



Riverview School
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Research for Better Teaching

Since September 2007, Riverview has been training staff in the Research for Better Teaching (RBT) model. The RBT approach, which compliments Riverview's philosophy and pedagogy, emphasizes what students are learning rather than what teachers are teaching. It helps staff



focus on essential shared beliefs about learning. A few of these beliefs include: every child can learn and get smarter; learning involves continual study; the school environment has a great influence on learning; and effort matters. We offer our students "expectation messages" such as "you can do this with effective effort" and "we will not give up on you." Riverview has embraced this common language and set of beliefs for talking about and planning for learning. Evidence of this work can be seen and heard throughout the campus as staff engage in meaningful conversations about teaching and learning, the hallmark of a truly dedicated educational community.

— Maria Cashdollar, Director of Education

Residential Learning

Tennis anyone? As one of many diverse social and recreational activities, tennis fundamentals is led by Jerry Weil, father of senior Harry Weil, teaching two groups of students from the High School program and GROW. This is only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to residential opportunities offered. Socialization is a major component of the Riverview program which includes participatory programs such as cooking, computers, zumba and key club. Fitness and physical education programs encourage students to advocate for their own health needs, as they develop independent living skills. Students are encouraged to learn to manage their time



and financial needs, and to organize activities which integrate them into the community. The development of cooperative skills is a priority and students grow with self-confidence and new competencies. This is the Riverview way!

— Steve Grinsell, Director of Programs

Quarterboard

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Teaching - A Riverview Specialty

When families visit Riverview for the first time, they are often surprised to learn that we have almost as many staff as students. The main reason of course is that we employ three distinct faculty groups. Two groups share the seven day residential program and focus primarily on independent living and social skills while the classroom teachers and specialists focus largely on academic, prevocational and social/emotional development. Managing the communication systems for all these individuals is another specialty of the School.

Good teaching begins with a core belief in the ability of all students to learn and to reach levels not previously anticipated. Knowing how to motivate, encourage, support, challenge and celebrate achievement are all necessary ingredients. Faculty who are genuinely committed to their own learning, who are deeply attuned to the interests and talents of their students, and who are open to the input of parents and colleagues are the best teachers of all. Riverview is blessed with such employees.

But valuable teaching and learning are also promoted daily by the structured predictable routines that are built into all facets of the program. From the established morning routines in the dorm to the social autopsies of peer problems,

our students learn helpful strategies for managing their lives and their friendships. Hesitant and unsure at first about assuming more responsibility for their lives, they soon realize that their emerging self-advocacy skills are respected and encouraged. This can be a true turning point for many young people as they understand for the first time ever that they can be agents of change in their own lives.

And no group reinforces these feelings more effectively than other Riverview students who serve as meaningful role models and teachers for each other. When students for example observe their peers in the GenYes club operate the lights and sound for a school assembly or repair a teacher's computer, they begin to imagine new possibilities for themselves. When they see their friends perform in a play, serve meals in the dining hall or plan a fundraiser for a worthy cause, they find inspiration and courage to try something different. Just last week, a new high school student leaned over to me at lunch and said "I'm going to run for class officer next year." I have no doubt she will!

The horizons of Riverview students are expanded daily by all the different teachers they encounter at School. The messages they receive directly and indirectly are "yes you can" and "we believe in you." For Riverview faculty though, a special satisfaction comes when our students exclaim with a smile, "that's just what my parents say."

— Maureen Brenner, Head of School

The Art(s) of Teaching

Creativity comes naturally to many of our students at Riverview. Listen to the roar of the Lion, or the whine of the Scarecrow in the Wizard of Oz, the School's recent musical production. Have you observed the student art work, which is an integral component of our new donor wall in James Center, or had the pleasure of hearing the Deja View Chorus sing? Riverview students are taught to appreciate the arts through doing. Their enthusiasm leads them, as our talented staff, Nate Olin and Joyce Payne (art); Vickie Summers (drama); and Greg Simpson (music) help to direct their creative intuitions. To perform, or paint, or sing, or draw is to use their talents to build confidence and an appreciation for the arts, which enhance their everyday lives.



The teaching of the arts at Riverview is an integral part of the students' curriculum. With the building of James Center, new studios are being put to good use, and the new Sharon D. Lund Auditorium provides a perfect venue for young talent. But what matters most is that the students are willing to take on creative challenges. They are guided and encouraged to listen to and express what they feel, hear, and like – and make it their own - to share with others or keep for themselves. There is never a lack of ingenuity or enthusiasm, because students are always given the option of doing what they do well – create.

– Meg Albert, Director of Marketing

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Thematic Integrated Curriculum

Learning is more meaningful when the student is able to garner information from a variety of sources. It might be a book, or an experience, or a guest speaker who adds to the understanding of a particular subject. In the early 90's, Riverview wanted to capture this concept and adopted the new instructional model called thematic integration.

Jeanne Pacheco and Maria Cashdollar led the effort to integrate this process throughout the curriculum. Each aspect of the students' learning was incorporated into and linked to a theme. Today, reading about the Civil War is complimented by a topical video; a lesson on the Victorian era is brought to life through a Victorian tea – dresses, top hats, finger sandwiches and all! In the Wellness Center and on Davis Field, students have their health and fitness lessons reinforced through real life exercise routines and soccer games.

Every aspect of every day affords the academic and residential faculty the opportunity to offer our students a unique way of incorporating knowledge. The students see the value of using these skills both in and out of the classroom, and are able to generalize what they learn. Riverview, a puzzle with many pieces, continually strives to create an integrated whole.

– Jeanne Pacheco, Director of Admissions

Dedication of James Center



Riverview School

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Simple Math

Everyone is different in how they absorb information. Some learn through trial and error and others study carefully. Some process information through listening, some prefer to read, while others need to verbalize or put it in writing. Most agree that one of the best ways to learn is to follow a good example.

In an effort to get everyone involved in the Annual Fund, eight Riverview families have set that good example. Each has not only agreed to make donations to the Annual Fund, but has also pledged a matching gift as a challenge to the parents of current students. Here's how it works based on participation:

- For each donation beyond 60% (up to 70%) a matching gift of \$500 will be contributed = an extra \$10,000
- We have 197 families enrolled in Riverview School
- 118 families participating = 60% - 138 families participating = 70%

Our ultimate goal is 100% participation and we hope that everyone will be as generous as possible. But, by merely making a gift, you are helping to add another \$500. This is very simple math to learn and a wonderful example to follow!

– Charlie McNamara, Director of Development

Charlie McNamara, Director of Development, has been an integral part of Riverview for the past 17 years. It is with great sadness that we say good-bye, as he moves on to other opportunities with the South Shore Hospital Charitable Foundation. Charlie will be sorely missed by everyone who has worked with him at Riverview, and we all wish him the best with his new endeavor. Charlie is a prime example of the best Riverview has to offer.



Real Life Opportunities

Opportunities for GROW students to experience and participate in real life situations are abundant and these afford students ways to practice using the skills and strategies that are taught daily in classrooms and on campus. Students are shown that each skill they learn is connected to others. For example, when students budget their money in Consumer Math class, they also make plans for weekend activities with their friends, and must allow for sufficient funds. This may include purchasing passes for the Congo Line to go into Hyannis to shop or have lunch and a movie with dorm mates. In Travel Training class, students learn the basics of reading bus schedules, locating landmarks, figuring out how to get "unlost," and calling for

A Sporting Chance

John Benkis, Riverview's Athletic Director, teaches that "Practice makes your sports skills more permanent." John suggests that teaching sportsmanship builds character, which is more important than winning or losing. Riverview's "no cut" policy enables our students to build both competence and confidence – a major component of our mission.

– quotes from John Benkis, Athletic Director



rides, clearly stating their present locations. They transfer this set of skills when they travel home or take the bus back to the dorm from college. When students attend Cape Cod Community College Project Forward or mainstream classes, they apply their social and life skills on that campus. There they navigate the college grounds, traveling to different classes, using the cafeteria to meet friends or grab a snack, and locating or calling for their ride back to Riverview. Furthermore, students have opportunities to apply specific work skills and knowledge learned at the college to community internships while they attend GROW, but more importantly, to future employment after graduation.

– Kathy Titus, Director of Vocational and Transitional Services