

# Parent Handbook



**2011 - 2012**

**RIVERSIDE PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
DISTRICT 96  
RIVERSIDE, ILLINOIS**

**SCHOOL DISTRICT 96  
PARENT HANDBOOK**

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DISTRICT INFORMATION

**Superintendent’s Message**

Dear Parents,

We are extremely pleased that your child will be with us this year. Please read carefully the following guidelines and policies found in this handbook. Your awareness of the contents will help develop a common understanding of expectations and will help ensure the best possible educational experience for your child.

As stated in our mission, we believe in providing “a challenging education” for each student. We will accomplish this mission by promoting “academic excellence,” encouraging “creativity,” and developing “critical thinking.” Also, we will develop a cooperative understanding and appreciation for one another by developing respect among the child, the teacher and parent.

Communication between parents and the school is very important for the quality of education for your child and for the tradition of excellence in our district. Please feel free to discuss any concerns regarding your child with us. In order for us to successfully address any concerns, please initially discuss the matter with your child’s teacher, then with the principal and finally with the Superintendent. Thank you for significantly contributing toward our goal of effective communication between home and school.

We look forward to a remarkable educational experience this year.

Sincerely,

Jonathan E. Lamberson, Ph.D.

Superintendent

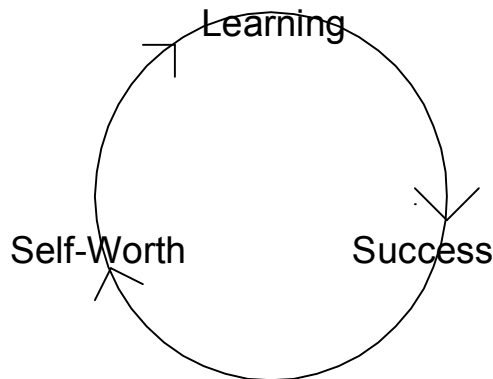
## Mission Statement

The mission of the District 96 Public Schools is to provide for each student a challenging education which promotes academic excellence, encourages creativity, develops critical thinking, and fosters respect for self, community, and the environment.

## Statement of Beliefs And Values

The following statements express the belief of the District 96 Community that education is the shared responsibility of students, families, schools, and community and that:

- every participant in the school community has rights, deserves respect, and shares accountability for achieving the academic and social goals of the school district while maintaining its financial integrity.
- every student should become a lifelong learner capable of functioning in an ever-changing technological multicultural world.
- every student is unique and should be offered challenging programs adapted to meet diverse physical, intellectual, social, and emotional needs.
- every student achieves best in a safe and nurturing environment.
- every student should be provided with opportunities to attain his or her full potential.



## School District Organization

The Riverside Public Schools, District 96 is a public, elementary school district established under the laws of the State of Illinois. The district is responsible for the education of all students who wish to attend a public school and who reside in Riverside, or those parts of North Riverside, Brookfield, Lyons and Riverside Lawn lying within the district.

The first public school in Riverside opened in 1871, with the first school building being constructed in 1874. By 1879, enrollment in the school had grown to 178 students. A new, larger school had to be constructed, leading to the building of a new school on Woodside Road, the site of the present Central School/Hauser Junior High complex.

Over the years, five school buildings were constructed in District 96. Hollywood School was formed in 1918 and located in the Community House. The present Hollywood School facility was built in 1929, with a contemporary addition put on in 1953. A. F. Ames Elementary School was erected in 1923 and named after the district's first superintendent. Additions were made to the Ames building in 1928 and 1968. An Intermediate School (the original name for the junior high) was built in 1929 and opened in 1930. L. J. Hauser Junior High received its current name in 1963 when Dr. Hauser, the district's second superintendent, retired. The Central/Hauser complex received major additions in 1953 and 1968 due to enrollment changes, safety requirements, and program needs. The last school building constructed in the district was Blythe Park, which was built in 1949.

At the present time, there are four elementary schools in District 96 which house students in grades K-5; A. F. Ames, Blythe Park, Central and Hollywood.

Students from the four elementary schools attend Hauser Junior High School. The junior high houses students in grades six through eight. The junior high/middle school organization makes it possible to offer an enriched school program with instruction in such specialized areas as foreign language, drama, world percussion, electronic communication, art, and music. An extensive activity and athletic program compliments the students' academic experiences.

## School Boundaries

District 96 covers an area of approximately four square miles. It is bounded on the east by Harlem Avenue, on the south by 39th Street and Ogden Avenue, on the west by Salt Creek, and on the north by 22nd Street (Cermak Road). The district's northwest boundary is defined by First Avenue and 26th Street (west of First Avenue).

In May of 2002, the Board of Education made changes in the boundaries for the four elementary schools and approved a new, flexible boundary plan. The goal of the plan is to keep elementary school class sizes small and to make optimal use of school facilities. Copies of the neighborhood school boundaries and the flexible boundary plan are available in each school office.

## ADMISSION AND ATTENDANCE INFORMATION

### Residency

A student must be a valid resident of the school district and provide required proofs of residency before the student will be enrolled. Residency is defined as the district wherein the parent or legal guardian resides. The district does accept students from other areas for placement in special education classes through the La Grange Area Department of Special Education and the DuPage/West Cook Regional Special Education Association. Different standards may apply to students who experience homelessness. Questions about residency and/or homelessness should be referred to the Superintendent.

### Admission of Pupils

A certified birth certificate is required for each child entering District 96 for the first time. This applies to grades K through 8. Transfer students will be expected to produce other pertinent records from the previous school.

A child must be five years of age on or before September 1st of the year in which the child is to be enrolled in kindergarten. According to Board Policy, children who attain the age of five after September 1 would be eligible to attend kindergarten the next year.

### School Hours

KINDERGARTEN	8:25 a.m. - 11:20 a.m. <b>or</b> 12:10 p.m. - 3:05 p.m. (8:20 a.m. - 11:15 a.m.)*
GRADES 1 - 5	8:25 a.m. - 3:05 p.m. (8:20 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.)*
GRADES 6 - 8	8:45 a.m. - 3:23 p.m.

\*Hollywood School Hours

### Emergency Closing of Schools

If a weather emergency or other type of emergency requires the closing of any school, PTA room mothers will be notified and asked to call the students' homes. This information will be broadcast over several Chicago radio and TV stations. Among the radio and TV stations that will be given this information are:

AM STATIONS	FM STATIONS	TV STATIONS
WMAQ - 670	WLS - 94.7	WMAQ - Ch. 5
WGN - 720	WBBM - B96	WGN - Ch. 9
WBBM - 780		FOX - Ch. 32
WLS - 890		

### Truancy

When a child enrolled in public school is absent from school, the building administrator has the responsibility to determine whether the child is truant. If such determination is made, the administrator shall follow the compulsory attendance guidelines developed by the Suburban Cook County Regional Office of Education and may impose discipline for truancy.

## Absences, Attendance and Punctuality

REGULAR ATTENDANCE IS ESSENTIAL TO GOOD SCHOLARSHIP AND GOOD ADJUSTMENT IN SCHOOL. PARENTS ARE ASKED TO SEE THAT CHILDREN ATTEND SCHOOL REGULARLY EXCEPT IN CASES OF ILLNESS OR SOME OTHER DISABILITY.

The school district's policy regarding student's absence is as follows:

1. If a student expects to be absent from school in the morning or all day, parents are asked to call the school office between 8:00 and 10:00 a.m. If a student expects to be absent from school in the afternoon only, parents are asked to call the school office between 12:30 and 1:00 p.m.
2. If no call is received by 10:00 a.m. or 1:00 p.m., the school office will call the parents of an absent child.
3. It is necessary for the school to have a current phone number where parents can be contacted at all times.
4. If no phone contact is made for an absence, the student must have a note from the parents when the student returns to school.
5. Tardiness will be either "excused" or "unexcused".
6. Tardiness will be considered "excused" for valid reasons if a parent calls the principal's office or the student brings a note from a parent.
7. Tardiness will be "unexcused" without parent contact and a valid reason. At the junior high level, the student may have to make up time after school by serving a detention (see School Discipline Code).

## SCHOOL ACCESS, SECURITY, AND VISITATION INFORMATION

### School Safety

Student safety is a high priority. District 96 is safety conscious and safety education is included in the curriculum. Various safety activities such as fire drills, disaster drills and bus evacuation drills are routinely scheduled. The school district has a comprehensive Crisis Plan which will be activated in the event of a tragedy or disaster.

### Information Regarding Registered Sex Offenders

Information regarding registered sex offenders can be accessed on the Illinois State Police Website [www.isp.state.il.us/sor/](http://www.isp.state.il.us/sor/) and the National Sex Offender Public Website [www.nsopw.gov/core/conditions.aspx](http://www.nsopw.gov/core/conditions.aspx) .

### Security System

Entrances to all schools and the district office in District 96 will be locked during school hours (see page 6). Parents and other persons who wish to enter the school during school hours will need to go to the main entrance and "buzz" the office. A two-way, audio-video security system has been installed at each main entrance and is connected to the school office. Permission to enter the school will be given by school personnel.

All visitors are required to report to the school office immediately upon being admitted. The security system was installed as a precautionary measure to give school officials greater control over access to the building. In some cases, it may take a few moments for school personnel to respond to your "buzz." Your patience and cooperation will be appreciated.

### **Visits by Parents**

Parents are encouraged to visit classes as observers. Appointments for such visits are a courtesy to the teacher and will result in less disruption of the educational program. If a parent wishes to visit the classroom, an appointment must be made through the Principal's office. Conferences will be held outside of school hours or during the teacher's conference and/or preparation period.

Persons living outside the District, other than parents or guardians, or who are not of school age are not permitted to visit classes without specific permission of the Principal, in advance.

All visitors are expected to check in at the school office before proceeding to their destination.

### **Messages to Students**

Telephone or personal messages will be forwarded to students only in emergency situations. Contact the school office in cases of emergency.

### **Handicapped Accessibility**

Each District 96 school provides accessibility for the handicapped public. The Hauser/Central building is considered one building by approval of the Cook County Regional Superintendent of Schools. As a result, Central School accessibility may be arranged at the Hauser Junior High School by contacting the Central School office by telephone.

## **PUPIL PERSONNEL AND HEALTH INFORMATION**

### **School Discipline**

Pursuant to state law, a School Discipline Policy must be prepared by each school district and distributed to parents and students fifteen (15) days after the start of each school year.

Additional copies of the District 96 Discipline Policy may be obtained from the office of the principal at each school.

The Board of Education by policy does not permit corporal punishment of students in the school.

The teacher has the right and responsibility to retain order in the classroom.

In all disciplinary related incidents, reasonable due process will be exercised.

## **Student Records**

Schools are required to keep permanent and temporary student records.

Student permanent records are kept on file for all students who have attended the Riverside Public Schools. These records include such information as student's name, birth date, address, phone number, grades, parents' names, and attendance records. This record remains with the Riverside Public Schools and is kept permanently. The Superintendent of Schools is the custodian of permanent records.

Student temporary records contain such information as student's name, address, phone number, birth date, names of parents, education, place of employment, name and phone number of family doctor, standardized test scores, grades, honors and awards received, participation in extracurricular activities, disciplinary information, special education files, and other information of clear relevance to the education of the student.

If a student transfers or attends a school other than School District 96 or 208, the Riverside Public Schools will forward to the new school the student's temporary records upon receipt of a written request from the receiving school and written permission from the parent.

Student temporary records are not retained beyond their period of usefulness to the student and the school. In no case are they retained longer than five (5) years after the student has transferred, graduated or otherwise permanently withdrawn from the school. Before any school student record is destroyed the parents will be given reasonable prior written notice.

Parents and/or eligible students have the right to inspect and copy information contained in the student's records (at a cost of no more than 35¢ per page), challenge the contents of the record, and inspect and challenge information to be transferred to another school district.

Except where legally specified otherwise, all releases of information require the prior written consent of the parent or eligible student. Additional information, including procedures for challenging the contents of school records, the names of persons/agencies/organizations who may have access to student records with parent consent, and procedures for the school's review and/or destruction of student records, may be obtained from school principals.

### **Bicycle Rules**

The rules for the proper use of bicycles are contained in village ordinances. All bicycles must be registered at the Village Hall in your village. A copy of the bicycle ordinance will be given to you when your bicycle is registered.

In general, the ordinances embody all of the regulations governing the use of automobiles in traffic. The two most important exceptions are that bicycles are to be ridden single file and only one person to a bicycle.

All bicycles left at school must be provided with good stands and locks.

Because of limited parking space at each school, children who live within easy walking distance should not ride bicycles to school. Bicycle riding by first and second grade children is discouraged.

## Health And Nursing Services

On the first day of student attendance of each school year, all students must have completed the health examination and immunization requirements for their grade level. Children not in compliance at the beginning of the school year may be excluded from school (Board Policy and Illinois Public Act 81-184).

### Health Examination

Every student shall present proof of a health examination by a licensed physician and of having received the immunizations against and screening for preventable communicable disease as required by the Illinois Department of Public Health rules:

- Upon entering Kindergarten
- Upon entering 6<sup>th</sup> grade; and
- Upon transferring into District 96 irrespective of grade.

Failure to comply with the above requirements by the beginning of the school year will result in the student's exclusion from school until the required health forms are presented to the district.

### Immunizations

If for medical reasons, one or more of the required immunizations must be given after the first day of school, then the students must present, by the first day of school, an immunization schedule and a statement of the medical reasons causing the delay. The schedule and statement of medical reasons must be signed by the physician, registered nurse or local health department responsible for administering the immunizations.

Immunization schedule will be monitored by District 96 School Authorities to ensure completion of the immunization schedule. If a child is delinquent for a scheduled immunization appointment, the child will no longer be in compliance with the law and will be excluded from school until the required health forms are presented to the District.

<u>Grade Level</u>	<u>Requirement</u>
K (or date of Initial entrance)	Physical, Dental and Vision Examination Diphtheria/Pertussis/Tetanus (Completed Series) Polio Vaccine (Completed Series) Measles/Mumps/Rubella (Completed Series According to Approved Date Schedule). Lead Poison Screening Assessment TB Skin Test Chicken Pox Vaccine (Varicella)
2 and 6	Dental Examination
6	Physical Examination Hepatitis B (Series of 3)

## Medical Objection

Exemptions may be made for valid medical or religious reasons. Any medical objection to an immunization must be made by a physician licensed to practice medicine in all its branches indicating what the medical condition is. The medical objection must also be endorsed and signed by the physician on the certificate of child examination and placed in the child's permanent health record.

If the physical condition of a child is such that any one or more of the immunizing agents should not be administered, the examining physician, advanced practice nurse, or physician assistant responsible for the performance of the health examination shall endorse that fact upon the health examination form. Exempting a child from the health examination does not exempt the child from participation in the program of physical education training provided in *School Code*.

### Religious Objection

Parents or legal guardians who object to health examinations or any part thereof, or to immunizations, on religious grounds shall not be required to submit their children or wards to the examinations or immunizations to which they so object if such parents or legal guardians present to the appropriate local school authority a signed statement of objection, detailing the grounds for the objection.

### Dental Examination

As of July 1, 2005, Illinois mandates that all children in grades kindergarten, second and six have an oral health examination performed by a licensed dentist.

### Eye Examination

Effective January 1, 2008, Illinois requires an eye examination for all children enrolling in Kindergarten. Eye examination is to be performed by a licensed optometrist or ophthalmologist. Proof of the eye examination should be presented to the school before October 15<sup>th</sup> of the school year. If not, the school may hold the child's report card.

### Vision and Hearing Screenings

Vision and hearing screening are required annually. Once a child begins school, vision screening is required at grades K, 2, and 8. The student is not required to undergo this vision screening if an optometrist or ophthalmologist has completed and signed a report form indicating that an examination has been administered within the previous 12 months and that evaluation is on the health record at school.

Hearing screening is required at grades K, 1, 2, and 3. Screening for both vision and hearing must be completed annually on all children in special education, new to the district, and teacher referrals. Parents may request vision and hearing screenings for any child at any time regardless of grade. Parents will be notified of results.

## **Athletic Participation**

State law and Board policy require that students participating in interscholastic activities shall be required to have an annual physical examination in order to participate in any interscholastic sports as a member of a team or group representing District 96. Written parental consent is required for student participation in interscholastic activities.

## **Sick Day Guidelines**

Consider keeping your child home if he or she:

- Has a fever 99 degrees or higher
- Has been vomiting
- Has symptoms that prevent him or her from participating in school such as:
  - ✓ Productive coughing, sneezing
  - ✓ Headache, body aches, earache
  - ✓ Sore throat

A minor sore throat is usually not a problem, but a severe sore throat could be strep throat even if there is no fever. Other symptoms of strep throat in children are headache and stomach upset. Contact your pediatrician, as your child needs a special test to determine if it is strep throat.

Keep your child home until his or her fever has been gone for 24 hours without medication. Returning to school too soon may slow the recovery process and expose others unnecessarily to illness.

If these symptoms appear while the child is in school, the parents will be called and asked to take the child home. If a child is absent 3 days or more due to an illness, a physician's note will be required to be turned into the school.

## **Head Lice**

Head Lice Guidelines: Students will be checked for head lice on an "as needed" basis. This includes children with symptoms of 'itchiness to scalp,' and those students who are in a classroom with a confirmed case of lice or nits. It shall be determined if the student identified with lice has any siblings in other grades so that those students are also checked and the entire class as well. If a parent is knowingly treating a case of lice that was not identified in school they should notify the school immediately so others in the class can be checked. Any student with confirmed lice or nits may not return to school until completely free of both. This must be confirmed by the school nurse before that child can return. Any student treated will automatically be rechecked in 7-10 days to establish if initial treatment was successful or if another treatment may be necessary.

## **Physical Education Procedures for Absences and Return**

A child may be excused from physical education class for one (1) day at the discretion of the teacher, principal, or school nurse if the child doesn't feel well.

A child may be excused from physical education class for one (1) or two (2) days with a dated note from a parent.

To be excused from physical education class for three (3) or more days, a dated note from a doctor is required. The note should specify the duration of absence and conditions of return (if any).

Students with casts, splints, or serious illnesses also will need a doctor's note of exclusion and a doctor's permission to return to physical education class.

## **Medication at School**

School District 96 discourages the dispensing of all but essential medications at school. All medications, both prescription and non-prescription, which are necessary to maintain the child in school and must be given during school hours shall be administered according to the following guidelines.

### **Prescription Medications:**

1. A written statement is required from the student's physician or licensed prescriber stating the necessity for the medication, the dosage, route, and time of administration.
2. A written request and permission from the parent/guardian to administer the medication as prescribed is also required.
3. Medications may be self-administered by a child with a physician's prescription, written parental authorization, and school nurse's approval and supervision. Forms are available from the school nurse.

### **Non-Prescription Medications:**

1. A written request and permission from the parent/guardian to administer the medication is required (i.e., Tylenol for pain due to Orthodontia).
2. If the medication is to be given for more than three (3) consecutive days, a written statement is required from the student's physician.
3. Cough drops will be permitted for up to three (3) days with a parent's note. The nurse or the classroom teacher will keep the cough drops. Coughs of more than a few days duration should be evaluated by a physician.

### **The following applies to all medications:**

1. All medication is to be brought to school in original containers appropriately labeled, with your child's name on it.
2. All medications shall be stored appropriately in a locked cabinet in the nurse's office.
3. It shall be the student's responsibility to report to the nurse or designated school personnel at prescribed medication times.
4. Unauthorized medication in any school shall be confiscated and may be reclaimed only by the parent.
5. District 96 retains the discretion to reject a request to administer medications deemed unnecessary or unsafe to be taken at school, such as vitamins, non-traditional therapies, drugs unapproved by the FDA, or medications causing extenuating side effects for the student.

The responsibility to obtain the physician's authorization lies with the parent and not with the school. Authorization forms are available in the school office. The school nurse is available to address any questions or concerns regarding the administration of medication at school

## **PARENT INFORMATION**

### **Parent-Teacher Association**

Each elementary school in District 96 has its own Parent-Teacher Association. The purpose of these organizations is to carry on constructive work for better parenthood, better homes, better schools, and better communities. All parents are invited to attend the regular meetings and to become members.

In the junior high school Parent-Teacher Association all parents or guardians of sixth, seventh, and eighth graders are considered members.

### **Collection Of Money For Gifts Or Other Purposes**

Money should never be collected by pupils for any purpose without first checking with the teacher and/or the building principal.

Parents are asked to cooperate with this policy by not arranging for collection of money for any purpose without the approval of the principal. While educators do not wish to discourage the generous impulses of children, the giving of gifts to teachers should be simple and spontaneous without any pressure from any source. Teachers cooperate with this policy by opening gifts in private and thanking children individually and privately.

### **School Fees**

District 96 charges an annual school fee to assist in the furnishing of textbooks and other materials. There is a standard fee established for each grade. The amount of the fee will be announced prior to the opening of the school year.

The fee may be waived for parents/guardians who are unable to pay. Requests for a fee waiver should be submitted in writing to the Superintendent. Verified income at or below federal free lunch program eligibility standards shall be used as the criterion for inability to pay. (Ref.: ILLINOIS SCHOOL CODE, Chapter 12, paragraph 10-20.3).

Waivers may also be granted to families experiencing extenuating circumstances such as a verifiable significant loss of income due to severe illness or injury or unusual expenses such as fire, flood or storm damage; or other similar emergency situations that may be decided on a case-by-case basis.

For students who enter or leave during the school year, school fee payments will be prorated on a trimester basis.

Extra fees may be assessed for other purposes during the school year, i.e., field trips, yearbooks, Junior High athletic participation as three examples.

Parents are responsible for paying for any lost or damaged District 96 materials such as textbooks, library books, magazines, etc. at replacement cost.

### **Free Lunch Program**

Under certain provisions of the Federal and Illinois State Free Lunch Program, children whose families have a gross income at or below levels indicated in the current guidelines are eligible for a free or reduced price lunch. Free lunch applications and current guidelines are available in the school district business office or through each building principal's office.

### **School Parties**

It is customary in District 96 Schools to limit parties during the school year to those that will not interfere with the educational program. Refreshments may be served.

Parents are asked not to send cake, cookies, toys or any type of treat on a child's birthday or on holidays throughout the school year. Although the desire to supply these treats may be motivated by a very commendable attitude on the part of the parents, they lead to many obvious difficulties should the practice become general and be repeated many times during the year.

Invitations to parties held outside of school may be distributed at school only if each child in the group has been invited.

### **Lost And Found**

A lost and found department is maintained in each building, but often articles and clothing are left unclaimed. For this reason, parents are requested to mark clothing and school equipment with nametapes or ink. Parents and children should check at school for lost articles.

### **Personal Property**

The school district does not assume nor provide insurance coverage for personal property. It is suggested that students do not bring expensive, personal items to school. Items such as musical instruments should be kept in a secure location.

## INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM INFORMATION

### The Instructional Program, Grades K - 8

This section of the Parent Handbook contains a brief summary of the course offerings which comprise the curriculum of the Riverside Public Schools from the kindergarten through eighth grade. These course offerings and related school activities provide a variety of experiences for the education of the student in school. It shall be the goal of this district to ensure equivalence among attendance centers in teachers, administrators, auxiliary personnel, curriculum materials and instructional supplies within reasonably identifiable differences which exist among academic disciplines and grade levels. The home and community also influence the total educational growth of children.

Schools are organized to provide formal instruction in (1) acquiring fundamental skills, (2) analyzing experiences and values, (3) developing a specialization for vocational purposes, (4) providing opportunities for developing creative talents, and (5) exploring our cultural heritage. Curricular offerings and instructional programs are differentiated to provide for students of varying abilities and interests. Special educational services are provided to meet the special needs of atypical children. A program designed to meet the needs of gifted children is provided. Summer school is provided for remediation, enrichment, cultural experiences, and accelerated programs.

#### A. Specific Student Goals of the School District.

- To develop and maintain physical and mental health.
- To develop skill in the use of fundamental tools of learning.
- To develop ability to think critically and act responsibly.
- To develop respect for the understanding of self and others.
- To develop an understanding of moral values.
- To develop understanding and ability to cope with the physical environment.
- To develop interest and skill in worthwhile leisure-time activities.
- To develop appreciation of the arts.
- To develop understanding of and respect for our cultural heritage, including all racial, ethnic, and nationality groups.
- To develop knowledge and skills necessary as a foundation for vocational choice.

These goals are continued and diversified at the junior high school.

#### B. The Elementary School Program, Grades K - 5.

##### 1. Functions of the Elementary School.

- The **first** function of the elementary school is to aid the child in acquiring the skills basic to formal learning.
- The **second** function of the elementary school is to assist the pupil in changing from a self-centered individual into a cooperative citizen and an effective member of society.

- The **third** function of the elementary school is to acquaint the pupil with a well-selected body of conventional knowledge and to develop a wholesome attitude toward learning.
- The **fourth** function of the elementary school is to encourage the pupil to make worthy use of his/her leisure time through good recreational, educational and civic activities.
- The **fifth** function of the elementary school is to instill in the pupil the importance of his/her physical and mental health and general well being.

##### 2. Subject Offerings in the Elementary School - (All Grade Levels, Unless Specified).

In each classroom in the elementary school the classroom teacher shall plan the program of instruction in all subjects listed below except in the specialized areas of art, music, physical education, and gifted education. The program in these areas shall be planned cooperatively between classroom teachers and the special teachers for the areas. The elementary reading improvement program provides additional reading instruction planned cooperatively by the classroom teachers and reading assistants for students with reading problems and for students accelerated in reading. Qualified librarians assist students and teachers with the selection and use of resource materials for classes, as well as with recreational reading. Elementary instrumental music instruction is the responsibility of the instrumental music teacher; however, General/Vocal music teachers and classroom teachers may include a study of musical instruments in their program.

Language Arts  
- Reading  
- Writing  
- Listening  
- Speaking  
- Spelling  
- Penmanship  
Mathematics  
Social Science  
Science

Health Education  
Physical Education\*  
Art\*  
Music, General/Vocal\*  
Music, Instrumental\*  
(Student option) strings (5th grade)  
band (5th grade)  
Computer Education (integrated)  
\* Special Teacher

Objectives are continuously being reviewed in the various subject areas to provide consistent implementation and improvement of the instructional program.

#### C. The Junior High Program, Grades 6 - 8.

##### 1. Functions of the Junior High School.

The middle school years are a period of transition from the elementary school program to the senior high school. The junior high school encompasses grades 6, 7, and 8. General education, including the development of basic skills, continues at the middle school level.

The purpose of the junior high school is to expand and extend the educational opportunities afforded at the elementary school level. Specially equipped rooms have been provided for instruction in art, music, physical education, computer science, and laboratory sciences. Exploratory (“Encore”) experiences are emphasized in the junior high school. Furthermore, students who meet the district’s criteria for gifted education receive specialized instruction in the subject areas of language arts and mathematics.

Counselors are provided in the junior high school. The functions of the counselors include group guidance, individual counseling with students and parents, group and individual testing, and educational and pre-vocational planning. A qualified librarian assists students and teachers with the selection and use of resource materials for classes as well as with recreational reading. Extra-curricular activities assume an expanded role in the educational program at the junior high school.

2. Subject Offerings in the Junior High School.

Sixth Grade

Language Arts/Reading	Health Education
Mathematics	Physical Education
Science	Music
Social Science	Communications
Art	Computer Keyboarding

Seventh Grade

Language Arts/Reading	Music
Mathematics	Art
Science	Spanish I
Social Science	French I
Physical Education	“Encore” Electives
Health Education	

Eighth Grade

Language Arts/Reading	Spanish II
Mathematics	French II
Science	Physical Education
Social Science	Health Education

3. Extra-Curricular Activities in the Junior High School.

A variety of student activities closely related to the educational program are available to students in the junior high school. Activities include: music performance groups, visual and performing arts, intramural and interscholastic athletics, and co-curricular clubs. In addition, outdoor education in a camp format is provided annually for all sixth grade students. All of the activities emphasize growth in leadership and citizenship.

**Health Education Program**

By law the Riverside Public Schools’ curriculum includes instruction in recognizing and avoiding abduction, recognizing and avoiding child abuse including sexual abuse, infectious diseases including AIDS, and sex education.

No pupil, K-8, shall be required to participate in the above instruction if objected to in writing by a parent or guardian. Written objections should be addressed to the principal of your child’s school.

Exclusion from said instruction shall not be reason for disciplinary action. Excused students shall be provided a suitable alternative activity. The school shall give not less than five (5) days written notice to parents or guardians prior to the instruction of the above-mentioned topics.

**Special Education Program**

Special education services in the Riverside Public Schools are an integral part of the school program. Such services include evaluating and aiding in the treatment of learning disabilities, problem behavior, surveying and correcting speech, educating the hearing impaired, making adaptations for the physically and orthopedically handicapped, meeting children’s health needs, bringing education to homebound children, evaluating mental and emotional characteristics, and serving the emotionally handicapped. Some of these services are provided in the district; others are secured through cooperative efforts of District 96 with other school districts in the LaGrange Area Department of Special Education (LADSE) and the DuPage-West Cook Regional Special Education Association. Needs of selected children may be met by programs provided in private facilities if diagnosis confirms the necessity for such treatment and parental consent is secured.

The Board pays a portion of operating and personnel costs of LADSE and for programs in LADSE, DuPage-West Cook Regional Association, and other agencies when there is no program to meet the needs of these children within the district or within any co-op with which the district is affiliated.

As in most programs involving state and federal legislation and reimbursement, the State Superintendent of the Illinois Office of Education has set certain requirements regarding the operational procedures of these programs. In operating these programs, the school system must conform to procedures and regulations set up by the state and federal guidelines and policies of the special education cooperative.

In the paragraphs below, some of the special education programs and services which support special education classroom programs are described.

A. Special Education Due Process

Parents of children in any special education program have the right of an impartial due process hearing in the event that they object to the special education evaluation, placement, change of placement or failure of the district to comply with the rules and regulations of the Illinois State Board of Education. A request for a hearing must be made in writing to the district superintendent. An impartial hearing officer will hear the case and render a recommendation. If the school district feels that special education services are needed for a child, and the parent disagrees, the school district may request a due process hearing.

A parent handbook on special education services, procedures, and rights is available to any District 96 parent through the principal's office. The handbook is entitled: "A Parent's Guide: The Educational Rights of Handicapped Children."

B. Early Childhood Screening

The Riverside Public Schools provide pre-school screening for 3 or 4 year old children in the school district. The pre-school screening is scheduled for mid-February. Specific appointment times are scheduled for each child to be screened.

Early childhood screening covers (1) vision, (2) hearing, (3) speech and language development, (4) gross and fine motor skills, and (5) social development. The purpose of the screening is to help determine if the child is progressing at a normal rate of growth in the areas screened. A second purpose is to determine if early childhood special education services might be appropriate.

Parents of infants and toddlers between the ages of birth to 36 months, who are concerned about the development of their child are asked to contact the LaGrange Area Department of Special Education, at no cost to the parent, to determine whether or not a child is eligible for special education services such as speech/language, occupational therapy/physical therapy. If a child is found to be eligible for services, then parents will be assisted in locating services from an appropriate agency serving infants and toddlers with handicaps.

C. Psychological Services

School psychological services are available in the district on behalf of students who require assistance in their educational and/or behavioral adjustment. To this end, the school psychologist serves as a member of the Student Support Team, consulting with staff and identifying children who should be referred for individual study. The school psychologist performs individual psychological examinations with children in need of such services, interpreting the findings to parents and staff and providing recommendations which will lead to meaningful educational experiences for the child.

In addition, the school psychologist is available as a consultant with teachers and other school personnel, in relation to behavioral management and learning problems. The school psychological services are also utilized to assist in the process of maintaining an educational climate conducive to the optimum development of all children.

D. Speech Therapy Program

The speech therapist works with children in the district who have problems with specific speech sounds, voice quality, stuttering, hearing, or language development. Speech screening tests are administered to new students, former speech students and those students referred by parents and teachers, and kindergarten children. Children needing help are seen in small groups or individually - usually twice a week. The speech therapist and classroom teacher plan a "speech time" which will not interfere with the child's classroom work. Periodic reports are sent to parents. The speech therapist conducts a speech improvement class once a week with the entire kindergarten class.

E. Social Worker Services

The school social worker is available for conferences with teachers, parents, and children to evaluate and discuss individual problems which may interfere with learning or affect the student's adjustment to school.

The social worker may serve on the Student Support Team to determine if regular social worker service is needed, other special education supports, or referral to community agencies would be appropriate. Parents are closely involved in planning for the remediation of adjustment problems.

F. Student Support Team

Decisions regarding the need for an in-depth evaluation, or special help of any kind, are made by a Student Support Team, composed of the principal, teacher, and appropriate school personnel. Parental involvement in the process is required.

## Elementary QUEST Program, Grades 3 - 5

QUEST (Questioning, Understanding, Enriching, Synthesizing, Thinking) is the name of the elementary school enrichment program. Students in grades 3-5 who meet the criteria for the QUEST program will receive enrichment instruction in reading and/or math, one session per week, outside of the regular classroom. The QUEST program is designed to build upon the already challenging curriculum in regular classrooms.

### A. Program Description.

- An enrichment program for students in grades 3-5 will be offered in each neighborhood school. A program will be offered in reading and mathematics.
- Math classes will meet for 60 minutes a week. Reading classes will meet for 90 minutes a week.
- The curriculum will be project based and in addition to the regular curriculum. Students will be responsible for the regular class curriculum. Classroom teachers will allow participating students to be exempt from assignments missed if it is appropriate to do so.
- Curriculum projects in the QUEST programs will be developed according to guidelines provided by the QUEST teacher
- QUEST students will have access to technology in each school.
- Student performance will be monitored by the QUEST teacher and reported to parents semi-annually (mid-January and end of May).
- A copy of each report card will be placed in the student's cumulative folder.

### B. Criteria for Student Identification, Reading and Math.

#### 1. Initial Placement.

- Matrix Score of 7 points or above = automatic placement (CogAT Score of 135+ combined with a MAP Score of 97-99%ile; CogAT Score of 135 or above, combined with a MAP Score of 94-96%ile; CogAT Score of 130-134 combined with a MAP Score of 97-99%ile).
- The CogAT Verbal Score is used for placement in the Reading Program and the CogAT Quantitative Score is used for placement in the Math Program.
- CogAT scores are available at parent request to assist them in evaluating their child's ability levels.
- Spring Reading and Math MAP scores are used for placement.

#### 2. Continued Placement.

- Students initially recommended for the QUEST Program will continue in the program unless the classroom teacher, QUEST teacher, or parent determine that the student is not able to perform at a level commensurate with the expectations of the QUEST Program, and/or maintain an acceptable level of performance in the regular classroom in reading and/or math (the student's identified area of strength).

- QUEST Re-admission - Students may be considered for re-admission at the start of each school year.
- Eligibility pursuant to initial placement criteria in the District 96 QUEST Program shall be reviewed at the end of the K-5 experience before entering the junior high school. Eligibility criteria must be re-established for placement in the Junior High Program. Students not qualifying will automatically take the In-View test.

### 3. Placement Appeal Process.

- Parents or teachers who feel that further consideration should be given to the initial or continued placement of a student in the QUEST Program may appeal this matter which will be taken under advisement by the Coordinator of the District 96 QUEST Program.
- Parents or teachers who wish to present a case for appeal should submit their request in writing to the building principal. The request should include a rationale as to why the student should be considered for program entry. The principal will forward the request to the Coordinator of the District 96 QUEST Program.
- In cases where the student demonstrates high achievement scores (CogAT Score of 125-129 (CogAT Verbal Score for Reading Program and CogAT Quantitative Score for Math Program) combined with a spring MAP Score of 97-99%ile thereby earning a matrix score of 6 points, the student will be extended an invitation to take the InView test by letter which will include a copy of the identification matrix.
  - The student's classroom teacher and/or parent will be given a Behavioral Characteristics Checklist to complete regarding the student's classroom performance.
  - A matrix will be completed that includes the student's spring MAP score, the InView test score and the Behavioral Characteristics Checklist score. The student must earn a matrix score of 8 points or higher to qualify for placement in the QUEST Program.
  - A copy of the completed matrix will be placed in the student's cumulative folder.

### 4. Annual Program Notification.

- Students continuing in the QUEST Program and students new to the program will be notified by letter in May

## Junior High Gifted Program, Grades 6 - 8

The District offers a Gifted Program at Hauser Junior High School in grades 6, 7, and 8. The Gifted Program is offered to eligible students in the subject areas of reading or language arts and mathematics.

### A. Criteria For Student Identification, Reading or Language Arts and Math.

#### 1. Initial Placement.

- Matrix Score of 7 points or above = automatic placement (CogAT Score of 135+ combined with a MAP Score of 97-99%ile; CogAT Score of 135 or above, combined with a MAP Score of 94-96%ile; CogAT Score of 130-134 combined with a MAP Score of 97-99%ile).
- The CogAT Verbal Score is used for placement in Reading/Language Arts Programs and the CogAT Quantitative Score is used for placement in the Math Program.
- CogAT scores are available at parent request to assist them in evaluating their child's ability levels.
- Spring Reading/Language Arts and Math MAP Scores are used for placement.

#### 2. Continued Placement.

- Students initially recommended for the Gifted Program will continue in the program unless the classroom teacher, Gifted teacher, or parent determine that the student is not able to perform at a level commensurate with the expectations of the Gifted Program, and/or maintain an acceptable level of performance in the regular classroom in reading/language arts and/or math (the student's identified area of strength).
- Re-admission - Students may be considered for re-admission at the start of each school year.
- Eligibility pursuant to initial placement criteria in the District 96 QUEST Program shall be reviewed at the end of the K-5 experience before entering the junior high school. Eligibility criteria must be re-established for placement in the Junior High Program. Students not qualifying will automatically take the InView test.

#### 3. Placement Appeal Process.

- Parents or teachers who feel that further consideration should be given to the initial or continued placement of a student in the Gifted Program may appeal this matter which will be taken under advisement by the Coordinator of the District 96 Gifted Program.

- Parents or teachers who wish to present a case for appeal should submit their request in writing to the building principal. The request should include a rationale as to why the student should be considered for program entry. The principal will forward the request to the Coordinator of the District 96 QUEST Program.

- In cases where the student demonstrates high achievement scores (CogAT Score of 125-129 (CogAT Verbal Score for Reading Program and CogAT Quantitative Score for Math Program) combined with a spring MAP score of 97-99%ile thereby earning a matrix score of 6 points, the student will be extended an invitation to take the InView test by letter which will include a copy of the identification matrix.

- The student's classroom teacher and/or parent will be given a Behavioral Characteristics Checklist to complete regarding the student's classroom performance.

- A matrix will be completed that includes the student's spring MAP score, the InView test score and the Behavioral Characteristics Checklist score. The student must earn a matrix score of 8 points or higher to qualify for placement in the Gifted Program.

### B. Program Description.

#### 1. Mathematics.

- Students will be instructed in separate classes by a mathematics specialist. The focus of the program will allow for greater depth of study of curriculum concepts and for accelerated study, as appropriate for the group.

#### 2. Reading or Language Arts.

- The curriculum for the gifted reading/ language arts classes will be based on the existing curriculum for each grade level. Extended study of content areas will occur, as well as projects designed to meet the interests and capabilities of this group of students.

## **INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM POLICY INFORMATION**

### **Reports to Parents**

Report cards are sent home three times per school year with students in grades K-8.

Pursuant to state law, a School District Report Card will be available to all residents of the school district prior to October 31st of each year. This card reports student achievement, student information, staff information and financial information. This report is posted on the district's web site (see inside cover) and is available to parents and other interested parties upon request.

It is the policy of the school district that a minimum of one conference be held each year with the parents of each student in grades K-5. Conferences with parents of students in the junior high school are optional and may be requested by either parent or teacher. Some of the parent-teacher conferences are held during the regular school day and others are conducted before or after school. In any case, every effort is made to arrange for the conference as early in the school year as possible. Requests should be made through the school offices.

The purpose of the conference is to answer any questions the parents have regarding their child in school and to also inform the parents of the progress the student is making in school. Parents should not hesitate to bring a list of questions that they would like to discuss with any teacher of their children.

### **Homework**

Homework is defined as any work or task planned by the teacher to be completed by the student outside of the regular classroom without immediate and direct teacher interaction.

District 96 has a commitment to excellence in instructional programs while taking into consideration the unique developmental stages of children. Homework is a continuation of a learning process developed in the classroom and carried on by the child in the home environment. Its effectiveness depends upon careful planning by the teacher as well as supportive parental involvement.

District 96 recognizes the importance of having opportunities for growth and development provided by parents for their children outside school hours. We realize that children participate in many after-school activities and the need for proper rest cannot be over-emphasized. However, work not completed in class, drill and practice activities, and special projects will be assigned. Good parenting skills such as reading to children, providing cultural activities and working on language development are encouraged.

**POLICY:** Homework is encouraged at the discretion of the teacher. Homework may be required of all students at all grade levels. The emphasis should be on quality rather than quantity. Teaching responsibility and organization should be a by-product of homework. Homework tasks and assignments may be given for the sole purpose of developing organizational skills and responsibility.

Homework should include teacher involvement, student improvement and parent involvement.

### **Absences Due to Vacations**

It is the policy of the Riverside Public Schools to encourage student attendance at school every day unless illness or other valid reasons prevent the student from being present.

Consistent attendance is an essential component of a child's academic achievement. Classroom activities cannot be replicated if a child is absent. Furthermore, if a child is absent, classmates cannot benefit from the child's contributions.

It is recognized that some families cannot avoid scheduling vacations at times when school is in session. When possible, the district requests that such school-time vacations be kept at a minimum.

Because of the nature of the classroom learning experience, it is our policy not to provide textbooks or homework assignments prior to the vacation period during which school is in session.

When the student returns from vacation, make-up assignments which lend themselves to independent work will be given by the teacher. Normally, a student will be given an amount of time equal to that of the absence to complete assigned make-up work.

### **Field Trips and Excursions**

Planned and supervised field trips and excursions have been a means of giving children first-hand educational experiences. Attendance on all such trips is required when planned as a part of the school curriculum. Notice of all trips will be sent to parents who will be requested to grant written permission to have their child attend. No charge is made for transportation or attendance for field trips unless there is a charge for admission to a paid event or the trip is for a special enrichment or recreational activity.

## **Transportation Safety**

It is the policy of the Board of Education to provide the safest environment for its students. Therefore, when students of the school district are to be transported by bus, seat belts shall be used, except in emergencies. The administration shall promulgate necessary guidelines to enforce this policy, including but not limited to disciplinary regulations.

## **Standardized Testing**

There are various standardized tests that are administered to students in District 96. Two nationally normed tests are given to students: the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) given in the fall and the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) given several times during the year. These tests help measure student performance on a national level.

The student assessment program for the State of Illinois is the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT). The ISAT has been designed to measure student achievement in relation to state standards for learning. In the spring of each year, all third through eighth grade students take the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT). These tests cover three sessions of reading and three sessions of math. In addition, fourth and seventh graders also take two sessions of science.

Results of the MAP and ISAT tests are given to parents as they become available. Results of the CogAT test are available to parents upon request.

## **Title IX Compliance**

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination in education programs that are financially assisted by the federal government. If any person feels they have been discriminated against because of sex, they may file a grievance with the Superintendent of schools.

## **Technology Acceptable Use Policy**

### **A. Purpose of Technology.**

The District 96 philosophy statement on technology states that students are entering a world where the ability to work with technology will be an essential skill. The Riverside Public Schools wants to provide effective technology related experiences as tools to help these children prepare for a successful life in tomorrow's world.

Through technology, the District provides access for students and staff to resources from around the world. Expanding technologies take students and staff beyond the confines of the classroom; provide tremendous opportunities for enhancing, extending, and rethinking the teaching/learning process; and assist in preparing each student to be a productive citizen. This new capability requires guidance for students and staff. Accordingly, this policy is written to apply to all adults and students who utilize the District's facilities, equipment, and means of access to District technology.

### **B. Access to the Internet.**

The Board believes that the value of information and interaction that technology offers outweighs the hazards of its misuse. Making network access available, however, carries with it the potential that some network users will encounter sources that may be considered controversial or inappropriate. The District has installed, or will install, technology protection measures designed to prohibit access to material that, among other things, is obscene, constitutes child pornography, and/or is harmful to minors. However, because information on networks is transitory and so diverse, the District cannot completely predict or control what users may or may not locate. Technology provides a conduit to information; the users must be wary of the sources and content and be responsible in choosing information to be accessed.

No technology is guaranteed to be error-free or totally dependable. Among other matters, the District is not liable or responsible for: 1) any information that may be lost, damaged, or unavailable due to technical, or other, difficulties; 2) the accuracy or suitability of any information that is retrieved through technology; 3) breaches of confidentiality; or 4) defamatory material. Furthermore, the District will not be liable for unauthorized charges or fees which result from accessing the Internet.

Users may access technology only for educational purposes. Exercising this privilege requires that users accept the responsibility for all material viewed, downloaded, and/or produced or transmitted. Users should honor copyright restrictions in accessing materials through District technology and District means of access.

The actions of users accessing networks through the District reflect on the School District; therefore, users must conduct themselves accordingly by exercising good judgment and complying with this policy, any accompanying administrative regulations and guidelines, and existing policies of the Board that relate to staff and student conduct.

### **C. Technology Usage Guidelines.**

Students and personnel shall not load onto the network or Internet District 96 work product without prior approval from the superintendent, principal, or his/her designee. Examples of materials constituting District 96 work product include, but are not limited to: District 96 curriculum, District 96 test or examination materials, Department Guidelines and/or Procedures, Parent/Student Handbooks, Personnel Handbooks, District 96 publications and brochures, school newspaper, school yearbook, District 96 policies and administrative regulations/procedures.

Students and personnel shall not load onto the Internet any communications, student work, student images or any personally identifiable information about students without prior approval from the superintendent, principal, or his/her designee and prior written parental consent (when required by applicable State or federal law). Personnel

shall maintain confidentiality of student records in their use of District computers. Confidential student information should not be loaded onto the network where unauthorized access to such information may be obtained.

1. Access to the District's Internet must be for the purpose of education or research, and be consistent with the educational objectives of the District. Access is prohibited for any illegal activities, including but not limited to, "hacking," copyright violations and unauthorized access to or use of databases.
2. The use of the District's Internet is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use may result in the cancellation of those privileges. Users are only allowed access to information and data on the Internet which is consistent with the school's pedagogical message and educational mission. Users are not authorized access to information which is inaccurate, illegal, indecent, obscene, inappropriate or harmful to minors, pornographic (including child pornography), defamatory, likely to result in harassment of another student or staff member, likely to cause material disruption in the schools, or is otherwise inconsistent with the District's educational mission, or to enter or transmit such information. The system administrator will make judgments regarding whether or not a user has violated these procedures and may act to suspend or deny user access to the system.
3. Only language or communications that are appropriate for school situations and consistent with the District's educational mission will be permitted. For example, obscene, defamatory or inciteful communication is not permitted.
4. A user will only use their account or password (and no other) when utilizing the system. No anonymous or impersonated messages will be posted. The privacy rights of individuals will be respected.
5. Users will not divulge their own address, telephone number, or access code, nor will similar information concerning others be divulged.
6. Copyright laws will be followed. Material created by others will not be posted without their consent and with proper credit.
7. Deliberate destruction of equipment, software, or data will result in denial of privileges and collection of damages.
8. The system is not to be used for commercial purposes, private business, personal gain, or any activities contrary to law.

9. As a condition of being allowed access to the Internet and the District's electronic mail communication through use of District computers and District means of access, users shall consent to monitoring and inspection by school staff and administration of all use of District computers and District means of access including any and all electronic mail communications made or attempted to be made or received by users and all materials accessed or downloaded by users.
10. Installing and downloading software.
  - a. Student users are not permitted to download and install software without school authorization.
  - b. Staff members may download and install software provided they comply with the software license agreement and have authorization from the technology coordinator.
  - c. No user may disable or modify, or attempt to disable or modify, any blocking software (filters) or similar technology protection measures on the District's computers or computer system.
11. Users shall report immediately, to the system administrator, any violations of this policy and any malfunctions or misuse of the District's computer system, including but not limited to, any malfunctions or disabling of blocking software (filters) or similar technology protection measures.

D. Network Etiquette.

Users are expected to abide by the following examples of acceptable network etiquette:

- a. Be polite. Do not become abusive in messages to others.
- b. Use language that is appropriate for the school setting.
- c. Do not reveal the personal addresses of telephone numbers of students or colleagues.
- d. Recognize that electronic mail (e-mail) is not private. People who operate the system have access to all mail. Messages that are inappropriate will be reported to the proper authority.
- e. Do not use the network in any way that would disrupt its use by other users or result in material disruption in the schools.

