



**RAYTOWN
QUALITY
SCHOOLS**
Expect the Exceptional

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Office of the Superintendent

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Dear Raytown Parents and Guardians,

We're excited to share some great news with you! Beginning with the 2025–2026 school year, Raytown Quality Schools will launch a brand-new Freshman Academy at both Raytown and Raytown South High Schools — designed especially with your student in mind.

We know the transition to high school is a big step, and we're committed to making it as smooth, supportive, and meaningful as possible. That's why we're creating a space just for 9th graders to grow academically, build confidence, explore their interests, and get ready for what comes next — both in high school and beyond.

This exciting change is part of a larger plan to bring career academies to our high schools. We're partnering with Ford Next Generation Learning, a national nonprofit that helps schools reimagine education so students are prepared for real-world success. Together, we're working to make sure every student is: academically strong, reflective and self-aware, connected and relational, a contributor to their community, academically strong, and equipped with the skills and experiences to thrive in college, trade school, military and in a high-demand, high-wage career.

Here's how it will work: In 9th grade, students will join the Freshman Academy, where they'll receive extra support as they make the transition to high school. It's also a chance to explore different courses and career pathways that will be offered through the Academies of Raytown. By the end of their freshman year, students will choose a “home” academy — a smaller learning community — for 10th through 12th grade that aligns with their personal interests and goals.

While they'll spend time in their chosen academy, they'll still be able to take classes in other areas they're curious about. It's a flexible, personalized approach to learning that gives students the chance to go deeper and get hands-on, real-world experience. An example of an academy could be “Health and Human Services.” A pathway within that academy could be “first responders” or “law and justice.”

Each school will have an Executive Principal who oversees all the academies and an Academy Coach who works with all the academies. Additionally, each Academy will have its own team, including: an Academy Principal, an Academy Counselor, an Academy Interventionist, and a dedicated team of teachers and staff. The Freshman Academy team will support two groups of about 120–150 students, helping to create a close-knit community where your child will be known and supported. We're also thrilled to introduce our Freshman Academy Principals: **Raytown South High School** – *Ms. Samantha Strabel, Academy Principal* and **Raytown High School** – *Dr. T'Neisha Love, Academy Principal*.

We'll be sharing even more details with you and your student during transition days, so stay tuned! In the meantime, feel free to explore more about the Academies on our [website](https://www.raytownschools.org). We can't wait to welcome your student to high school and partner with you in this exciting next chapter of their journey!

Sincerely,

Dr. Penelope Martin-Knox,
Superintendent, Raytown Quality Schools

[raytownschools.org](https://www.raytownschools.org)