



**CITY OF RICHMOND**  
**DEPARTMENT OF FIRE & EMERGENCY SERVICES**

Redactions were made in pursuant with these sections of the Code of Virginia:

Exclusions to application of chapter; records relating to public safety.

§ 2.2-3705.2 (14) 14. Information contained in (i) engineering, architectural, or construction drawings; (ii) operational, procedural, tactical planning, or training manuals; (iii) staff meeting minutes; or (iv) other records that reveal any of the following, the disclosure of which would jeopardize the safety or security of any person; governmental facility, building, or structure or persons using such facility, building, or structure; or public or private commercial office, multifamily residential, or retail building or its occupants

Disclosure of law-enforcement and criminal records; limitations.

§ 2.2-3706 (D) D. Noncriminal records. Public bodies (i) engaged in emergency medical services, (ii) engaged in fire protection services, (iii) engaged in criminal law-enforcement activities, or (iv) engaged in processing calls for service or other communications to an emergency 911 system or any other equivalent reporting system may withhold those portions of noncriminal incident or other noncriminal investigative reports or materials that contain identifying information of a personal, medical, or financial nature where the release of such information would jeopardize the safety or privacy of any person. Access to personnel records of persons employed by a law-enforcement agency shall be governed by the provisions of subdivision B 9 of this section and subdivision 1 of § 2.2-3705.1, as applicable.

Disclosure of law-enforcement records; criminal incident information and certain criminal investigative files; limitations.

§ 2.2-3706.1 (C)(5) C. The provisions of subsection B shall not apply if the release of such information:

5. Would disclose law-enforcement investigative techniques and procedures, if such disclosure could reasonably be expected to risk circumvention of the law



# RICHMOND FIRE DEPARTMENT

## FIRE INVESTIGATION REPORT

FIRE INVESTIGATION  
201 E. Franklin St.  
Richmond VA 23219

ACCIDENTAL

Incident # C202204301

### SCOPE OF ASSIGNMENT:

On February 11, 2022, at approximately 2235 hours (Shift # C) I was advised of a fire involving a structure located at 2300 Hanover Ave Richmond. Instructions were provided to respond to that location and conduct an origin and cause investigation involving a three-story, Educational Facility structure. At the time of the assignment the following information was provided involving the circumstances of the fire. Fire units were on the scene of Fox Elementary School on a third alarm fire.

### RESPONSE:

**Investigator:** Det. C. Lindsey, Richmond Police Department

**Engine Company:** Engine 10, Engine 18, Engine 5, Engine 12, Engine 14, Truck 3, Truck 2, Safety 1, BC2, & BC3 **Battalion #:** 2

### ADDITIONAL AID:

The following provided assistance during the investigation:

**Other Investigators:** Investigator Acors, Investigator Kopacsi, Lt Edwards, Capt McCarter

**Law Enforcement Officer:** Report #: None

**Other Agencies:** Virginia Power, RPS

### INVESTIGATION:

I responded to 2300 Hanover Ave Richmond and began the examination of the fire scene. [REDACTED]

My opinions and conclusions contained in this report have been determined to a reasonable degree of certainty within the fire investigation profession. Each is based on the examinations conducted, the evidence and information known as of the production of this report and the analysis of the same. Any new or discovered evidence or information may require the conclusions and opinions to be re-evaluated.

### CONCLUSION:

Based on the physical examination of the fire scene, and witness statements, in combination with an analysis of the evidence and information; the cause of this fire was not determined. As of the production of this report, the cause of the fire remains undetermined.

Analysis of all the evidence and witness information concluded that the area of origin was in the building in what was determined to be the auditorium area of the school. This area is located on the "A" side of the building just above the front door on the second floor of the structure.

Analysis of the evidence and information supports that the fire was initiated with an ignition source.

### PROPERTY STATUS:

The property was unoccupied at the time this incident occurred on February 11, 2022.

Incident #: C202204301

Investigator: C. Lindsey

Date of Fire: February 11, 2022



# RICHMOND FIRE DEPARTMENT

## FIRE INVESTIGATION REPORT

FIRE INVESTIGATION  
201 E. Franklin St.  
Richmond VA 23219

ACCIDENTAL

### FIRE DAMAGE ASSESSMENT:

This fire involved a three-story structure in normal use as an Educational Facility. Fire damage assessments conducted of the structure suggest the property damages to be approximately \$2,000,000.00 with an additional \$500,000.00 in content losses. During the process of the investigation and examination, no physical evidence was collected.

The following tasks were conducted as a result of the assignment:

The investigation, On-Site Examination, Captured Digital Photos, Captured Digital Video, Reviewed surveillance cameras, Witness interviews, written report, Reviewed fire department response reports

### ADJACENT PROPERTIES INVOLVED:

No fire damage was observed.

### INJURY / DEATH:

During the process of the investigation and examination, no injuries or deaths were identified.

### SUSPECTS / PERSON of INTEREST / ARRESTS:

None

### INSURANCE:

VaCorp

### EVIDENCE:

During the process of the investigation and examination, no physical evidence was collected.

Incident #: C202204301

Investigator: C. Lindsey

Date of Fire: February 11, 2022

Page 2 of 31



# RICHMOND FIRE DEPARTMENT

## FIRE INVESTIGATION REPORT

FIRE INVESTIGATION  
201 E. Franklin St.  
Richmond VA 23219

ACCIDENTAL

### SUBJECTS / INDIVIDUALS PRESENT:

The following are the individuals present, or the subjects referred to in the body of this report.

#### Number One

Daniela Jacobs  
Principal  
Richmond Public Schools  
2300 Hanover Ave  
[REDACTED]

#### Number Two

[REDACTED]  
Custodial Manager  
Richmond Public Schools  
1461 Commerce Road #A  
[REDACTED]

#### Number Three

Ronald Hathaway  
Director of Facilities  
Richmond Public Schools  
[REDACTED]

#### Number Four

[REDACTED]  
Dunbar Structural  
(804) 323-0656 & (804) 363-1682



# RICHMOND FIRE DEPARTMENT

## FIRE INVESTIGATION REPORT

FIRE INVESTIGATION  
201 E. Franklin St.  
Richmond VA 23219

ACCIDENTAL

### Preliminary Information

#### Tasks Conducted

Among the efforts conducted as a result of the assignment were:

- Investigation
- On-Site Examination
- Weather Report
- Capture Digital Photographs
- Capture UAV Photographs
- Capture Fire Scene 3-D Images
- Review Video Images (Surveillance)
- Witness Interviews
- Written Report
- Diagram(s)
- Review Provided Materials (Emails & Pest Control Documents)
- Review Fire Department Response Report

#### Environmental Conditions

Weather data was gathered [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] A printed copy of the information retrieved is included as an addendum to this report.

Analysis and consideration of the information obtained indicate that during the fire: the weather report was researched, and there were no reports of lightning or severe weather in the City of Richmond at the time of the fire.

Analysis of the weather data revealed no evidence of a weather-related ignition source. Additionally, no weather-related conditions had substantially contributed to the propagation (*spread*) of this fire.

#### Photographic Documentation

[REDACTED] These master original photographic images are held within the case file. The original photographic images can be provided upon request.

The photos that have been printed, provided as exhibits, or included in the addenda section of this report may have been adjusted. These adjustments may include icons, pointers, or other similar notations to direct the viewer's attention to a specific area or detail. When present, the depictions included at the bottom of each photograph were added to draw attention to specific observations or existing conditions.

Incident #: C202204301

Investigator: C. Lindsey

Date of Fire: February 11, 2022



# RICHMOND FIRE DEPARTMENT

## FIRE INVESTIGATION REPORT

FIRE INVESTIGATION  
201 E. Franklin St.  
Richmond VA 23219

ACCIDENTAL

### Permission to Access

Access to the building to conduct the origin and cause investigation was the result of the continuation of exigent circumstances by the Richmond Fire Department. During the process of the investigation, efforts were conducted to capture aerial images of the fire scene by use of the Richmond Police drone. These images included the general fire scene area. A copy of these images will be maintained in the case file, and are available upon request.

### First Contact

Upon arrival, I met with Richmond Fire Department Battalion Chief 2. Together we reviewed the activities and information revealed prior to my arrival [REDACTED]

### Firefighter Observations

Interviews were conducted involving fire department first responders. Specifically, to identify any evidence or information that may be useful in determining the origin and cause of the fire. The information conveyed included that upon their arrival the crews observed fire venting from the roofline and center of the structure on the second floor.

### Firefighter Activities

Efforts were conducted to obtain information regarding fire extinguishment and suppression activities. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The information included that the fire crews initiated fire ground operations consisting of interior fire attack and prior to roof ventilation attempts, the fire had spread in both directions (left & right) along the entire roofline. The fire had also penetrated the roof of the structure.



# RICHMOND FIRE DEPARTMENT

## FIRE INVESTIGATION REPORT

FIRE INVESTIGATION  
201 E. Franklin St.  
Richmond VA 23219

ACCIDENTAL

### Witness Statements and Interviews

During the process of this examination, the following witnesses were contacted or interviewed.

#### Witness One

Daniela Jacobs  
Description: Principal  
Cell Phone: [REDACTED]  
Email: djacobs2@rvaschools.net  
Employer: Richmond Public Schools  
2300 Hanover Ave  
(804) 780-6259

After the examination, I spoke with this witness in person. The following in substance is the information obtained as a result of a voluntary interview:

On 2/12/2022 I met with the principal of Fox Elementary School Mrs. Jacobs On this day Mrs. Jacobs informed me this particular facility has been experiencing issues with the alarm panel for several months. She also stated she has several emails and communications with RPS personnel regarding issues with the alarm panel. She also informed me that Orkin Pest Control made staff aware of an issue with rodents within the building. She also stated she was previously informed the building was infested with mice, and the mice had previously chewed through the wires in the attic area. She also stated at one point the lights were on inside the building and they suddenly just went out while the switch was still on. The lights remained out for several days with the switch still on, and suddenly the lights came back on without any personnel adjusting the switch. I also inquired about the status of the surveillance footage at the school, and Mrs. Jacobs informed me the surveillance cameras did not work. While speaking with the principal she described the area above the front main doors as where the classroom and auditorium was located on the second floor.



# RICHMOND FIRE DEPARTMENT

## FIRE INVESTIGATION REPORT

FIRE INVESTIGATION  
201 E. Franklin St.  
Richmond VA 23219

ACCIDENTAL

### Witness Two

[REDACTED]  
Description: Custodial Manager  
Home Address: 1461 Commerce Road "A"  
Cell Phone: [REDACTED]  
Email: [REDACTED]  
Employer: Richmond Public Schools

During the examination, I spoke with this witness in person. The following in substance is the information obtained as a result of a voluntary interview:

I spoke with this witness on 2/11/2022 the night the fire occurred at this facility. She informed me she had a new phone when she received a text message from 911 about the alarm at the school, she went back to sleep after hearing the initial notification. It wasn't until the second notification was received that the school was on fire that she got up and responded to the scene of Fox Elementary School.

### Witness Three

Ronald Hathaway  
Description: Director of Facilities  
Home Address: 1250 Ingram Ave  
Contact # [REDACTED]  
Email: [Rhathaway@rvaschools.net](mailto:Rhathaway@rvaschools.net)  
Employer: Richmond Public Schools

On 2/12/2022 I spoke with Mr. Hathaway via phone inquiring about the status of the surveillance cameras located at Fox Elementary. Mr. Hathaway informed me the cameras were not functional at the time of the fire, and therefore video surveillance was unavailable prior to or post-fire. On 2/14/2022 I learned there was video surveillance footage capturing the incident pre and post-fire. I, Investigators Acors and Kopacsi went to 1461 Commerce Rd "A" to view the surveillance footage along with some of Richmond Fire Command staff, and Richmond Public Schools staff.

### Witness Four

[REDACTED]  
Employer: [REDACTED]

On 2/16/2022 I communicated with [REDACTED] regarding the information on the alarm panel located at 2300 Hanover Ave (Fox Elementary School). I was informed my request would be passed on to the litigation department. I also learned at a later time that on 2/7/2022 the alarm panel was placed on a 96-hour test status by the school principal which was set to expire on 2/11/2022. [REDACTED] made contact with the school on several occasions regarding the fault signals they were receiving from the panel located at the school.

Incident #: C202204301

Investigator: C. Lindsey

Date of Fire: February 11, 2022





# RICHMOND FIRE DEPARTMENT

## FIRE INVESTIGATION REPORT

FIRE INVESTIGATION  
201 E. Franklin St.  
Richmond VA 23219

ACCIDENTAL

### Witness Five

[REDACTED]

On 2/11/2022 Investigator Kopacsi spoke with one of the original 911 callers [REDACTED] regarding the fire. She stated when she looked outside she could see the fire along the roofline of the school.

### Security/Surveillance Images

During the process of the investigation, efforts were conducted to identify still or video images captured prior to, during, and/or after the fire. As a result of these efforts, video images were identified. Specifically, these images were captured by surveillance footage located inside and outside of the school.

A copy of these images are held in the case file.

### Aerial Images

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] These images included the general fire scene area. A copy of these images will be maintained in the case file, and are available upon request.

### 3-D Images

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The images included the general fire scene and portions of the surrounding areas. A copy of the images are held in the case file.

### Fire Department Response

To collect additional data for consideration involving fire suppression and other similar activities, an official copy of the Richmond Fire Department incident report was obtained and reviewed. The following is a summary of the information obtained during my review of the report. Interviews of the first arriving fire companies and Battalion Chief Abdus-Sabur advised when he arrived on the scene the fire was ventilating from the roof area directly above the front main entrance doors located on the "A" side of the structure.

Overall, the information contained is consistent with the dates, times, and locations discovered during my investigation.

The body of the report revealed no information that would support, or preclude, any deliberate cause or act of negligence that would have resulted in the fire. The report provided no witness statements. There was no narrative included in outlining a hypothesized or probable sequence of events leading up to the fire.



# RICHMOND FIRE DEPARTMENT FIRE INVESTIGATION REPORT

FIRE INVESTIGATION  
201 E. Franklin St.  
Richmond VA 23219

**ACCIDENTAL**

## Exterior of Structure

The exterior areas of the structure examination included assessments and consideration of the remaining physical evidence. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

These efforts, considerations, and assessments provided sufficient evidence or information, which supports the following analyses:

Analysis of the fire and heat-related patterns and other evidence located exterior of the structure

- That the fire had not propagated from the exterior areas
- With the elimination of each of the ignition sources available first fuels located at or near the exterior areas having caused or contributed to the sequence of ignition for the fire

While examining the exterior of the structure I noticed obvious visible signs of extensive fire damage throughout the entire roof area of the structure. Numerous photographs of the structure were obtained to document the extent of damage to the structure.

### Safety Assessment

During the process of examination, efforts were conducted to determine if any safety-related conditions could be identified which may cause me (or any other individual) physical harm as a result of anticipated investigative efforts. Beyond the personal safety gear normally associated with fire investigation, (e.g., eye, hand, respiratory, and footwear protection), safety concerns were identified that required attention

### Preliminary Efforts

Examinations of the exterior and surrounding areas of the fire location were conducted. [REDACTED]



# RICHMOND FIRE DEPARTMENT

## FIRE INVESTIGATION REPORT

FIRE INVESTIGATION  
201 E. Franklin St.  
Richmond VA 23219

### ACCIDENTAL

#### *Exterior Areas (Non-Areas of Origin)*

- ***Fire Hydrants***

During the process of the examination, efforts were conducted to locate public or private fire hydrants. These efforts revealed public hydrant(s) existed that were designed for use in the event of a fire involving this structure or property.

- ***Electrical Service***

Examination of the structure revealed electrical service was provided via overhead power supply lines. Examination of the electric meter revealed it had been removed by Dominion Energy post-fire.

#### **Condition of Property**

The property location is best described as follows: a two-story masonry building with a basement. Examination of the areas outside the structure revealed the property appeared to be in good condition at the time of the fire. Specifically, considering the structure's age and use, it appeared to have been well-maintained.

Examination of the exterior areas of the property revealed:

- No evidence that the property may have been for sale, rent or lease
- No evidence was observed that the property had been in foreclosure or abandoned

#### **Property Fencing**

Examination of the fire loss property location revealed no perimeter fence existed.

Examination of the area revealed no observable pre-fire obstructions which would have been obstacles or restricted the fire department's access to the property.

#### **Structure's Construction**

Examination of the exterior wall areas revealed they had been constructed of masonry brick. Examination of the structure revealed alterations (*or additions*) that had been assembled after the structure's original completion. These changes involved the area that was located near the auditorium inside the structure located on the second floor. This area was a classroom where the gifted and talented students were located according to the school principal.

- ***Mechanical Security Devices***

Examination of the structure's exterior revealed that prior to the fire; no window security bars or other similar devices have been installed.

Examination of the structure's exterior revealed that prior to the fire, no metal security screen door devices had been installed (*beyond traditional door lock assemblies*).



# RICHMOND FIRE DEPARTMENT FIRE INVESTIGATION REPORT

FIRE INVESTIGATION  
201 E. Franklin St.  
Richmond VA 23219

ACCIDENTAL



### *Structure Exterior Areas*

The exterior areas of the structure were examined. These examinations included assessments and considerations of the remaining physical evidence.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



# RICHMOND FIRE DEPARTMENT

## FIRE INVESTIGATION REPORT

FIRE INVESTIGATION  
201 E. Franklin St.  
Richmond VA 23219

ACCIDENTAL

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

These efforts, considerations, and analyses provided sufficient evidence or information, which supports:

- That the fire had not propagated from any of the exterior areas
- The elimination of each of the ignition sources and available fuels located at or near the exterior areas as having caused or contributed to the sequence of ignition for the fire

As a result of these conclusive determinations, the exterior areas were determined not to have been the area of origin for the fire.

Digital photographic images were captured of the exterior areas providing a general overview of the contents, and conditions (or damages) documented. These images may contain, in part, the absence or presence of fire effects, fire department efforts, cleanup, or other activities that occurred after extinguishment.

Unless noted to the contrary, examinations of each of the exterior areas revealed:

- No cigarettes, cigarette butts, or other similar materials were found within the areas. No other indications were observed that suggested the occupants frequently smoked in the areas
- No evidence was observed of open flame or smoldering materials; e.g., candles, incense, or other similar materials
- Examination of the areas revealed no visible fire and heat-related patterns or other evidence consistent with an ignitable liquid having been dispersed

A preliminary examination of the structure's exterior wall areas was conducted. This process included analyzing and considering the visually observable absence or presence of fire, heat, and/or soot-related damage. During this process, areas were identified as having observable fire-related damages.



# RICHMOND FIRE DEPARTMENT

## FIRE INVESTIGATION REPORT

FIRE INVESTIGATION  
201 E. Franklin St.  
Richmond VA 23219

ACCIDENTAL

### Exterior Wall Areas

- **Window Documentation**

An examination of the exterior window(s) was conducted. [REDACTED]

These examinations revealed evidence of fire, heat, and soot-related damage. Additionally, these efforts provided insufficient evidence to determine the specific position of the window(s) during the "incipient stage" of the fire.

Continued examinations and analyses were conducted of the window(s) and remaining evidence. These efforts provided sufficient evidence to conclude that during the fire, ventilation occurred through the window(s).

- **Exterior Area Overall**

Examination of the exterior wall areas revealed evidence (*e.g., visual damage from fire, heat, soot, etc.*) that the area had experienced the effects of exposure to the fire. The observations included deposits resulting from soot and other incomplete combustion materials.

Analysis of the fire and heat-related patterns involving the exterior wall areas concluded, based on the fire's movement and intensity that the fire had propagated from an area within the structure.

### Roof Exterior

Examination of the structure's exterior roof areas revealed it had been constructed using composition type (asphalt shingles). Examination of the roof areas revealed fire and heat-related damage. These damages were the result of heat impingement from the interior areas.

Analysis of the roof located fire and heat-related patterns, by movement and intensity, supports that the fire had propagated from an area within the structure.

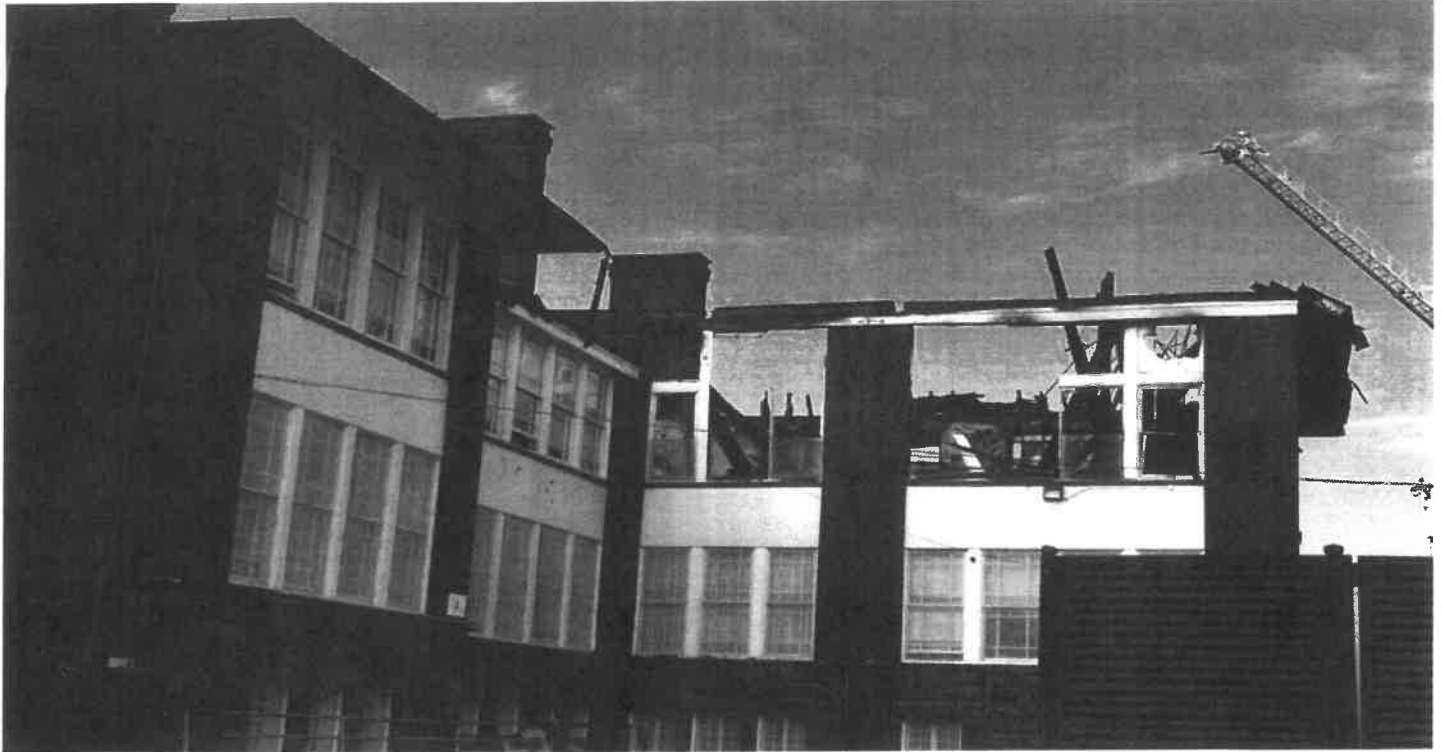


# RICHMOND FIRE DEPARTMENT

## FIRE INVESTIGATION REPORT

FIRE INVESTIGATION  
201 E. Franklin St.  
Richmond VA 23219

ACCIDENTAL



### *Interior (Non-Areas of Origin)*

The entrance to the interior of the structure was made on the "B" side of the building through the double doors. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] There was an absence of a fire suppression system, which would not have been required during the original construction of this building. The lack of an internal suppression system during the incipient stage of the fire caused or contributed to the propagation of the fire. In addition, this absence possibly contributed to the consumption of and degradation of the combustible materials within the structure.

[REDACTED] While documenting the various classrooms located on the interior of the structure, numerous photographs were taken to document the damage. Each classroom was examined to include assessment and consideration of remaining physical evidence. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Analysis of the fire and heat-related patterns, as well as, any deposit of soot materials, concluded that the fire had not propagated from these areas. These rooms were considered to be exposure rooms.

Incident #: C202204301

Investigator: C. Lindsey

Date of Fire: February 11, 2022



# RICHMOND FIRE DEPARTMENT

## FIRE INVESTIGATION REPORT

FIRE INVESTIGATION  
201 E. Franklin St.  
Richmond VA 23219

### ACCIDENTAL

Analysis of the evidence and information obtained during the preliminary examination revealed areas with the least amount of damage.

[REDACTED]

While examining the interior of the structure we started on the first floor from the entrance door located on the "B" side of the building. As I entered the structure on the floor I noticed the walls and hallway ceiling displayed signs of water damage as a result of fire department suppression efforts. There were also places within the hallway where the ceiling above was damaged as a result of water usage during suppression efforts. Photographs of this area were obtained for documentation purposes.

Further inspection of the first-floor area down the hallway I noticed a hole in the ceiling located near the main corridor of the structure. There was debris hanging from the ceiling, and fire debris spread all along the floor in this area. However, this did not appear to be the area of origin of the fire. While moving further throughout the structure while still on the first floor, I noticed a distinct fire pattern on the wall located directly below another hole in the ceiling. This whole was located near the bottom of the stairwell that led to the second floor just past the alarm panel that was near the front door. This fire pattern is best described as an inverted "V pattern". There was a metal chair rack with the remains of metal chairs sticking in this hole from the top down. These items were located on the second floor and had started to fall through the ceiling as a result of the ceiling falling in this particular area. While observing the surveillance footage on camera #3 the molten metal could be observed falling from above in the area where the inverted "V pattern" was located.





# RICHMOND FIRE DEPARTMENT FIRE INVESTIGATION REPORT

FIRE INVESTIGATION  
201 E. Franklin St.  
Richmond VA 23219

ACCIDENTAL



Incident #: C202204301

Investigator: C. Lindsey

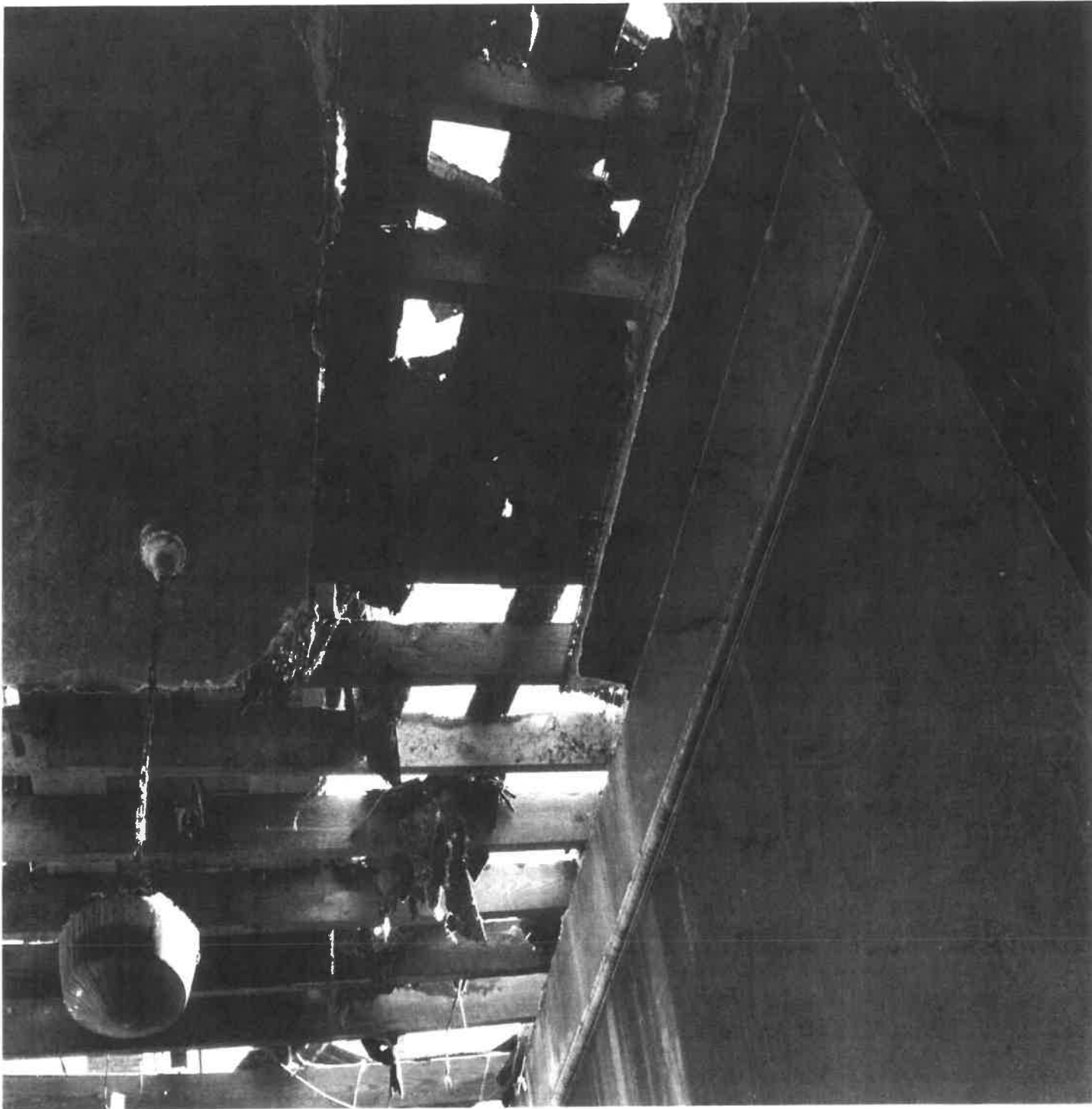
Date of Fire: February 11, 2022



# RICHMOND FIRE DEPARTMENT FIRE INVESTIGATION REPORT

FIRE INVESTIGATION  
201 E. Franklin St.  
Richmond VA 23219

ACCIDENTAL





# RICHMOND FIRE DEPARTMENT

## FIRE INVESTIGATION REPORT

FIRE INVESTIGATION  
201 E. Franklin St.  
Richmond VA 23219

### ACCIDENTAL

The examination then continued to the second floor of the structure starting on the "B" side of the building. While starting in this area of the structure I noticed the roof had been burned away on this side of the structure. The roof trusses were also burned, but the burn patterns indicated the fire was on the top side of the trusses. This was documented by photographs. There were large amounts of fire debris on the floor in the hallway and visible signs of smoke stains on the walls. The roof in this area of the structure had been burned completely away. There was a large pile of burnt debris located on the floor including shingles, insulation, and smaller pieces of wood that had fallen from the ceiling further ahead down the hallway. The roof trusses were still present but did present with signs of top-down burning on the majority of them. Each classroom presented with the same type of burn patterns on their respective ceiling trusses.

Each classroom was visually inspected for fire damage and then documented by photographs. [REDACTED] The fire damage observed on the second floor was deemed to be more significant than what was observed on the first floor. I continued documenting this area while moving towards the end of the hallway located at the opposite end of the building where the attic area was located which contained the classroom and auditorium that Mrs. Jacobs informed investigators of during the documented interview. Once I made it to this area of the second floor I noticed the fire damage appeared to be the most significant compared to the other areas of the structure. The charring on the remaining wood was heavier, and there were signs of incomplete combustion located in the classroom located next to this area. The roof in this area of the structure had collapsed onto the floor. This area could not be accessed due to safety concerns for the investigators.

Incident #: C202204301

Investigator: C. Lindsey

Date of Fire: February 11, 2022



# RICHMOND FIRE DEPARTMENT FIRE INVESTIGATION REPORT

FIRE INVESTIGATION  
201 E. Franklin St.  
Richmond VA 23219

ACCIDENTAL



Incident #: C202204301

Investigator: C. Lindsey

Date of Fire: February 11, 2022



# RICHMOND FIRE DEPARTMENT

## FIRE INVESTIGATION REPORT

FIRE INVESTIGATION  
201 E. Franklin St.  
Richmond VA 23219

ACCIDENTAL

### Fire Control

Examinations conducted of the interior areas revealed no fire extinguishment system had been installed within the structure. The possibility exists that fire and/or building codes do not require a built-in extinguishment system in this type of structure.

The absence of a fire extinguishment system, during the incipient stage, caused or contributed to the propagation of the fire. In addition, this absence contributed to the consumption of and degradation of the combustible/ignitable materials within the area.

- ***Hand-Held Extinguishers***

Examinations conducted of the areas revealed hand-held fire extinguishers.

- ***Fire - Smoke Detector / Alarm***

Examinations conducted of the interior areas revealed that prior to the fire event, fire or smoke detector /alarm(s) had been present. They had been attached to the upper portion of the following compartment(s): office, hallways, and stairwells.

During the process of the examination and investigation, evidence or information was revealed that suggests a fire or smoke detector /alarm-related "delay in discovery" of the fire occurred.

Examination of the device revealed that it had been designed to be "hardwired with a battery backup".



# RICHMOND FIRE DEPARTMENT

## FIRE INVESTIGATION REPORT

FIRE INVESTIGATION  
201 E. Franklin St.  
Richmond VA 23219

ACCIDENTAL



Incident #: C202204301

Investigator: C. Lindsey

Date of Fire: February 11, 2022



# RICHMOND FIRE DEPARTMENT FIRE INVESTIGATION REPORT

FIRE INVESTIGATION  
201 E. Franklin St.  
Richmond VA 23219

ACCIDENTAL

## Exposure Rooms - Areas

Each of the compartments and areas within the structure were examined. These examinations included assessments and considerations of the remaining physical evidence. These evaluations included considering and analyzing the absence or presence of physical evidence involving:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

As a result of these efforts, considerations, and assessments sufficient evidence or information was revealed that supports the following analyses:

Analysis of the fire and heat-related patterns, as well as, any deposit of soot materials, concluded that the fire had not propagated from these compartments (*or areas*).

Analysis of the evidence and information was sufficient to eliminate each of the available ignition and fuel sources as having caused or contributed to the sequence of ignition for the fire. As a result of these conclusive determinations, each was determined to have been damaged to varying degrees as a result of exposure to the fire. Each of the compartments (*or areas*) was then considered "Exposure Rooms/ Compartments".

Digital photographic images were captured of the compartments (*or areas*). This was done to provide a general overview of the contents, and conditions (*or damages*) documented. These captured images may contain, in part, the absence or presence of exposure to the fire, fire department efforts, cleanup, or other activities that occurred after extinguishment.

A preliminary examination of the structure's interior was conducted to identify areas exhibiting any visually observable absence or presence of fire, heat, and/or soot-related damage. During this process, the area with the least damage was identified.

Analysis of the evidence and information obtained during this preliminary examination revealed areas with the least damage. [REDACTED]



# RICHMOND FIRE DEPARTMENT

## FIRE INVESTIGATION REPORT

FIRE INVESTIGATION  
201 E. Franklin St.  
Richmond VA 23219

### ACCIDENTAL

#### Group Areas

Examinations were conducted on each of the exposure areas. The exposure areas included: the hallway, classrooms, and restrooms on all three floors of the structure.

Examination of these areas revealed evidence (*e.g., visual heat and/or soot deposits and damage*) of the effects, to varying degrees, of exposure to the fire. Observations included radiant and convective heat transfer, direct flame impingement, fire, and heat-related damage, as well as, the consumption of, and degradation to the combustible.

The vertical and horizontal areas had moderate to severe damages, resulting from radiant and convective heat, as well as, direct flame impingement.

The combustibles in the upper-most portions of the compartments sustained the most fire and heat-related damage. The lower portions had comparatively less fire and heat-related damages.

As a result of the exposure to fire and heat-related energy, consumption of, and degradation of the combustible materials occurred. The only areas with remaining combustibles were those protected from heat energy, or where the process of combustion had been limited by ventilation and/or extinguishment efforts.

Analysis of each of the exposure rooms revealed the greatest fire and heat-related damage was located in the auditorium area located on the second floor.

An overall review of the areas revealed that the majority of the contents had not been significantly disturbed since the fire.

- ***Smoking Activity***

Examination of these areas revealed no cigarettes, cigarette butts, or other similar materials. No other indications were observed that suggested the occupants frequently smoked in the area.

- ***Open Flame / Smoldering***

Examination of these areas revealed no evidence (*e.g., candles, incense or other similar materials*) of an open flame or smoldering materials.

#### Adverse Conditions

Examinations of the fire location were conducted to identify and evaluate changes that occurred during, or after, the fire. These efforts focused on the changes that may have been obstacles to determining the origin, or cause, of the fire. The result of these efforts revealed no adverse conditions affecting this fire scene examination.

#### Building Defects

Examinations were conducted to identify building defects. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Those efforts concluded with no visible building defects that could have caused this fire. In addition, no defects were observed that would have substantially contributed to the fire's spread.





# RICHMOND FIRE DEPARTMENT

## FIRE INVESTIGATION REPORT

FIRE INVESTIGATION  
201 E. Franklin St.  
Richmond VA 23219

ACCIDENTAL

### Building or Fire Code

Examinations were conducted to locate any identifiable fire or building code issues. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] During this process, fire or building code issues were identified.

During the on-site examination, sufficient evidence or information was revealed that a pre-fire building or fire code violation existed.

*Assistant Fire Marshall Capt William Spindle conducted the Fire Safety Inspection of this facility on 8/24/2021 and issued a Notice of Violation. See the below attachment:*



# RICHMOND FIRE DEPARTMENT

## FIRE INVESTIGATION REPORT

FIRE INVESTIGATION  
201 E. Franklin St.  
Richmond VA 23219

**ACCIDENTAL**



**City of Richmond**  
**Department of Fire and Emergency Services**  
Fire Prevention Division  
201 E. Franklin Street  
Richmond, VA 23219  
(804) 646-6840 Fax (804) 646-7485

**Notice of Violation**

CITY OF RICHMOND SCHOOL BOARD  
William Fox Elementary  
2300 HANOVER AVE  
Richmond, VA 23220

2/16/2022

On 8/24/2021, an inspection of 2300 HANOVER AVE, Richmond VA 23220 revealed the following violations of the Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code. Each Violation is listed below to include the code section and a description of the condition cited. A re-inspection of the property will be conducted to determine whether or not these violation have been corrected.

**CODE SECTION / INSPECTION ITEM**

**1086.3 Illumination emergency power.** Correct By: 9/30/2021 Date Corrected: \_\_\_\_\_

The power supply for means of egress illumination shall normally be provided by the premises' electrical supply. In the event of power supply failure, an emergency electrical system shall automatically illuminate all of the following areas:

1. Aisles and unenclosed egress stairways in rooms and spaces that require two or more means of egress.
2. Corridors, exit enclosures and exit passageways in buildings required to have two or more exits.
3. Exterior egress components at other than their levels of exit discharge until exit discharge is accomplished for buildings required to have two or more exits.
4. Interior exit discharge elements, as permitted in Section 1027.1, in buildings required to have two or more exits.
5. Exterior landings as required by Section 1008.1.6 for exit discharge doorways in buildings required to have two or more exits.

The emergency power system shall provide power for a duration of not less than 90 minutes and shall consist of storage batteries, unit equipment or an on-site generator. The installation of the emergency power system shall be in accordance with Chapter 27 of the International Building Code.

\*\*\*EEL out throughout\*\*\*

1. Next to room 114, 214, X2 near door #2, Second floor near teacher work room, X2 in auditorium

**1010.1 Scope.** Correct By: 9/30/2021 Date Corrected: \_\_\_\_\_

The provisions of this section shall apply to ramps used as a component of a means of egress.

Exceptions:

1. Other than ramps that are part of the accessible routes providing access in accordance with Sections 1108.2 through 1108.2.4 and 1108.2.6 of the International Building Code, ramped aisles within assembly rooms or spaces shall conform with the provisions in Section 1028.11.
2. Curb ramps shall comply with ICC A117.1.
3. Vehicle ramps in parking garages for pedestrian exit access shall not be required to comply with Sections 1010.3 through 1010.9 when they are not an accessible route serving accessible parking spaces, other required accessible elements or part of an accessible means of egress.

\*\*\*Chains on doors\*\*\* Stated they are removed daily by maintenance during school hours

8/24/2021 Inspection of 2300 HANOVER AVE

1 of 3

Incident #: C202204301	Investigator: C. Lindsey	Date of Fire: February 11, 2022
------------------------	--------------------------	---------------------------------



# RICHMOND FIRE DEPARTMENT FIRE INVESTIGATION REPORT

FIRE INVESTIGATION  
201 E. Franklin St.  
Richmond VA 23219

## ACCIDENTAL

### CODE SECTION / INSPECTION ITEM

**315.2.3 Equipment rooms.** Correct By: 9/30/2021 Date Corrected: \_\_\_\_\_

Combustible material shall not be stored in boiler rooms, mechanical rooms or electrical equipment rooms.

\*\*\*Combustibles and lunch tables in boiler room and combustibles in sprinkler room\*\*\*

**2403.12.6.1 Exit sign illumination.** Correct By: 9/30/2021 Date Corrected: \_\_\_\_\_

Exit signs shall be either listed and labeled in accordance with UL 924 as the internally illuminated type and used in accordance with the listing or shall be externally illuminated by luminaires supplied in the following manner:

1. Two separate circuits, one of which shall be separate from all other circuits, for occupant loads of 300 or less; or
2. Two separate sources of power, one of which shall be an approved emergency system, shall be provided when the occupant load exceeds 300. Emergency systems shall be supplied from storage batteries or from the on-site generator set, and the system shall be installed in accordance with NFPA 70. The emergency system provided shall have a minimum duration of 90 minutes when operated at full design demand.

\*\*\*Exit lights out X2 in auditorium, 2nd floor near teacher work room, near the front door, near door 214, on top of stairs by room 204.

**1030.3 Obstructions.** Correct By: 9/30/2021 Date Corrected: \_\_\_\_\_

A means of egress shall be free from obstructions that would prevent its use, including the accumulation of snow and ice.

\*\*\*Copier in front of exit in modular class left\*\*\*

**605.3 Working space and clearance.** Correct By: 9/30/2021 Date Corrected: \_\_\_\_\_

A working space of not less than 30 inches (762 mm) in width, 36 inches (914 mm) in depth and 78 inches (1981 mm) in height shall be provided in front of electrical service equipment. Where the electrical service equipment is wider than 30 inches (762 mm), the working space shall not be less than the width of the equipment. No storage of any materials shall be located within the designated working space.

Exceptions:

1. Where other dimensions are required or allowed by NFPA 70.
2. Access openings into attics or under-floor areas which provide a minimum clear opening of 22 inches (559 mm) by 30 inches (762 mm).

\*\*\*Electrical Panel Blocked right side of storage\*\*\*

**907.9 Inspection, testing and maintenance.** Correct By: 9/30/2021 Date Corrected: \_\_\_\_\_

The maintenance and testing schedules and procedures for fire alarm and fire detection systems shall be in accordance with Sections 907.9.1 through 907.9.5 and NFPA 72.

\*Alarm System in "Trouble" mode and no updated annual inspection report

**605.5 Extension cords.** Correct By: 9/30/2021 Date Corrected: \_\_\_\_\_

Extension cords and flexible cords shall not be a substitute for permanent wiring. Extension cords and flexible cords shall not be affixed to structures, extended through walls, ceilings or floors, or under doors or floor coverings, nor shall such cords be subject to environmental damage or physical impact. Extension cords shall be used only with portable appliances.

Incident #: C202204301	Investigator: C. Lindsey	Date of Fire: February 11, 2022
------------------------	--------------------------	---------------------------------



# RICHMOND FIRE DEPARTMENT

## FIRE INVESTIGATION REPORT

FIRE INVESTIGATION  
201 E. Franklin St.  
Richmond VA 23219

ACCIDENTAL

### CODE SECTION / INSPECTION ITEM

\*\*\*Brown extension cord used as permanent electrical source in Ms. Gilbert's Office\*\*\*

Failure to correct violations within the time specified in this notice may result in appropriate legal proceedings. An owner or occupant may appeal a decision of the Fire Marshal to the City of Richmond Board of Fire Appeals within fourteen (14) calendar days from receipt of this notice.

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding this notice, feel free to contact me in the Fire Marshal's Office between the hours of 8:00 am and 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday.

Inspected By: WILLIAM SPINDLE  
Assistant Fire Marshal

Issued To: \_\_\_\_\_

8/24/2021 Inspection of 2300 HANOVER AVE

3 of 3

Incident #: C202204301

Investigator: C. Lindsey

Date of Fire: February 11, 2022



# RICHMOND FIRE DEPARTMENT FIRE INVESTIGATION REPORT

FIRE INVESTIGATION  
201 E. Franklin St.  
Richmond VA 23219

**ACCIDENTAL**

### Wear and Tear

The on-site examinations of the areas within the structure that I was able to safely access included efforts to identify visually observable wear and tear and/or age-related damages. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] As a result of these efforts, none were found to exist.

### *Area of Origin*

This particular portion of the report is unable to be completed at this time due to not being able to access what has been determined as the area of origin which includes the attic space. Within this area of origin, a classroom was identified after speaking with the principal and other RPS staff. This information will not be available until the City of Richmond, and VaCorp insurance company portion of the investigation had been completed. This includes the shoring up of the building, and removal of asbestos, and the building engineer determines this area of the building is safe for investigators to enter. On 6/6/2022 I responded back to the scene of this fire to meet with representatives from various interested parties in this case. The area of origin appears to be somewhere between the second and third floor near what used to be a stairwell of some sort. However I was never able to confirm what was located in this area prior to the fire.

### **Origin and Cause Determination**

This particular portion of the report is unable to be completed at this time due to not being able to access what has been determined as the area of origin which includes the attic space. Within this area of origin, a classroom was identified after speaking with the principal and other RPS staff. This information will not be available until the City of Richmond, and VaCorp insurance company portion of the investigation had been completed. This includes the shoring up of the building, removal of asbestos, and the building engineer determining this area of the building is safe for investigators to enter.



# RICHMOND FIRE DEPARTMENT

## FIRE INVESTIGATION REPORT

FIRE INVESTIGATION  
201 E. Franklin St.  
Richmond VA 23219

### ACCIDENTAL

#### ***Area of Origin***

As a result of the examinations and consideration of the remaining burn patterns, witness statements, and fire flow patterns this fire was determined to have originated from within the structure. The area of origin was the attic area located on the second floor within the structure which contained a separate classroom and auditorium according to interviews conducted with the school principal.

#### ***Fuel Sources***

TBD

#### ***Causes Considered***

Efforts were conducted to determine the specific action, or inaction, which caused the competent ignition source and the first fuel ignited to interact which resulted in the fire. Among the fire cause scenarios considered were: degradation of materials over time, occupant/invitee negligence, accidental or incendiary (arson), and natural (lightning).

In field investigation and examination provided sufficient evidence or information which eliminated some of the causes considered. The causes that could not be eliminated were accidental.

Analysis of all the evidence and information revealed during this examination provided insufficient evidence to support any conclusive determination regarding the specific cause of the fire.

#### ***Hypotheses Developed***

Based on the evidence and information revealed, working hypotheses have been identified which describes both the sequence of ignition (*that may have resulted in the fire*) and the fire's development (*fire spread*). The following are supported by the evidence and information revealed to date:

***Hypothesis Number One:***

***Hypothesis Number Two:***

***Hypothesis Number Three:***

Without the benefit of additional evidence or information the specific cause of the fire will remain undetermined.



# RICHMOND FIRE DEPARTMENT FIRE INVESTIGATION REPORT

FIRE INVESTIGATION  
201 E. Franklin St.  
Richmond VA 23219

ACCIDENTAL

## Summary

Based upon the totality of information obtained during this investigation, this fire was determined to have originated from an area within the structure. Once ignited, the fire burned upward and outward, communicating to the surrounding combustibles. After identifying the area of origin, additional efforts were focused on available ignition and fuel sources, as well as, fire cause scenarios.

Analysis of all the evidence and information supports conclusive determinations regarding the origin of the fire and competent ignition source.

Analysis of all the evidence and information revealed was insufficient to support conclusive determinations regarding the first fuel ignited.

### *Accidental Cause*

Analysis of all the evidence and information revealed was sufficient to support that the fire was the result of an unintentional act. During this investigation, no evidence or information was discovered that would support any deliberate act which would have caused this fire.

### *Points Considered*

This report contains opinions and conclusions involving the fire's origin (*and spread*), the first fuel ignited the competent ignition source, as well as the cause of the fire.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



# RICHMOND FIRE DEPARTMENT FIRE INVESTIGATION REPORT

FIRE INVESTIGATION  
201 E. Franklin St.  
Richmond VA 23219

ACCIDENTAL

## Recommendations

This particular portion of the report is unable to be completed at this time due to not being able to access what has been determined as the area of origin which includes the attic space. Within this area of origin, a classroom was identified after speaking with the principal and other RPS staff. This information will not be available until the City of Richmond, and VaCorp insurance company portion of the investigation had been completed. Which includes the shoring up of the building, and removal of asbestos, and the building engineer determines this area of the building is safe for investigators to enter.

- *Fire Origin*

*See the above notes as it relates to this portion of the report as well.*

*Jos M. Marshall*  
Judy. Margaret Marshall  
CBS 6  
**RECEIVED**

JUL 1 2022

RICHMOND FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE  
RICHMOND FIRE DEPT.