

# RIVER TRAILS SCHOOL DISTRICT #26

## Strategic Plan 2026-2031

Goal #1	Goal #2	Goal #3
<b>Maximize the Potential of All Learners</b> We will empower all learners to be life-ready by aligning our curriculum for consistency, modernizing support services for equity, and investing in comprehensive professional learning to ensure our educators meet the needs of every student.	<b>Foster a Districtwide Culture of Belonging</b> We will cultivate a districtwide culture of belonging by deepening “Heart Ready” practices, build trust through proactive outreach, and foster collaborative partnerships to ensure students, staff, families, and the community feel valued, connected, and supported.	<b>Ensure Long-Term District Sustainability</b> We will ensure long-term district sustainability through transparent financial stewardship, the modernization of our facilities, and a steadfast commitment to recruiting and retaining a premier, high-quality workforce.
<b>Strategy 1A</b> Enhance and align a modern, universal curriculum for all learners.	<b>Strategy 2A</b> Expand heart ready practices to ensure consistency in support and reduce stressors.	<b>Strategy 3A</b> Strengthen operations, systems, and resources to sustain a high-quality workforce.
<b>Strategy 1B</b> Provide a responsive continuum of services and support systems.	<b>Strategy 2B</b> Streamline communications and public relations to increase trust and transparency.	<b>Strategy 3B</b> Maintain safe, resource-efficient, and optimal physical environments.
<b>Strategy 1C</b> Establish an aligned and comprehensive professional learning system.	<b>Strategy 2C</b> Develop intentional feedback structures to ensure stakeholders feel valued and heard.	<b>Strategy 3C</b> Ensure transparency and the strategic use of all financial resources.

### KEY ACTIVITIES

### STRATEGY DESCRIPTIONS

<b>STRATEGY 1A: Enhance and Align a Modern and Transparent Curriculum</b> We will empower all learners to be life-ready by cultivating a modern, transparent curriculum that balances academic core standards with engaging extracurricular and encore programming. By auditing core subjects and encore programming, we will ensure that priority standards—from literacy and math to SEL and the arts—are vertically aligned and consistently assessed through a continuous loop of planning and adjusting.	<b>STRATEGY 2A: Expand Heart Ready Practices</b> We will expand the consistent implementation of "Heart Ready" practices district-wide to ensure equitable support for students and staff. By monitoring and measuring the impact of these practices, we will reduce academic and environmental stressors while fostering a culture of care and responsive learning environments where all stakeholders are ready to thrive.	<b>STRATEGY 3A: Optimize Operational Infrastructure and Workforce Support</b> We will optimize our operational infrastructure, systems, and resource allocation to create a high-functioning environment. This work will empower and sustain a premier professional workforce by ensuring that internal systems provide the necessary support for staff to perform at the highest level.
<b>STRATEGY 1B: Provide a Responsive Continuum of Services</b> We will provide a responsive continuum of services by establishing a rigorous program review cycle for all student support systems. By auditing and refining our delivery models, we will eliminate barriers to success, modernize learning opportunities, and ensure that enrichment and support services are both relevant and equitable for all learners.	<b>STRATEGY 2B: Streamline Communications and Public Relations</b> We will streamline communications and public relations to build trust through clarity, transparency, and accessibility. By optimizing digital platforms, embedding multimedia resources, and showcasing district achievements, we will strengthen community engagement and ensure that all families remain informed, connected, and valued.	<b>STRATEGY 3B: Modernize and Maintain Physical Infrastructure</b> We will modernize and maintain all physical infrastructure to ensure every facility provides a secure, desirable, and resource-efficient environment. By prioritizing facility health and safety, we will create physical spaces that optimally support student learning, staff productivity, and community pride.
<b>STRATEGY 1C: Establish a Comprehensive Professional Learning System</b> We will create a districtwide professional learning system that aligns professional development, coaching, and collaborative learning to instructional priorities. This system will support educators in designing rigorous curriculum, implementing inclusive practices, and strengthening behavior supports, thereby fostering collective efficacy and improved learning experiences for all students.	<b>STRATEGY 2C: Develop Partnerships and Feedback Structures</b> We will create intentional feedback structures to ensure every family, staff member, and student feels valued, heard, and represented. By strengthening onboarding, increasing student voice, and expanding two-way parent engagement, we will reinforce a sense of belonging and empower all stakeholders to actively participate in the life of the district.	<b>STRATEGY 3C: Maximize Fiscal Impact and Transparency</b> We will maximize the impact of every dollar through transparent financial reporting and data-driven budgeting. By aligning all fiscal resources with organizational priorities, we will ensure responsible stewardship of taxpayer funds while maintaining the highest quality of educational programming.

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**Success Measures and Targets**

Learning Systems		Connections		Resources and Finance	
<b>K-1 Growth (Tier 1):</b> Fall-to-Spring student growth percentile on Aimsweb (ELA & Math).	<b>Target:</b> >65% (High Growth)	<b>Student Belonging:</b> Percent of students reporting a "Sense of Belonging" on Panorama.	<b>Target:</b> >70%	<b>ISBE Financial Profile:</b> Annual designation from the Illinois State Board of Education.	<b>Target:</b> 4.0 (Highest Designation)
<b>K-1 Growth (Tier 2):</b> Fall-to-Spring student growth percentile on Aimsweb (ELA & Math).	<b>Target:</b> >65% (High Growth)	<b>Staff Belonging:</b> Percent of teachers/staff reporting a "Sense of Belonging" on Panorama.	<b>Target:</b> >80%	<b>Audit Integrity:</b> Number of comments or findings in the annual independent clean audit reports.	<b>Target:</b> <1
<b>K-1 Growth (Tier 3):</b> Fall-to-Spring student growth percentile on Aimsweb (ELA & Math).	<b>Target:</b> >65% (High Growth)	<b>Academic Personalism:</b> 5Essentials performance score for "Academic Personalism."	<b>Target:</b> >59% (Strong)	<b>Student Safety Perception:</b> 5Essentials score reflecting how safe students feel in and around school buildings.	<b>Target:</b> >69% (Strong)
<b>Grades 2-8 Growth:</b> Percent of students meeting individual growth targets on MAP (ELA & Math).	<b>Target:</b> >70% (Exceptional Growth)	<b>Student-Teacher Trust:</b> 5Essentials performance score for "Student/Teacher Trust."	<b>Target:</b> >59% (Strong)	<b>Staff Commitment &amp; Culture:</b> Scale score on the 5Essentials "School Commitment" metric.	<b>Target:</b> >59% (Strong)
<b>State Proficiency:</b> Percent of students in "Proficient" or "Exceeds" categories on IAR (ELA & Math).	<b>Target:</b> ELA 60% / Math 58%	<b>Digital Engagement:</b> Annual Smore newsletter views and link click volume on key focus areas.	<b>Target:</b> Stable annual views with a 3% YoY increase on key news links.	<b>Professional Retention:</b> Annual percentage of teachers retained within the district.	<b>Target:</b> 92%
<b>Collaborative Culture:</b> 5Essentials performance score for "Collaborative Teachers."	<b>Target:</b> >59 (Strong)	<b>Public Relations &amp; Print Communications:</b> Direct-mail community newsletters and strategic press releases.	<b>Target:</b> 4 community mailings per year and 5 press releases per trimester, covering all major fiscal, facility, and student milestones.		

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<b>Strategy 1A</b>	<b>Strategy 2A</b>	<b>Strategy 3A</b>
Enhance and align a modern, universal curriculum for all learners.	Expand heart ready practices to ensure consistency in support and reduce stressors.	Strengthen operations, systems, and resources to sustain a high-quality workforce.
<u>Key Activities</u>	<u>Key Activities</u>	<u>Key Activities</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>K-8 Alignment Audit:</b> Vertically and horizontally align core disciplines, encore programming, and assessments to ensure consistency across all buildings.</li> <li>○ <b>Grading &amp; Reporting:</b> Unify grading practices, homework policies, and reporting structures to ensure equitable expectations for all students.</li> <li>○ <b>Curriculum Visibility &amp; Compliance:</b> Make learning priorities and curriculum frameworks clearly visible to all stakeholders through an evaluation process focused on content quality, learning standards, and state compliance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Social-Emotional Framework &amp; Tiered Training:</b> Establish a district-wide SEL framework that maps student relationships, identifies programming gaps, and assesses staff training needs for multi-tiered student supports.</li> <li>○ <b>Academic Stress Mitigation:</b> Execute an "Academic Stress Audit" of student workloads and assessment practices to identify and address pressure points.</li> <li>○ <b>Student Wellness Partnerships:</b> Partner with multi-grade student forums to identify daily stressors and co-design solutions that improve the school day experience.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Retention &amp; Recruitment Pipelines:</b> Implement "Stay Interviews," proactive recruitment to cultivate a supportive culture, improve retention, and expand peer-leadership growth opportunities.</li> <li>○ <b>Operational Continuity &amp; Cross-Training:</b> Audit cross-department workflows to document standard operating procedures, eliminate "single points of failure," and implement a formal employee cross-training program.</li> <li>○ <b>Support Staff Empowerment Hub:</b> Launch a user-friendly hub and visual "how-to" infographics to simplify critical processes (payroll, benefits, work orders).</li> </ul>
<b>Strategy 1B</b>	<b>Strategy 2B</b>	<b>Strategy 3B</b>
Provide a responsive continuum of services and support systems.	Streamline communications and public relations to increase trust and transparency.	Maintain safe, resource-efficient, and optimal physical environments.
<u>Key Activities</u>	<u>Key Activities</u>	<u>Key Activities</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Specialized Service Modernization:</b> Audit and refine delivery models for Special Education (PK-8), Multilingual (EL), and Enrichment services.</li> <li>○ <b>Aligned Program Reviews:</b> Establish a recurring program review cycle to monitor the quality, effectiveness, and state compliance of all specialized tracks.</li> <li>○ <b>Integrated Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Support:</b> Define, audit, and modernize SEL services to address system-wide gaps.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Consolidated Family Resource Hub:</b> Streamline the parent experience by creating a single digital location for essential guides, system links, and archived updates to prevent information loss.</li> <li>○ <b>Strategic Progress Dashboard:</b> Build a public webpage, progress tracker, and informational publications to maintain transparent strategic plan updates.</li> <li>○ <b>Optimize Public Communication Channels:</b> Rebrand district newsletters to showcase student achievements and communicate investment impacts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Long-Range Facility Roadmap:</b> Execute comprehensive engineering inspections and space utilization studies to guide multi-year infrastructure modernization.</li> <li>○ <b>Proactive Safety Framework:</b> Standardize emergency protocols with law enforcement and integrate mass notification systems (PA/Classroom/Mobile).</li> <li>○ <b>Digital &amp; Physical Security:</b> Enhance threat monitoring on district devices and increase student awareness of anonymous reporting systems to proactively protect school safety.</li> </ul>

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<b><u>Strategy 1C</u></b>	<b><u>Strategy 2C</u></b>	<b><u>Strategy 3C</u></b>
Establish an aligned and comprehensive professional learning system.	Develop intentional feedback structures to ensure stakeholders feel valued and heard.	Ensure transparency and the strategic use of all financial resources.
<b><u>Key Activities</u></b>	<b><u>Key Activities</u></b>	<b><u>Key Activities</u></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Comprehensive Teacher Learning Plans:</b> Design and Implement district-wide training focused on universal curriculum, inclusive practices, and behavioral systems.</li> <li>○ <b>Shared Leadership &amp; Collaboration:</b> Refine and sustain adaptive strategies for professional teams to strengthen data-driven instruction and collective teacher efficacy.</li> <li>○ <b>Collaborative Team Frameworks:</b> Equip professional teams with structural tools, defined roles, team norms, and "our promise" frameworks to deepen instructional collaboration.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Student Leadership Pathways:</b> Expand formal opportunities for student representation to embed youth perspectives into district planning.</li> <li>○ <b>Two-Way Family Engagement:</b> Expand parent focus groups and dedicated feedback channels, including celebratory parent "shout-out" networks.</li> <li>○ <b>Supportive Staff Onboarding &amp; Culture:</b> Enhance onboarding with formal mentorship, student/team introductions, and structured activities that build relationships and deep cultural understanding.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Public Financial Reporting:</b> Publish an annual "Budget in Brief" and an interactive "Transparency Dashboard" to clearly visualize district expenditures and tax dollar allocations.</li> <li>○ <b>Long-Term Solvency Modeling:</b> Implement 5-year financial forecasting to align expenditures with revenue and maintain prudent reserve levels.</li> <li>○ <b>Governance &amp; Compliance Excellence:</b> Standardize internal controls through a formal manual and automated compliance tracking to ensure clean annual audits.</li> </ul>