



River Valley School District Strategic Plan 2023-2028
2018-2023 STRATEGIC PLAN ACHIEVEMENT EVALUATION
(Final: 2/2/23)

In June 2018, Board of Education adopted the *River Valley School District Strategic Plan 2018-2023*. The 2018 *Strategic Plan* charted the District's decision making over the ensuing five years in the categories of student achievement and instruction, student engagement, facilities, community communications and engagement, and finances and operations. Reviewing the 2018 *Plan's* strategies and implementation achievement is an important early step in the District's process to update the *Strategic Plan*.

The following pages include a full account of the strategies from the 2018 *Plan*. The strategies responded to eight strategies issues (i.e., key questions) prioritized at the time. Metrics were offered to help measure future strategy achievement. The final column on the attached pages indicate actual achievement in executing or realizing each strategy over the past 4 ½ years.

In sum, much has been accomplished to implement the 2018 *Strategic Plan*. Still, some strategies have not been implemented, or not fully implemented. There are specific reasons tied to some strategies. Broader reasons relate to two significant and unanticipated changes since 2018. The first was the COVID-19 pandemic, which radically shifted District priorities starting in March 2020, removed opportunities for professional development and many group meetings, resulted in significant staff turnover particularly related to earlier-than-anticipated retirements, and continues to affect students and staff to this day. The second was a Superintendent transition that began in 2018 and culminated in the hiring of a new, permanent Superintendent in 2020.

Additionally, the 2018 *Strategic Plan* anticipated an annual satisfaction survey of parents, students, and teachers to be first administered in Winter 2019. This survey was expected to generate data to measure performance in implementing certain strategies. Due at least in part to the major changes described above, the District has not administered an annual satisfaction survey. The District has administered other surveys around certain specific topics of concern, including transportation and school calendar.

In conclusion, reviewing the following pages may help the District decide which issues and strategies—as-is or with modifications—ought to be carried forward to the updated Strategic Plan. This review will also help identify issues, strategies, and performance metrics that are no longer relevant or were unexpectedly challenging to carry out or measure. New and amended strategies are bound to replace them as the update process moves forward in 2023.

Issue I.A: How can we maintain the quality and diversity of our educational offerings?

Strategy	Timeframe	Resources	Metrics	Accomplishments
1. Secure sufficient operating funds to continue quality, comprehensive programming and maintain moderate class sizes.	November 2018 referendum, authorizing fund increase through 2021-22	Administrative staff, with potential for outside support	Sustainable operating budget through 2021-22, with fund balance between 25% and 30%	Successful 2019 and 2022 referenda have allowed for sufficient operating funds. Fund balance is currently around 40%, but spending plan allowed under 2022 referendum will reduce to 30%.
2. Update K-12 curriculum across all subjects. Consider updated state and “next generation” standards and updated teaching materials. Integrate technology, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math), and the arts across various subjects.	Initial planning in summer 2018, with deployment by 2019-20 school year, staged as warranted across grades (6-12 may be first) and subjects	Administrative staff and teachers, using operating funds	Successful deployment of updated curriculum for grades 6-12 by 2019-2020 and grades K-5 by 2020-21; other metrics part of program design	Within the last two years, the District has identified essential standards for grade level and content for K-12. District has not yet updated curriculum, largely because the pandemic response captured resources and shifted focus to the mental health and acclimation of students and teachers first to virtual learning and then to in-person learning again.
3. Create a STEM Lab at River Valley Elementary School. Develop programming for the STEM Lab that is integrated with curriculum and learning objectives.	Create lab for 2018-19 school year; develop programming over that and the following year, in conjunction with execution of strategy 2.	Endowment grant received for creation; teacher involvement, operating fund, and further grants for evolution of use	Successful launch of Lab by October 2018; develop metric for STEM Lab success as part of program development	Lab was created, but there is not an associated STEM curriculum, professional development, or designated teacher(s). Lab space is currently used for before and after school programming. Updating curriculum in general (i.e., strategy 2) would need to proceed to understand how STEM is best incorporated.

Strategy	Timeframe	Resources	Metrics	Accomplishments
4. Continue incorporating technology in classrooms. Develop expectations for teacher and student integration in instruction and communication.	Ongoing, given accelerating change in technology and limited lifespan of equipment	Administrative staff and operating budget to fund and implement technology plan	Increased % of proposed survey respondents indicating successful use of technology	Pandemic accelerated technology, but not always in expected ways. Grades 3+ now have one-to-one Chromebook adoption. No specific plan yet for incorporating technology into classroom instruction.

Issue I.B: How can we improve our students' achievement, particularly those who are less economically advantaged?

Strategy	Timeframe	Resources	Metrics	Accomplishments
1. Provide additional and customized support to students who require it, as soon as practical, including assistance/assistants for high need students.	By end of 2018-19 school year	Part of "District Goals 2015-19"; activities and monitoring funded by operating fund	By spring 2019, increase by 6% the percentage of students (in reading by grade level) needing only the universal curriculum	The District refined the "District Goals 2015-19" approach, and then implemented it. In both the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years, 3% of students required intervention for reading, which increased to 5% in 2021-22 due to pandemic "catch-up."
2. Continue to improve readiness for post-secondary education and careers, among students of all achievement levels.	By end of 2018-19 school year	Part of "District Goals 2015-19"; activities and monitoring funded by operating fund	By spring 2019, increase by 6% students who enroll in a post-secondary institution and increase economically disadvantaged students enrolling in post-secondary institution so percentage above state average	Percentage of District graduates immediately attending post-secondary education decreased from 74% in spring 2018 to 68% in spring 2019, linked to a handful of student decisions. Ther following two years' data was skewed by pandemic. Economically disadvantaged District graduates from Spring 2020 and 2021 attended post-secondary education at 5-12% greater rate than those statewide.
3. Continue to identify, nurture, and challenge high-achieving students in different disciplines.	Ongoing	Assigned staff people to identify and encourage candidate students	By spring 2022, increase by 15% both enrollment in AP and similar classes and apprenticeships and similar	District removed minimum GPA to participate in apprenticeships because that was excluding key student population. % participation change from '18-'19 as follows: AP, +18%; apprenticeship, +45%.

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Strategy	Timeframe	Resources	Metrics	Accomplishments
4. Explore adoption of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework to develop more flexible environments and remove barriers to accommodate individual learning differences.	2018-19 exploration; 2019-20 decision; 2020-22 potential major initiative	Administrative staff and teachers, using operating funds	Meet timeframe target dates; develop metrics as part of program design if District adopts UDL framework	UDL Framework not adopted, largely resulting from interest shift and time constraints associated with the pandemic and staff turnover.

Issue II.C: How can we support all families to adapt to reconfigurations of grade levels and buildings?

Strategy	Timeframe	Resources	Metrics	Accomplishments
<p>1. Enhance programming to welcome students and families to their new schools, settling in to focus on 4K/5K, 1st graders, 5th graders, 9th graders, and new students to the District on ongoing basis.</p>	<p>Particular emphasis in Fall 2018, with continuation thereafter</p>	<p>Teachers, Administration, PTOs</p>	<p>Increased % of proposed survey respondents indicating welcome/comfort with new school</p>	<p>Adjustments made to school calendar, including that transition grades now start a day sooner than others. Open houses and other techniques also deployed. Celebration of different communities continues with display in High School foyer. No obvious lingering effects of 2018/19 school and grade shifts. General satisfaction survey not administered.</p>
<p>2. Continue and enhance efforts to establish sense of belonging for all students, families, and community members. For example, continue student-to-student mentoring and explore “no one eats alone” or similar efforts.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Teachers, student support staff, older students assisting with younger</p>	<p>Increased % of survey respondents each year responding favorably to “belonging” questions</p>	<p>Major point of emphasis. Climate goal is that kids all feel connected. Social-emotional connection curriculum for teachers introduced. Connection survey completed every year. Survey asks each student who they are connected to, if no one, intervention advised. Have recently added teachers to find to which students they connect. Have restored family activities following pandemic. Early Learning Center outreach has returned. 4K kids asked to visit in August for screening. Number of high school students providing mentoring in elementary and middle school classrooms has increased.</p>

Strategy	Timeframe	Resources	Metrics	Accomplishments
<p>3. Explore a before- and after-school care program at River Valley Elementary School (see also strategy III.D.1 regarding transportation).</p>	<p>Possible 2018-19 commencement, pending analysis of recent survey</p>	<p>District operating funds, possibly supplemented by modest fees and outside grant funding</p>	<p>Increased retention of resident elementary school students in District schools; program support among parents and annual survey respondents</p>	<p>Program introduced and in operation. Survey administered for after-school program with very positive results. Not clear if metric has been met, but enrollment has not decreased as much as previously expected.</p>

Issue II.D: How can we increase the breadth and depth of our students’ participation in co-curricular activities?

Strategy	Timeframe	Resources	Metrics	Accomplishments
<p>1. Explore restoration of after school transportation to facilitate co-curricular participation across all grade levels and increase participation in potential after-school care program.</p>	<p>Possible 2018-19 commencement</p>	<p>Pending successful referendum</p>	<p>Increasing participation in co-curricular activities and after-school care program (see strategy II.C.3); Increasing ridership</p>	<p>Was explored, including a parent survey. Based on limited interest, Board in May/June 2021 elected not to restore after school transportation.</p>
<p>2. Encourage participation in clubs at the elementary and middle schools. Such efforts will build an ethic of participation at younger grades, expose students to new ideas and activities, and enhance connections between students and teachers.</p>	<p>2019-20 discussion; 2020-21 implementation</p>	<p>Teacher-led groups based on teacher/ student interest, to be held during recess and/or after school</p>	<p>50% elementary student participation by 2022-23</p>	<p>Middle school clubs partially last year and more-or-less fully in 2022-23. Insufficient teacher volunteer interest at elementary school. River Valley Little League has helped.</p>

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<p>3. Engage with students who do not participate or who only sporadically participate in co-curriculars, learning what inhibits their participation. Act accordingly to increase participation based on survey results.</p>	<p>Winter 2019, with additional/corrective actions as soon as practical thereafter</p>	<p>District administrative staff</p>	<p>Increase high school participation in co-curriculars to 95% by 2022-23</p>	<p>Pandemic significantly affected co-curricular participation, and staffing changes have had secondary impact. Focus is on getting students back to feeling comfortable. Therefore, participation rates have not yet increased from 2018 levels. As of January 5, 2023, 70.4% of high school students had participated in co-curriculars in the 2022-23 school year to date, but some co-curriculars had yet to begin. New stadium opening in September 2022 should positively influence associated athletic and band participation.</p>
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Issue III.E: How can we decide how best to invest in our school facilities?

Strategy	Timeframe	Resources	Metrics	Accomplishments
1. Reengage in an open, long-range school facility planning effort, and select a preferred long-term path. Different alternative paths may include renovations to existing schools, further consolidation, and/or expansions. Selection of a long-range path will help ensure that short-term capital expenditures are made wisely.	Initiate in Spring 2019, with completion of <i>planning</i> effort in 2020. Any major construction expenditure not expected until late in 5-year period, or after.	Citizen task force to explore range of alternative paths and advise Facilities Committee; reengage architectural support as appropriate	Community understanding and involvement in planning process; Community accepted long-range facility plan	Long-range facility planning effort initiated in Fall 2022. Previously delayed by Superintendent turnover then pandemic.
2. Make short-term investments in existing school buildings with reference to selected long-range plan. Apply particular emphasis on maintenance, repair, and security.	Ongoing	Operating revenue	% of survey respondents who agree that school facilities are well-maintained and provide a healthy environment; Each school building has physical security enhancements by 2021-22 school year	CESA 10 completed a facilities audit of facilities, which has allowed District to be more proactive and strategic with maintenance plan and budget. Maintenance items have been included in referenda. Physical security improvements made to the extent allowed by current building layouts. No general satisfaction survey administered.

Strategy	Timeframe	Resources	Metrics	Accomplishments
<p>3. Work with Arena and Lone Rock communities on productive, community-enhancing reuse of decommissioned elementary school buildings. The definition of “community-enhancing” may vary by building and by community need.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Driven by local community interests, with decisions by Board as advised by Facilities Committee and administration</p>	<p>Final reuse decisions and transfers before 2019-20 school year</p>	<p>District sold buildings after offering to donate them to two villages. Both villages declined. Arena building has been repurposed for housing and community use (apartments, food pantry, gymnastics studio). Lone Rock building was anticipated to be used for housing, but this has yet to materialize.</p>

Issue IV.F: How can we foster trust and communications among our District community?

Strategy	Timeframe	Resources	Metrics	Accomplishments
1. Initiate annual parent, student, and District staff satisfaction surveys. Surveys would help demonstrate interest in their opinions, understand best how respondents prefer communications and operational choices, and provide metrics for some strategies in this Plan.	Starting in Winter 2019	Primarily through digital platform (e.g., Web-based survey), but with hard-copy surveys also available	At least 50% student/parent and 80% staff participation; Respondents residence locations and demographics reflective of community	No annual general satisfaction survey administered, but topic-specific surveys have been administered (e.g., transportation, calendar, pandemic response). Long-range facilities planning process will also have survey.
2. Seek additional positive interaction outlets with the entire District community. These may include teachers, students, and parents telling their River Valley story; school open houses; and District and/or Chamber social events to bring community together (e.g., “luau”).	Beginning in Fall 2019; ongoing thereafter	Collaboration with Chamber and others; use of various media, including local paper, other publications, social media, YouTube, etc.	Greater levels of satisfaction in “involvement” questions on proposed annual survey	A number of outlets pursued. Expansion of the school fair, and not having school that day, has made it more of a community event. RVTV (YouTube channel), Facebook page, and other social media has expanded. District website improved. Google Classroom has better connected teachers to students.
3. Enable community members affected by potential decisions to be fully informed of issues and options, and invite early and continued involvement in decision making processes.	Whenever major decisions are being contemplated (e.g., referendum)	Will vary depending on issue	Greater levels of satisfaction in “involvement” questions on proposed annual survey	Emphasis for Spring 2022 referendum information was on transparency and honesty, including meetings in each village. All Board meetings are now livestreamed and recorded on YouTube.

Issue V.G: How can we continue to retain and attract quality teachers and other staff?

Strategy	Timeframe	Resources	Metrics	Accomplishments																		
1. Assure that the District has sufficient operating funds to remain competitive on teacher pay and benefits, and to retain moderate class sizes and adequate support staff.	Ongoing	Operating fund, pending successful operating referendum	Teacher pay/benefits competitive with area districts	Pay is very competitive when compared to districts to southwest and do not have a teacher shortage (some emergency licenses). No increases in class sizes over past five years. Have scaled support staff to student enrollment. Staffing is viewed at a comprehensive K-12 level, rather than building by building, which has provided for flexibility and efficiency.																		
2. Financially reward teachers who demonstrate growth, development, and long-term commitment to the River Valley School District.	Initiate program following successful operating referendum	Operating fund	95% teacher and support staff retention rate (not including retirements)	Financial incentives in place for continuing education credits and longevity. Actual retention rates, not including retirements: <table style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th style="text-align: center;"><u>Teachers</u></th> <th style="text-align: center;"><u>Support Staff</u></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>'18-'19</td> <td style="text-align: center;">94%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">100%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>'19-'20</td> <td style="text-align: center;">93%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">94%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>'20-'21</td> <td style="text-align: center;">99%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">96%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>'21-'22</td> <td style="text-align: center;">94%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">92%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>'22-'23</td> <td style="text-align: center;">92%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">81%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		<u>Teachers</u>	<u>Support Staff</u>	'18-'19	94%	100%	'19-'20	93%	94%	'20-'21	99%	96%	'21-'22	94%	92%	'22-'23	92%	81%
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Strategy	Timeframe	Resources	Metrics	Accomplishments
<p>3. Continue and explore less tangible ways to attract and retain teachers. These may include efforts to provide an even more supportive work environment, develop leadership, increase flexibility (e.g., job sharing), take greater advantage of specializations, and support more and better housing options.</p>	<p>Ongoing, with individual efforts rolled out as time and budget permit</p>	<p>Administrative staff and teacher discussion; Discussion and collaboration with real estate pros, munis, and others regarding housing options</p>	<p>95% teacher and support staff retention rate; Stable to increasing % of community members who agree that quality of teaching is excellent</p>	<p>Work to develop substitutes into full-time teachers. Enhanced staff orientation and beginning of each year. In partnership with Chamber, brought in local food vendors and provided new staff welcome bags. Provide holiday gift bag for every employee. Housing options remain a challenge, but District staff have assisted individuals.</p>
<p>4. Provide time and opportunities for teacher training, idea sharing, planning, interaction, and leadership development, and to engage teachers in major decisions affecting them and the District. Engage teachers and other staff in carrying out Strategic Plan.</p>	<p>Ongoing, with individual efforts rolled out as time and budget permit</p>	<p>Operating fund; administrative staff planning with teacher involvement</p>	<p>Increasing % teachers expressing satisfaction with job and professional development</p>	<p>No general satisfaction survey, but staff survey in June 2022 provided some data and good retention rate appears to be an indicator. Administration developed Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) for deeper conversations about teaching and learning. Four teacher leadership teams trained in summer 2022, and all staff have had professional development in this area. District teams—in which all staff are encouraged to participate—have been formed around virtual learning, curriculum renewal, and district assessments.</p>

Issue V.H: How can we address looming budget deficits while advancing progress on other issues?

Strategy	Timeframe	Resources	Metrics	Accomplishments
<p>1. Consider various approaches to reduce expenditures without compromising resolution of other issues. These may include continued staff reductions if and when enrollment continues to decline and exploring increases in certain high school class sizes within a potential college-type lecture format.</p>	<p>2018-19 and ongoing thereafter</p>	<p>School Board, with advice from District administrative staff</p>	<p>District annual expenditure increases no greater than the rate of inflation</p>	<p>District has met performance metric. Staff reductions have paralleled enrollment decreases. (Strategy may have been prepared with concerned over major enrollment decrease, which did not occur.)</p>
<p>2. Explore long-range facility options that would reduce operating costs. These might include further consolidation and/or greater transportation efficiency.</p>	<p>2019-2020 study</p>	<p>To occur as part of long-range facility planning effort (see strategy III.E.1)</p>	<p>Same as strategy III.E.1</p>	<p>Will be part of long-range master planning process in 2023, which will investigate further consolidation and greater transportation efficiency.</p>
<p>3. Pursue various avenues to increase funding outside of the property tax. These may include increased grant procurement, advocating overhaul to state shared revenue formula, and increasing partnerships and donation opportunities.</p>	<p>2018-19 and ongoing thereafter</p>	<p>Administrative staff review of various grants available, particularly to pursue strategies or reduce property tax funded expenses; Potentially recruit outside advice on fundraising</p>	<p>% of community members who agree that “the District uses resources effectively and practices sound financial management”</p>	<p>Pursued a donation partnership for new stadium, with 50% of funding from private sources. Have advocated for state funding changes. No general satisfaction survey, but successes on the two operational referendums may be considered an alternative performance measure.</p>

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Strategy	Timeframe	Resources	Metrics	Accomplishments
4. Pursue operating referendum.	November 2018 referendum, authorizing fund increase through 2021-22	Administrative staff, with potential for outside support	Sustainable operating budget through 2021-22, with fund balance of 25-30%	Operating referenda approved in 2019 and 2022, and fund balance sufficient.