



**River Valley School District Strategic Plan 2023-2028**  
**COMMUNITY PLANNING WORKSHOP RESULTS**

Plain  
March 13, 2023

The purpose of this and other similar workshops 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, and potential strategies to address key issues.

Six community members, the Superintendent, and the RVSD's strategic planning consultant attended this workshop. Because of the modest number of attendees, the workshop was organized as a discussion in which issues and strategies were freely shared. The following were the identified issues (numbered) and strategies related to the issue (lettered—though there was not always a strategy tied to an issue). The issues and strategies are organized below by strategic plan category of interest, not in order of importance or when they were discussed during the workshop.

**Student Achievement and Instruction**

1. How can the RVSD best sequence curriculum/learning goals from 4K to 12<sup>th</sup> grade?
  - a. More curriculum documentation.
  - b. Noted that K-12 math curriculum sequencing has been completed.
  - c. Consolidation of elementary schools has helped.
2. How can new teachers get fully trained on curriculum when they arrive?
  - a. Professional Learning Communities of teachers in each grade have helped.
  - b. Assign teacher mentors.
3. How can curriculum embrace what is unique and special about the River Valley (e.g., ecology, farming, theater)?
  - a. School forest on Highway 23 could be better utilized—home of rare American Chestnut.
  - b. Embrace outdoor education; make better use of the woods behind elementary school (after clearing invasives).
  - c. APT provides excellent opportunities through enriching field trips, classroom visits, and workshops.
  - d. School Fair is a great asset; could this be grown?
  - e. Sustainable gardening as a potential focus.
4. What is the incentive to make sure that teachers are following the curriculum and best practices, particularly in this era of burnt out teachers?
  - a. Continued education and updating, particularly with technology.

- b. Make efforts to make sure everyone is on the same path.
- 5. How can the FFA/agricultural education better consider the technological side of farming?
  - a. Education on coding may be useful so farmers can maintain modern machines.
  - b. Flip side is that students in agricultural education still need to learn the basics—how to take things apart and put them together.

### **Student Engagement and Support**

- 6. How can we make sure we are not pushing students to four-year colleges when technical education may be a better, more affordable fit for many, and one that relates more to the types of jobs in the River Valley?
  - a. This may be a RVSD strength given technical educators and programs.
  - b. Make it clear that a technical career path is not an inferior path; remove stigma.
- 7. Can we have partnerships with companies to make sure that teachers and students are well clothed for Wisconsin weather, particularly noting that 40% of elementary school students are eligible for free and reduced lunch?

### **Facilities**

- 8. Can various shop spaces be co-located?
  - a. Current situation was based on particular teacher skills in the past.
- 9. What facilities could logically be shared with and among other adjacent school districts?
- 10. How can we improve benefits of school facilities to the older population and others without kids in school?
  - a. Explore opportunities for schools to be more open on evenings, weekends, and summer.
- 11. How can the RVSD understand desired patterns of usage so that facilities can support them?
  - a. Facility planners should make sure to ask people what is not working, and apply their professional expertise to that input.
- 12. What facility planning results would best benefit the students and the RVSD?
  - a. One set of opinions: Consolidate all of 4K-4 at one campus for full benefit of adjacencies. Handicapped accessibility, modern teaching methods, and safety may suggest school upgrades.
  - b. Another set of opinions: Is there room to consolidate 4K-4 without significant spending? Referendum for a new school or major expansion may fall flat, particularly so soon after and maybe coupled with other schools closing and without significant tax base growth in the RVSD.
- 13. Where are the places to linger and connect in the River Valley area? Can upgraded, open schools serve that role?

## **Community Communications and Engagement**

14. How can the RVSD better engage the community in understanding what educational and career-path support options are available in the schools?
15. How can schools be opened up more to the community?
  - a. More adult education opportunities. Gardening? Welding?
16. How can the RVSD engage parents to better instill work ethic in students? (Pandemic did not help for many.)
17. How can the RVSD encourage more former students back home to raise a family?
  - a. Utilize alumni list more strategically, such as a survey opportunity and/or to keep non-resident alumni more connected to the place and experience.
  - b. Use alumni list to understand place of residence, career, and willingness to connect with current students with similar career goals or destinations.
18. How can the RVSD better market itself to families currently living outside of the district?
  - a. Figure out who we are, then tell people about it.
  - b. Need more child care and quality, affordable housing, especially within the Villages (makes for easier transportation to school).
  - c. Affordability is an asset, even compared to Sauk Prairie.
  - d. Continuing to expand broadband access will allow more people with jobs headquartered in the Madison area to live in the River Valley area.
  - e. Show the successes of former RVSD students; that one can get the foundation in the RVSD to do anything they want (connect with alumni outreach effort).

## **Finance and Operations**

19. How can RVSD assure that libraries and other common spaces are almost always open for student use?
  - a. Make sure someone else is covering when librarian cannot be there.
20. How can students and teachers better utilize the libraries?
  - a. Teachers should occasionally use part of block time to visit or direct students/groups to library for research and project advancements.
  - b. Library use during Blackhawk Time makes sense.
21. How can we bring more non-property tax funds into the RVSD, ideally without the strings often attached to state and federal grants?
  - a. Can large solar farm operators be tapped for funding, for example? Think creatively.
22. How can the RVSD adapt to lower enrollment as a probable future?
23. What is the RVSD's plan to reduce teacher burnout?
  - a. Weekly connection and/or relaxation events. (Meditation? Venting session?)
  - b. Create more space for "teacher humanity" during the day.