Addressing the Achievement Gap
For the last three decades, the City of Richmond (the heart of central Virginia) has experienced a decline in the number of people living in poverty.

What that number does not tell us is that this positive trend is actually the reverse for many families with children.

Just over 39 percent of children in the City of Richmond live in poverty with thousands more hovering above the poverty threshold. That is double the child poverty rate from 1990.

Richmond’s concentrated poverty rate is 11.8% compared to 6% in DC and Norfolk and 8.1% in Baltimore, Maryland.

With a growing number of middle and higher income families choosing alternatives to public schools within the City, this has a tremendous impact on our public school system.
The changes in Richmond mirror what is happening on a national scale. In a report released in January by the Southern Education Foundation, researchers found that 51 percent of children in public schools across the United States qualify for free or reduced-price lunches.

Children who are eligible for the federal lunch program do not necessarily live in poverty, but it is clear that public schools are educating higher numbers of low-income children.
How can we close this gap?

We know that poverty is a major predictor of success in school, which in turn is a major predictor of success in life.

So what can we do to close this gap?
Our three panelists are here today to offer a system-wide response to closing the achievement gap in Richmond Public Schools.

Dr. Dana Bedden, Superintendent, Richmond Public Schools

Dr. Kiwana Yates, Principal, George Washington Carver Elementary

Ms. Ingrid deRoo, Communities In Schools Site Coordinator, George Mason Elementary
More than 16 million children live in the United States.

22% of all children live in families with incomes below the federal poverty level.

According to research, “Children raised in poverty rarely choose to behave differently, but they are faced daily with overwhelming challenges that affluent children never have to confront, and their brains have adapted to suboptimal conditions in ways that undermine good school performance” *(Eric Jenson, Teaching with Poverty in Mind)*.
Most significant risk factors affecting children raised in poverty:

- Emotional and Social Challenges.
- Acute and Chronic Stressors.
- Cognitive Lags.
- Health and Safety Issues.

**EACH** is a handy mnemonic.
About Carver Elementary

Our school opened in 1886 with our modern facility constructed in 1951. We serve 500 students in grades K-5. The majority of our students live in Gilpin Court – one of Richmond’s seven big housing developments that have stood in our community since the 1950’s.

These barracks-style communities segregate our poorest people, away from grocery stores, parks, and downtown Richmond. It's concentrated poverty, concentrated illiteracy, concentrated substance abuse and concentrated violence.

George W. Carver Elementary was just named a Title 1 Highly Distinguished School for exceeding all state and federal accountability benchmarks for two consecutive years and achieving pass rates on reading and math SOL tests at or above the 85th percentile.
Families: the Jewel in the Carver Community

The families in the Carver Community really shine. They participate in activities such as:

- Breakfast with Dads
- Pizza with Purpose (moms)
- Chat-n-Chew
School-wide Improvement Plan:

- Effective school-based leadership
- Student achievement
- High-quality instructional practice
- High-quality professional learning
- Vertical grade level planning
Building Relationships:

We are building key relationships through -

- Community Partnerships
- Makerspace Project
- One School, One Book
- Dancing Classrooms
- Minds in Motion
Keys to building a strong foundation:

- Attendance
- Improving Reading and Math levels
- Using technology at all grade levels
Interactive Management:

- iReady Pilot
- Interactive Achievement
- Technology based Classroom Management (Class Dojo)
- Gradual Release: I do, You do, We do
CIS Wrap-Around Services:

- Mentors
- Tutors
- Community involvement projects
- Standard-based Field Trips
The CIS Model offers the scaffolding to bring in resources and services to meet student need.

At the Macro level the model is guided by Five Basics
Our Needs Assessment is the School Business Plan

When a school partners with CIS, it gains a liaison that focuses on bringing resources into the school to support the basic and behavioral needs that help allow children to learn and teachers to teach. Working with each school’s administration, CIS develops annual site plans that prioritize the support needs of the population.
Tiered Supports

Tiers of Support apply to the services CIS provides, brokers and coordinates.

- Widely available services designed to foster a positive school climate and address school-level risk factors.
- Targeted services typically provided in a group setting to students with a common need.
- Intensive, individualized services typically provided in a one-on-one setting to students with highly specific needs.
Examples of all three sets of services:

**Tier 1:** One School One Book

**Tier 2:** Richmond Urban Dance – attend school every day in order to go

**Tier 3:** MICAH mentor
How does this relate to closing the achievement gap?