



River Valley School District Strategic Plan 2023-2028
COMMUNITY PLANNING WORKSHOP RESULTS
Facilities Study Advisory Task Force
February 15, 2023

As a component of one of its regular meetings, approximately 40 members of the Facilities Study Advisory Task Force participated in at this workshop. The purpose was to gain input on strategic issues that participants believed the River Valley School District (RVSD) is and will be confronting over the next year to five years—not just related to facilities—and potential strategies to address key issues.

Task Force members assembled into eight groups with four to six members in each group. First, each group member was asked to individually brainstorm as many strategic issues as they could over a five to ten minute period. Next, each small group convened and selected an identified issue around which to suggest strategies. Selected issues were often those that included or encompassed commonly-identified issues from individuals in that group.

The results are as follows:

GROUP 1

Issues identified by individuals:

- Secure our buildings
- Enhance student experience / Interviewing students to see what they wish was available
- Life classes
- Support mental health

Key Issue selected by group: “Safety and Security”. Strategies identified:

- One entrance to building – must make contact
 - Students outside must return through secure entrance
- Metal detectors
- All doors locked, exit only
 - No outside handles
- Video / audio at entrances and through buildings

GROUP 2

Issues identified by individuals:

- Declining enrollment
- Addressing the challenge of declining enrollment, needs, and financial reality
- Exporting our talented graduates when we’re done raising and educating them
- Keeping and attracting teachers

- Students understanding the importance of good education
- Parents understanding the importance of good education
- Funding improvements
- Communication

Key Issue selected by group: “Striving for a Lifetime of Excellence”. Strategies identified:

- Communication – all (Admin/Teachers, Parents/Students)
- Promoting positive school achievement
- Understanding the intent and need of a good education
- Raising expectations
- Respect – Develop
- Parent involvement in school and with their children
- Attract and retain staff
- Keeping students in local communities after graduation

GROUP 3

Issues identified by individuals:

- Teacher / staff salary vs. state /national averages + additional incentives
- Loss of staff leading to loss of (quality) opportunities
- Staff diversity and job needs
- At home / community access to internet speeds - similar to areas like Madison
- Community long range plans incorporate school needs
- Business recruitment / tax base / job skills
- Budget deficit after referendum
- Outdated / aging buildings not equipped for modern instruction / technology
- Updated facilities (that match current education)
- Not having updated equipment / safety of environment
- Building decline causing accessibility issues and not keeping up with advancing learning opportunities and patterns

Key Issue selected by group: “Staff Retention and Recruitment”. Strategies suggested:

- Housing availability / desirability / affordability
 - Financial incentive for District employees
- Competitive salaries
- Incentives / non salary benefits
 - Gym access
 - Lunch / meals
- After school adult classes / maker space
- Childcare availability
- Financial incentives
 - Anniversary recognition bonus
 - Referral bonus

GROUP 4

Issues identified by individuals:

- How does the enrollment increase?
- Declining enrollment, how to draw families in
- How does the District survive financially?
- Constantly having referendums
- Up to date facilities related to student population
- Lack of childcare in the community – for early childhood and summers
- Expand before and after care to support families
- Increase summer school programs/ camps
- Community Center to use + time and resources
- Shared community space for gathering / exercise – to engage community
- Storage spaces for all materials
- Appropriate office space for all privacy needed at times
- Student transportation shorter for younger students
- How do we maintain the level of courses as they are, if not increase?
- Support classes that help students excel – meet them at their learning level and prepare them for future
- Improving, advance courses / programs with diverse spaces to encourage educations opportunities for tech school / college
- ChatGPT, and how to instruct with changing technologies

Key Issue selected by group: “Enhancing Child / Student Care Throughout the Year”. Strategies identified:

- Pioneer a birth-to-3 year old care program
- Offer programs during summer to enhance educational opportunities
 - More outdoor and hands on courses (fun and education)
 - Diversity of land offerings – sustainable
 - Support students who want to advance learning for post-secondary options
 - Increase programs for work options
 - Play groups – create community for vast interests
 - Add experience with garden groups (example)
- Exercise - Space to burn energy
 - Swimming Pool
- Who should pick up child?
- Animal Facilities – Exposure to care and education
- Fab Lab – technology knowledge
- While young are at facility
 - Parents get tech lessons
 - Photo lessons
 - Support groups – sharing
 - Education on age levels (concerns / age groups)
 - What is safe for your children? Keep educating

GROUP 5

Issues identified by individuals:

- Further development of bus ride issues (length, need, geography)
- Further consolidation
- One building allows so much flexibility – teaching staff, kitchen, custodial
- Maintaining great teachers in our district (stay long term)
- Student achievement
- Facilitating technology education in all classes to meet future needs
- Identifying grade level expectations for future-ready skills
- Attract families to River Valley

Key Issue selected by group: “One Building / Campus”. Strategies suggested:

- Further consolidation
- Flexible staffing / resources (may create savings)
- May develop more community buy in
- Shared resources
- Shared funding increases \$

GROUP 6

Issues identified by individuals:

- Gain community support for capital referendum
- Maintain and improve educational offering with declining enrollment and budget pressure
- Declining enrollment
- Competitive academics
- Unique programs
- Provide logistical support for all co-curricular activities (effective scheduling, space logistics, etc.)
- Attract and retain staff, students, and family
- Is RV offering a competitive and inspiring education for students and staff? Do facilities support that?
- Better communication with staff, students, family and community
- Access to affordable, high-quality childcare
- In the center of a sustainable / organic region. Are farm kids learning well?
- Natural resources
- What are our current advantages and are we exploiting them?
- Access to quality affordable housing
- Community partnerships?

Key Issue selected by group: “How Do We Identify Needs of Students?* (*The whole student – not just, but including, curriculum)”. Strategies suggested:

- Whole student
 - Health – physical, mental and emotional
 - Nutrition – including school meals

- Housing insecurity?
- Academics / good teachers
- Job training / career preparedness
- Life skills / Financial, relationships, empathy
- Community rootedness and connection
- Arts, creativity, sports, hobbies
- How do we know? How do we identify? How to evaluate? Are the kids alright? What stress are they under?
 - Exit interviews with departing staff and students
 - Gather data – graduation and employment rates
 - Work with community partners on issues where RVSD has less direct control
 - Support staff – be creative!
 - Integrate community strengths
- Coaching / support new teachers
- Spaces / structures contributing to mental health

GROUP 7

Issues identified by individuals:

- Are our services and programs serving the whole family?
- Support for young families – daycare, before/after care
- Student mental health
- Students have a strong sense of self and sense of belonging to our community
- Students have a respect and understanding for and about technology use and ethics
- Students have strong grasp on and ability to achieve basic human daily needs and tasks
- Student achievement gaps (Low socioeconomic students especially)

Key Issue selected by group: “Supporting Families (Bringing more to River Valley)”. Strategies suggested:

- Early 3K – 4K – 5K
 - Daycare
- After school / before school care
- Transportation support: Buses, shuttles, carpools (evening events)
- Meal support
- (High School) Student mental health – support connections to community
- More diverse class offerings

GROUP 8

Issues identified by individuals:

- Referendum every 3 years getting communities to support the students
- Staff mentorship for new staff and sub teachers
- Communication flow between levels
- Staff numbers
- Student decline

- Development of a mentorship program / students with community mentors
- Classes that are not available that students want or need for future plans
- Gymnastics needs to be at high school
- How do we better deal with bullying? We are losing kids to homeschooling or other districts.
- Too much schoolwork / class is on Chomebooks / electronics
- Buildings being used efficiently
- Traffic flow

Key issue identified by group: “Safety and Security / Bullying”. Strategies suggested:

- Arming teachers with the tools they need to know how to deal with discipline issues
- Increasing communication between / among the different schools and grade levels
- Staff and substitute teacher mentorship
- Improved plans for staff
- Increased family involvement / counseling
- Student development – making sure the classes are available for what the kids will need for their future
- Mental illness awareness
- Mentorship with community members to offer other outlets and activities
- Administrative support to the staff
- Consistency with discipline