

Columbus

AFRICAN

News Journal

January 2012



CRISTO REY COLUMBUS HIGH SCHOOL TO OPEN IN 2013

A new high school with a focused mission and a unique approach is coming to Columbus. Work is underway to open Cristo Rey Columbus High School in 2013. Cristo Rey will be a Catholic, college preparatory high school for economically challenged students. The school will be part of the national Cristo Rey network of schools. The first Cristo Rey school was opened 15 years ago in Chicago. Since then, the number of Cristo Rey schools has grown to 24. These schools are intended to address the fact that a college preparatory education has become completely unaffordable to the poorest in our society.

Every year about 1.3 million students drop out of high school, and students from low income families drop out at six times the rate of students from affluent families. Similarly, while 59% of students from families in the top half of income levels in America are college graduates, only 12% of students from the bottom half are. Clearly more needs to be done to prepare economically challenged students to succeed in high school and in college.

Cristo Rey is part of the solution to this problem. Cristo Rey high schools have a 15 year track record of taking in low income students from poor performing schools, graduating them from high school and sending them on to college. Cristo Rey schools do this in percentages far higher than public schools with children from similar backgrounds. Over the past several years, 98% of the seniors in Cristo Rey high schools across the country

graduated and were accepted into college. Cristo Rey schools do this by providing a high quality, faith-based, college preparatory education in an environment of high expectations. The Cristo Rey Network's rigorous academic model gives students the teaching, tutoring, and supervision necessary to achieve those high standards.

Cristo Rey students will participate in a unique work-study program that gives them the opportunity to work five days a month at white collar businesses, such as law firms, insurance companies, banks, universities, accounting firms, and hospitals. This innovative arrangement allows students to pay for most of their tuition, and it gives them exposure to a professional world they would never have experienced without Cristo Rey. The experience, knowledge, and self-confidence they gain from their jobs will complement their education and help them graduate from high school, go on to college and succeed there as well.

This month Cristo Rey Columbus hired its first two employees to bring this school to life. Jim Foley, formerly a partner at the law firm, Vorys, Sater, Seymour and Pease, was hired as President of Cristo Rey. He will be in charge of the overall operation of the school. James Ragland, the former Executive Director of the University District Organization and former legislative aide to Councilwoman Charleta Tavares, will be the Development Director of Cristo Rey. James will be in charge of all fundraising efforts on behalf of the new school and will be a member of the school's leadership team.

Cristo Rey will begin meeting with potential students and their parents later this year. The Cristo Rey team will have informational meetings at middle schools, churches, and social service agencies. For more information, contact Jim Foley at jimf@cristoreycolumbus.org or 614.395.1505, or James Ragland at jamesr@cristoreycolumbus.org or 614.256.8122.