



NEWS RELEASE

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Richmond Public Schools Set to Change Safety and Security Protocol Following John Marshall Incident

In light of today's incident at John Marshall High School where a weapon was discovered during an altercation this morning involving two students, Richmond Public Schools will be changing its safety and security procedures during inclement weather at the secondary level.

While the district is still investigating the details surrounding today's altercation, specifically how the weapon came to be on school grounds, Richmond Public Schools will be reviewing its safety and security procedures to determine appropriate actions that will ensure the safety and security of students and staff, while maintaining an optimal environment for instruction.

Currently, the district's standard procedure during inclement weather is to bring students into the school to minimize their exposure to extreme weather conditions and then conduct random classroom searches. During normal weather conditions, students go through metal detectors as they enter the building.

"I am extremely proud of the actions of our John Marshall staff and students, safety and security personnel, and the Richmond Police Department. Today's incident was quickly diffused without incident, and normal school operations were able to proceed with efficiency," said Dr. Yvonne Brandon, Superintendent, Richmond Public Schools. "However, today's incident has highlighted the need for expeditious changes in our safety and security procedures during inclement weather at the secondary level. There are some areas we can refine to minimize the possibility of another weapon entering any of our buildings. We will be conducting a comprehensive review district-wide to determine ways we can maintain the safety of our students while protecting the integrity of class time and decreasing our students' exposure to extreme weather conditions."

"In the face of recent events that have occurred both nationally and locally, the safety and security of our students and staff cannot be overemphasized. While we were fortunate that no serious injuries occurred today, there are definitely some areas of

concern with our procedures that have to be addressed. As we continue to modify the 2013-14 school budget, now is the time for the district to look at our safety and security needs to see if additional funding is required to ensure the continued well-being of our students and staff,” said Jeffrey Bourne, Chairman, Richmond City School Board.

Bourne would like for the Board to review the safety and security needs assessment as early as the next regularly scheduled Board meeting.

In addition, John Marshall will hold a parental meeting on Tuesday, February 26 at 6:30 p.m. to discuss today’s incident, the importance of parental engagement, as well as obtain suggestions and feedback on safety and security procedures going forward.

“I commend the staff and students here at John Marshall as we worked together to get back to the business of learning as quickly as possible. Our staff followed proper procedures and our students handled themselves appropriately,” said Beverly Britt, Principal, John Marshall High School. “We look forward to having a discussion with our parents on ways we can work together to prevent such incidents from happening again.”

The two students involved in this morning’s altercation have been taken into police custody and are facing several charges. Both students will be appropriately disciplined pending a panel review.

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