

## **Atlantic City's Children Benefit from New, State-of-the-Art Elementary Schools**



*New Richmond Avenue School*

The Atlantic City community recently opened two new elementary schools at Richmond and Pennsylvania avenues, replacing older structures that had outlived their effectiveness as learning institutions moving forward in the 21st century.

Recently, Superintendent of Schools Donna Haye, Richmond Avenue School Principal Gabrielle Caldwell and Pennsylvania Avenue School Principal Sylvia Stewart gave us their insight into how these modern schools will substantially improve

how Atlantic City's children learn and how effective teachers teach.

### ***Why are these schools vitally important for the community?***

All residents of Atlantic City stand to benefit from these two new schools. Institutions of learning are always vitally important to a community, regardless of where they are built. However, there is a greater significance when a school is built in an inner city. There is an inspirational value attached to those places. When people see a school there is immediate recognition of what it is there for—to improve and to make them better citizens.

Furthermore, a school symbolizes the potential of a community. It has the power to recreate the culture of a neighborhood, shape the minds of its residents, and instill within them the belief that learning can open doors to which they might not have always felt they had access to. The schools are an aesthetically beautiful addition to the community while the classrooms and common areas are filled with natural light that enhances the educational environment.

### ***How will these schools positively improve our children's learning experience?***

For years, the children of Atlantic City have been viewed through a distorted lens. As the city itself has faced a variety of challenges, its youngest residents have often been challenged by the perception that they are somehow inferior to children from other communities. This perception has been prevalent for years, however, that is about to change.

The educational and extracurricular programs offered at these new schools will equip Atlantic City's youth with the tools necessary to compete with and excel amongst their suburban peers—both in school and later in life. These schools will produce students who are college and career ready. Additionally, these students will be prepared for the global economy of the 21st century. Their lack of exposure, not lack of ability, has often left them unprepared for such success. Now there is a renewed sense of promise for the future. At present, that future can be found in classrooms throughout the city.

The idea of a traditional school day is being reinvented as well. There are many projects planned for the youth of Atlantic City who attend these new schools. These projects will offer outlets for education, exploration and expression. Academics, the arts and athletics will all be offered as alternatives to involvement in at-risk behaviors.

Activities will make students feel like members of a larger school community, one that extends long beyond the dismissal bell. That sense of belonging is essential for the complete development of a child. These new schools will offer a place for children to learn, grow and develop into their highest potential. In turn, the promise of a city will be fulfilled in every success story whose first chapters were written in its schools.

***Continued on page 2***

### **State-of-the-Art Technology Abound in both Schools**

\*Both buildings are wireless.

\*All classrooms feature: eight student computers, color laser printer, mounted projectors over board, mimio interactive whiteboard, document camera, school pad allowing teachers to be interactive with white board from around the room, and responder sound system so teachers can use microphones.

\*Two computer labs feature: 30 iMac and 30 Dell computers, respectively, mounted projectors over board, mimio interactive bundle, color laser printer, and sound system.

\*Media Centers feature: two circulation computers, 12 computers, two carts with 24 netbooks each, and iTeach interactive white board.

\*Science Labs feature: eight computers, color laser printer, mounted projectors over board, mimio interactive white board, document camera, school pad allowing teachers to be interactive with white board from around the room, and responder sound system so teachers can use microphones.

\*Art and Music Rooms feature: eight computers, color laser printer, mounted projectors over board, mimio interactive white board, document camera, school pad allowing teachers to be interactive with white board from around the room, and responder sound system so teachers can use microphones.

\*Small Instruction Rooms feature: four computers, color laser printer, mounted projectors over board, mimio interactive white board, document camera, school pad allowing teachers to be interactive with white board from around the room, and responder sound system so teachers can use microphones.

**Richmond Avenue School Important Facts**

The New Richmond Avenue School is raising the bar and leveling the playing field when it comes to the amenities made accessible to learners. This impressive, nearly \$38 million, state-of-the-art facility spans 125,000 square feet along an entire city block facing Ventnor Avenue and bounded by Windsor and Richmond avenues.

The school may accommodate between 550-600 students ranging from pre-Kindergarten through the eighth grade and boasts two music rooms (one for instrumentalists and one for choral), a sports-ready gymnasium, an art room, full-service science laboratories, two computer labs and a sprawling media center.

Students at the school will also benefit from success-based reading intervention programs, like System 44, Read 180, and Teen Biz, which will assist in their academic growth. Moreover, for the first time, the school will also house a Parent Resource Center, which will provide a variety of services to the school's surrounding community.

The Atlantic City Free Public Library will once again house a 3,000-square-foot branch location at the school, replacing the temporary Library Express remote location on the corner of Atlantic and Morris avenues. During construction of the new Richmond Avenue School, the school's students were temporarily housed at the near-by Brighton Avenue school.



*Old Richmond Avenue School before demolition (photo courtesy of the Atlantic City Free Public Library)*

**Pennsylvania Avenue School Important Facts**

The new Pennsylvania Avenue School sits one block away from the original school and rests in the shadow of several casinos. As the casinos have changed the city's skyline as conduits to a revitalized Atlantic City, the Pennsylvania Avenue School stands as a revitalized educational link to community collaborations. With cooperation being another one of the primary facilitators of a globally competitive education for students with their parents as partners.

This new learning institution is equipped with state-of-the-art technology that allows students instant access to global information. The heart of the school is the amazing Library & Media Center. With lessons facilitated through ongoing training provided by the School District to classroom teachers, students develop the confidence to ask questions, seek information, and utilize critical thinking skills as they navigate through the Common Core Standards in all subject areas.

The importance of the Arts in education is accentuated through a spacious music suite and performance stage. Visual art talent is encouraged in an art studio. A cavernous



*New Pennsylvania Avenue School*

gym with all of the amenities needed for physical wellbeing and competitive sports is a jewel of the building and provides an additional venue for visiting performers. The new Pennsylvania Avenue School also offers a 7th and 8th grade district-wide Choral Academy. The program uses an approved curriculum designed by music teachers and district supervisors. The program allows students to pursue their development of vocal skills and music appreciation.

The school is also involved in several worthwhile projects, such as hosting a nationally recognized former teacher and author, Sharon Draper; have been the recipients of several library grants to provide books for children in the school and throughout the school district; and are recipients of the fresh fruit and vegetable grant for the third consecutive year. The school is currently networking with the National Blessings in a Back program that provides weekend snacks for free lunch recipients, as well as acting as a participating school in the Community Think Tank sponsored by Revel. The school is also an annual participant in a Thanksgiving feeding project, which is sponsored by the State Troopers of the Division of Gaming Enforcement.



*Librarian Theda Bradley helps customers at the Library's old Richmond Avenue School branch. The new Richmond Avenue School features a 3,000-square-foot branch of the library. (photo courtesy of the Atlantic City Free Public Library)*

**New Bus Shelters Installed & Pocket Parks Completed throughout City**



New, state-of-the-art bus shelters, designed to withstand hurricane conditions, have been installed throughout Atlantic City. 65 shelters were purchased at a cost of \$560,770. 50 of the shelters were installed throughout the Tourism District, 12 others were provided to the City of Atlantic City for installation at locations they deem necessary, while the remaining three shelters are being kept in reserve for later use or for replacement.

These shelters will utilize just 50% of their lighting power from dusk to dawn and would draw 100% of their power during the evening hours, but only when a motion sensor detects movement inside the shelter, thus cutting down on electrical costs.

*(Left— new bus shelter located along Pacific Avenue at the corner of Florida Avenue.)*

In order to create a more attractive appearance, several pocket parks were recently completed throughout the city in 2012, including Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard & Atlantic Avenue SW corner, Bartram Avenue & Boardwalk, Florida & Pacific Avenue SW corner, Kentucky & Pacific Avenue SE corner, and a refurbished Texas and Pacific Avenue lot.

More pocket parks are planned in 2013, including New Hampshire Avenue & Boardwalk street entrance; Georgia & Pacific Avenue north side parking lot; Ocean Avenue & Boardwalk street end; Albany and Pacific Avenue SW corner; California Avenue & Boardwalk street ends; Atlantic Avenue at North Carolina, Rhode Island, Vermont & New Hampshire avenues; Oriental Avenue lots at New Hampshire to Seaside avenues, Seaside to Vermont avenues, Vermont to Victoria avenues, Victoria to Rhode Island avenues & Rhode Island to Metropolitan avenues all along the south side; Pacific & Connecticut Avenue NE corner; Pacific & South Carolina Avenue; Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard & Pacific Avenue NW corner; Maryland & Pacific Avenue NW corner; and Congress & Pacific Avenue NW corner.



**Some of the completed pocket parks in all of their splendor: *(clockwise—Texas & Pacific Avenue lot; Bartram Avenue & Boardwalk lot; and Kentucky & Pacific Avenue lot.***