and Performance Plan for Instructional Support Providers (PGPP-I) process links providers' professional growth to their annual performance evaluation. Moreover, the process acknowledges that the employees need additional education and varied levels of supervision to improve student services. Key features guide instructional support providers in analyzing their performance and refining their practice through targeted professional development goals and opportunities.

Information about each Professional Growth and Performance Plan is available here: [PGPPs](#).

#### Professional Development

Professional development provides education and professional growth opportunities to enhance learning at all levels for employees of Chesterfield County Public Schools with the ultimate goal of improving student learning. Professional development is delivered online, through individual courses and workshops from all departments, through the Superintendent's Learning Series, at CITE, internally in schools and departments and through numerous other venues during the school year. Professional development provides a comprehensive, sustained and intensive approach to improving the knowledge and effectiveness of education professionals and all school system employees. Professional development fosters collective responsibility for improved performance by students, schools and departments. Professional development comprises learning that is

- aligned with rigorous state academic achievement standards as well as related local educational agency and school improvement goals

- conducted among educators at the school and central office level and facilitated by well-prepared experts, educators, professional development coaches, mentors, department leaders or teacher leaders
- delivered on a regular basis among established teams of teachers, principals or school system employees that engage in a continuous cycle of improvement

National standards for professional development can be seen here: [Standards](#).

#### Leadership Development

Leadership development is extremely important if Chesterfield County Public Schools is to remain on the cutting edge in education. School leaders must develop, communicate and build momentum for clearly defined beliefs about teaching and learning. All members of the school and community must share ownership in the educational process.

Effective leadership provides adequate direction and support to help schools achieve goals that promote student success. School leaders must be

- flexible to adapt to the school environment
- able to analyze the leadership characteristics of their schools
- knowledgeable about where a school community is and where it needs to be
- able to develop a vision about the future needs of students and deliver a coherent message so stakeholders can speak the same language about leadership in the school
- able to work with people in a manner that ignites their passions, talents and desire to attain that shared vision

Chesterfield County Public Schools supports leadership development through high-quality professional development programs for all employees. Breakfast programs, book studies, mentorships and a variety of ongoing professional development opportunities are provided to all employees to expand and develop leadership potential. Partnerships with local universities and the guidance of the K12 Advisory Committee for Excellence in Education further support leadership development.

#### Cultural Competence

Keeping the needs of all employees and students in focus, professional development incorporates the school system's cultural competency model. Through their attitudes and behaviors, employees are expected to establish environments that are emotionally and physically safe and that communicate high expectations for academic achievement and quality relationships. Professional development related to these issues is particularly important when working with students or employees from a wide variety of backgrounds.

High-quality professional development about cultural competency provides employees with opportunities to understand their attitudes regarding race, class and culture and how those attitudes affect their daily practices and expectations for student and employee learning and behavior. In addition, employees learn about the cultural backgrounds of students and colleagues to develop an appreciation for the benefits of diversity in classrooms, schools and departments. Professional development equips all employees with the knowledge and skills to establish safe and orderly learning

environments characterized by mutual respect in which academic achievement and psychosocial development will occur.

## Guiding Principle: Quality Service and Operations

Excellence requires planning and change.

### General Expectations

Essential to actualizing any organization's vision and mission is the overarching dynamic that defines how the work is accomplished. Chesterfield County Public Schools is committed to providing the highest-quality programs and services by empowering all staff members to incorporate and engage in quality management principles and practices while efficiently managing resources.

Chesterfield County Public Schools efficiently and effectively exceeds minimum compliance standards, has a pervasive commitment to the highest-quality service and maintains a culture of honesty and integrity. Along with the school system's commitment to continuous improvement, these principles create, support and maintain an environment that is emotionally and physically safe and that communicates high expectations for academic achievement and quality relationships.

No matter what their title or job description is, employees of Chesterfield County Public Schools are expected to provide the highest-quality service effectively and efficiently.

### Compliance

Compliance is a basic element of public education. Committed to the highest-quality service, Chesterfield County Public Schools continually exceeds basic compliance standards. The school system conforms to Chesterfield County School Board policies, Virginia Department of Education regulations and county, state and federal laws and regulations.

It is the responsibility of every employee of Chesterfield County Public Schools to make sure their work complies with applicable laws, regulations and policies.

### Quality

Chesterfield County Public Schools expects no less than the best from students and from employees. The days of "that's how we've always done it" are over, replaced by a spirit of innovation and a determination to lead the way into the future. School system employees are expected to model for our students academic achievement, core values and technology and 21st-century skills.

The school system continuously evaluates major goals and objectives and aligns appropriate resources on an annual basis by using proactive, flexible strategic planning and budgetary processes.

Engaging and communicating with all stakeholders — within and without Chesterfield County Public Schools — is a vital part of high-quality service and operations, strengthening policy, planning and development. The school system's community relations program, which seeks to build a productive relationship with the community, includes information sharing and communication plus opportunities for community input and engagement. That includes opportunities for internal and external stakeholders to offer ideas during the budget process, comprehensive plan development and other school system initiatives.

Creating an organizational culture driven by continuous improvement requires consistent application and reinforcement by workforce performance systems that provide development support. Professional Growth and Performance Plans are used annually to evaluate all employees. Pairing professional growth with performance evaluation, the plans provide an opportunity for employees to self-evaluate and make suggestions for their own professional development.

Culture of Respect, Responsibility, Honesty and Accountability

Quality service begins with the core values of respect, responsibility, honesty and accountability. Since 1999, Chesterfield County Public Schools has embraced these core values in classrooms and offices.

It is easy to see core values in action. Visit any school on any day to observe students bringing in food bank donations, mentoring younger children and studying hard. Visit any school on any day to see teachers making sure every child achieves academically, staff members going the extra mile and administrators and parents collaborating to solve problems. The entire school system demonstrates accountability by providing a quality education to the children of Chesterfield County and by using tax dollars effectively and efficiently.

## Guiding Principle: Community Investment

Our citizens, parents, students and employees are partners in sustaining competence and investing in excellence.

General Expectations

Through partnerships with students, families and citizens, the school system's mission is to emphasize and support high levels of achievement through a global education for all with options and opportunities to meet individual students' diverse needs and interests. The School Board counts as its partners not only students, parents and families but also PTAs, the faith community, businesses, other groups, such as the Chesterfield Public Education Foundation, and Chesterfield residents of all ages.

Chesterfield County Public Schools promotes the active engagement of the community not only to nurture a better understanding of the goals and attributes of public education but also to create effective partnerships to benefit our students. The School Board is committed to establishing and sustaining a productive, mutually beneficial relationship with the community through a community relations program. The cornerstones of community relations, both at the division and school levels, are ongoing internal and external information sharing and communication, opportunities for community input and engagement, partnerships and volunteerism. The superintendent or the superintendent's designee is responsible for carrying out the division's community relations program. Principals are responsible for carrying out community relations efforts for their schools.

Every employee is a representative of Chesterfield County Public Schools. Community investment is built on hundreds of daily interactions between employees and parents or other community members, so it is the daily responsibility of every employee to be a productive ambassador for Chesterfield County Public Schools.

### Information Sharing and Communication

All employees are expected to provide accurate, regular, timely and consistent messages and information that build public support and help residents make informed decisions about public education in Chesterfield County. Also, division-level employees are expected to release accurate and timely information so that residents, staff members and students understand School Board actions, policies and related issues.

Among the ways that information will be distributed are through employee and community newsletters, the school system's website, social media, blogs, publication of "mythbusters" and responses to frequently asked questions, ParentLink, School Board and superintendent's reports at televised School Board meetings, news releases, news conferences, employee orientations, regular communication to County Council of PTAs/PTSAs and local PTAs and email accounts (to the School Board and school system) that allow community members and staff members to ask questions and comment on Chesterfield County Public Schools matters, key communicators network, ACTS meetings, graduation ceremonies, superintendent's presentations to school faculties, superintendent's TV spots and the PR network.

### Opportunities for Community Input and Engagement

Employees at the division and school levels are expected to provide opportunities for two-way communication and public engagement seeking citizen input during the budget process, comprehensive plan development and other vital initiatives. Division-level employees and School Board members are also expected to be visible in schools, in the community and at community meetings and events. Principals are expected to be visible in their communities. This includes attending or speaking at community, civic, business, division or school functions; serving as a formal or informal liaison to various groups such as the Chesterfield Public Education Foundation, County Council of PTAs/PTSAs, Communities In Schools, regional governor's schools and Chesterfield Business Council; hosting informational meetings for faith leaders, business leaders and others; and attending meetings with members of the Chesterfield County Board of Supervisors.

The school system's methods of communicating and seeking citizen input include a speakers bureau, serving on boards of community organizations, holding School Board public engagement sessions, involving community members and staff members on various advisory committees established by the School Board, involving community members and staff members in the development of the Design for Excellence 2020, conducting bus tours of Chesterfield schools for senior citizens, real estate agents and others and posting proposed School Board policies on the school system's website.

### Partnerships

Employees are expected to promote educational partnerships for schools and for the entire school system. An educational partnership is a mutually beneficial, cooperative relationship in which the partners share values, objectives and human or financial resources to enhance student learning. Partners may include students, parents/guardians, families, businesses, community organizations, the faith community and other citizens.

According to School Board policy, certain partnerships must be in writing. In addition, School Board policy limits the formal partnerships that principals may approve.

Because the involvement of parents/guardians and families is vital to student achievement, the School Board expects schools to provide a welcoming and supportive climate that facilitates parent/guardian involvement as volunteers, audiences, joint

problem-solvers and supporters of their students' learning. The School Board also endorses the voluntary involvement of the faith community in education-related activities such as mentoring, tutoring, crisis counseling, student and staff recognition and helping communicate school system priorities to the community.

The School Board desires and encourages the involvement of businesses and other community groups in schools. This involvement enriches educational experiences for students, provides professional development for staff members and builds greater understanding between the school system and the broader community.

#### Volunteerism

The School Board values and appreciates parents and community members who volunteer their time, talent and expertise to Chesterfield County Public Schools and its students and staff members. Citizens are encouraged to take advantage of opportunities in schools to share their interests and experiences with students. Volunteers allow instructional staff members to spend more time with students, show students the relevance of the curriculum to real life and help individual students improve their academic skills. The School Board encourages parents and other community members to volunteer in schools and supports the recognition of volunteers by schools and the division.

The School Board encourages local citizens to attend school events that are open to the public. Also, the School Board provides community members access to school facilities for recreation and learning opportunities.

Employees are expected to promote volunteerism in schools and throughout the division. This includes enlisting the assistance of supportive stakeholders to help schools through donations of time, talents and resources.

The School Board desires that all students develop a strong sense of personal and social responsibility and that Chesterfield County students be perceived as a resource to the community. The School Board encourages students, with family support, to volunteer on weekends and after school. The School Board supports student engagement in school-sponsored community service activities and in school-sponsored service learning, which adds real-life perspective to classroom studies.

### Guiding Principle: Safe, Supportive and Nurturing Learning Environments

Trusting relationships and our core values — respect, responsibility, honesty and accountability — foster learning.

#### General Expectations

Learning is the core business of Chesterfield County Public Schools, but children cannot learn effectively if they do not feel safe, so providing safe, supportive and nurturing learning environments for students and staff members is a top priority. Although problems can sometimes occur, Chesterfield schools are safe and students learn every day in excellent academic environments.

#### Safe

Collaborating with local and state health, safety and emergency personnel, Chesterfield County Public Schools takes a proactive approach to security. The school system's

security coordinator oversees efforts, but everyone has a responsibility to keep schools safe.

Every school and the school division have emergency response plans, which include strategies to prevent problems and actions to take if there is an emergency. Emergency response plans are updated each year.

Prevention efforts include security cameras, monitoring school entrances and computers in every school that scan visitor IDs and check names against an online sex offender registry.

Each school has a crisis management team, trained to National Incident Management System standards. High schools and middle schools have school resource officers who are members of the Chesterfield County Police Department trained to work in a school environment. Communication is an important part of safety, and Chesterfield County Public Schools uses ParentLink to quickly communicate via phone and email with parents.

Safety efforts also include keeping schools clean and free of germs, making sure food is prepared safely and educating students about staying safe online.

#### Supportive

Students arrive at school with a variety of experiences from diverse backgrounds. Schools simultaneously prepare students for the world and offer a refuge from harsher realities.

A supportive climate grows from positive relationships among students, teachers, staff members, parents and volunteers. The core values of respect, responsibility, honesty and accountability offer a framework for building positive relationships. Anti-bullying programs and kindness activities also help create environments where students and employees feel safe and supported.

#### Nurturing

Students stay committed to their education when they believe that teachers or other school staff members are interested in them and their future, so it is vital for every student to feel connected to at least one adult at school.

With high expectations for every student, Chesterfield County Public Schools offers instruction to engage multiple learning styles, including nontraditional alternatives for students for whom traditional programs have not been successful; exceptional education and gifted instruction; high school specialty centers and governor's schools that allow students to deeply explore interests and talents; online instruction; and classes that carry college credit.

Chesterfield schools are implementing Effective Schoolwide Discipline, a comprehensive initiative to improve student behavior using frequent positive feedback, consistent support and student-centered problem-solving.

The school system serves healthy breakfasts and lunches and encourages students, staff members and families to choose healthy lifestyles.

New buildings are energy efficient, and older buildings are being updated to become more efficient. Schools support recycling and conservation efforts.