

RAIL (Richmond Applied Inquiry Learning) Program

Mission Statement

RAIL's mission is to empower students through inquiry-based and project-based learning, fostering critical thinkers, collaborators, innovators, and contributors who are prepared to thrive in an ever-changing world.

What is RAIL?

The **Richmond Applied Inquiry Learning (RAIL)** program is a district program for students in **Grades 8–9** who are curious, creative, and motivated learners. Open to students across Richmond, RAIL combines rigorous academics with hands-on, real-world learning experiences that encourage students to explore ideas, solve problems, and make meaningful connections between their learning and the world around them.

Students accepted into the program become part of the Palmer Secondary School community while also benefiting from the unique opportunities provided through the RAIL cohort experience.

A Unique Learning Experience

RAIL is built around **inquiry, innovation, collaboration, and experiential learning**. Students work closely with dedicated RAIL teachers who guide them through interdisciplinary projects that connect learning across subject areas and encourage deeper thinking.

The program is designed to help students develop:

- Critical thinking and problem-solving skills
- Creativity and innovation
- Collaboration and communication skills
- Leadership and personal responsibility
- Adaptability and resilience
- Confidence as learners and contributors

Through engaging projects and authentic learning experiences, students are encouraged to take risks, ask meaningful questions, and become active participants in their education.

Program Structure

Students enroll full-time in the RAIL program and take a combination of RAIL and Palmer courses at RC Palmer Secondary.

RAIL Courses with 2 Rail Teachers:

- English Language Arts
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Studies
- Applied Design, Skills, and Technologies (ADST)

These courses are integrated whenever possible to create meaningful, project-based learning experiences.

Palmer Secondary Course Options:

- Physical and Health Education (PHE)
- French
- Fine Arts
- Band
- Drama
- Technology Education
- Other elective opportunities as available

Students also have full access to the vibrant Palmer school community, including:

- Clubs and leadership opportunities
- Athletics and sports teams
- School events and activities
- Arts and performance programs

Is RAIL Right for You?

RAIL may be a great fit for students who:

- Enjoy asking questions and exploring new ideas
- Thrive in collaborative environments
- Want to learn through projects and hands-on experiences
- Are creative and self-motivated

- Value community, leadership, and innovation
- Are interested in learning that connects to real-world challenges

Join RAIL and discover a learning experience that inspires curiosity, builds confidence, and prepares students to make a positive impact in their communities and beyond.

Application Process- *(Applications for 2027/2028- will be shared in December 2026)*

Admission to the RAIL Program involves a comprehensive process designed to identify students who will thrive in an inquiry-based, collaborative, and project-focused learning environment.

The application process includes:

1. **Application** – Students and families complete an application outlining their interests, experiences, and reasons for applying to the program.
 2. **Grade 7 Teacher Review** – Current teachers provide input regarding the student's learning habits, engagement, collaboration skills, and readiness for the program.
 3. **In-Person Assessment and Interview** – Applicants participate in an interactive assessment and interview designed to showcase their problem-solving abilities, communication skills, creativity, and enthusiasm for inquiry-based learning.
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Questions

This holistic process helps ensure that students are well-matched to the program and prepared to benefit from the unique learning opportunities that RAIL provides.

We encourage applications from students who are curious, motivated, collaborative, and excited to learn through real-world projects and experiences. We encourage all interested students to apply and join this learning community.

For questions, please contact Principal Herj Ghaug.
