



# BACK TO SCHOOL PRAYER GUIDE



## Introduction

On Monday, August 21st, over 153,000 precious young people will walk through the doors of public schools in Chesterfield, Hanover, Henrico and Richmond to begin the new school year. If you've ever spent time in a school, you know that some students will enter the year with joy and hopeful anticipation, and that others will enter carrying heavy burdens that no child should have to bear.

Through the For Richmond network's partnerships with schools across Metro Richmond, we know that students walking through those doors are dealing with food and housing insecurity, mental health challenges, neglect and abuse, violence in their communities, and more. We also know that schools need the broader community to come around them and help.

This year, we've asked our superintendents to share specific ways that we can be praying for the children, teachers, and administrators in their respective district. They've also provided some next steps for getting involved.

Our hope is that you will pray each day from August 20th-23rd, providing our schools with unified and effectual prayer and that you will also grow in compassion for the students in your own locality and those around Metro Richmond. Today, we'll start with a devotional that was created by our volunteer, Lauren Northcutt, who has served as a teacher in both Richmond Public Schools and at Imago Dei School:

## Why God Cares

God created each and every one of us in the imago dei – in His image (Genesis 1:27). Through this pronouncement, He has bestowed magnificence and dignity upon each member of society even down to the little children, so all children, whether in Chesterfield, Hanover, Henrico, or Richmond, are close to God's heart. He has charged us with a special responsibility to welcome children (Matthew 18:5) and "train them up" (Proverbs 22:6) in the way they should go.

## Why We Do This Together

We all want to live in a place where we and our neighbors are flourishing – physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. God wants these things as well, but no one person can accomplish this on their own. The good news is that together, we can! Together, we can unite in prayer for the flourishing of our communities. Together, we can be faithful stewards of the gifts that God has given us to serve those around us, helping children realize their God-given potential.

## Scriptures to Consider

- Matthew 18:4-5 "Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me"
- Mark 10:14 "When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these."
- Deuteronomy 11:19 "Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up."
- Proverbs 22:6 "Train up a child in the way he should go: And when he is old, he will not depart from it."
- 1 Peter 4:10 "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms."