



Mayor Stoney Appoints Senior Policy Advisor for Youth Initiatives

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CITY OF RICHMOND
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Mayor Stoney Appoints Senior Policy Advisor for Youth Initiatives

Richmond, VA - Mayor Levar M. Stoney is pleased to announce Eva Colen is joining the administration as a Senior Policy Advisor for Youth Initiatives.

A Norfolk native who currently lives in east Richmond, Colen will be responsible for advancing the mayor's policies and priorities to benefit the "whole" child by collaborating with Richmond Public Schools through the Education Compact and overseeing the Mayor's focus on out-of-school time opportunities.

"Eva is a difference maker and a great fit for our team," said Mayor Stoney. "Her can-do work ethic, experience and innovative thinking on the challenges we face will make things happen for the young people in our city."



A former school teacher and education equity advocate, Colen said that she is looking forward to leveraging her experience in education to align City services with Richmond Public Schools and external partners around shared goals for Richmond's youth.

"We will pursue all available opportunities to secure the resources to offer our kids what they deserve," Colen said. "I'm especially thrilled for the opportunity to work with Mayor Stoney, who has shown a clear commitment to working collaboratively to expand opportunity and improve outcomes for our City's kids."

Colen's position is being funded as part of an 18-month pilot program with The Community Foundation, which has served the Greater Richmond region for nearly 50 years.

"The Foundation is grateful that Eva Colen has accepted the position and will be the first to serve in this role and will be a pacesetter for results," said Scott Blackwell, Chief Community Engagement Officer for the Foundation. "Eva's experience with policy and advocacy work, as well as her ability to make things happen on the ground will serve the city well."

Eva has called Richmond home since 2010. Her first job out of college was as a high school English teacher in Philadelphia through Teach For America, an experience which cemented her conviction that all children, no matter their background, possess extraordinary potential. After the classroom, Eva spent time recruiting teachers to high-poverty public school districts, advocating for education policy in the General Assembly and engaging her community in conversations about educational equity. Most recently, Eva founded and led Virginia Excels, a nonprofit advocacy organization dedicated to advancing policies and programs that are good for kids, families and their communities.

Eva lives in Church Hill with her husband, Derek Salerno, their nine-week-old son, Abram, a RACC rescue pup and three cats. She holds a bachelor's degree from Columbia University and a master's in Urban Education from the University of Pennsylvania. She is an alumna of ChamberRVA's RVA Leadership Lab, 50CAN's Education Advocacy Fellowship, Leadership for Educational Equity's Public Leaders Fellowship and New Venture Fellowship, YWCA Richmond's Young Women's Leadership Alliance and Leadership Metro Richmond's Leadership Quest Class of 2017.

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