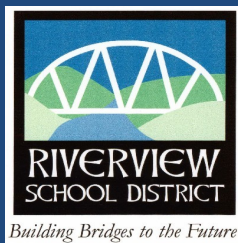


Building Bridges to the Future

Riverview School District Entry Plan Summary Report To The Community

Dr. Anthony L. Smith, Superintendent

***“Building Bridges to Elevate Student Readiness for
College, Career, and Life”***



Building Bridges to the Future

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2014-15 Riverview School Board of Directors

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Introduction



DR. ANTHONY L. SMITH

The Riverview School Board has charged me with continuing to elevate our “super goal” of improving student achievement for every student while continuing to build upon priorities established in the district’s strategic plan.

Dear Students, Staff, Parents and Community Members,

The purpose of my entry plan was to view all district efforts with a new lens and provide transparency around planned objectives for the coming school years through the district’s successful strategic plan. A key priority within this effort was to reach out to a diverse group of stakeholders to gain input that may not have been previously heard through traditional forms of communication. This meant setting up dialogue sessions with individuals and groups throughout our district, community, and region. These sessions included over 80 formal conversations and more than 400 informal conversations. Additional information was gained as I visited our schools and classrooms, observed classroom instruction, and attended staff meetings and professional development. I also was present at after-school activities which included academic presentations, sporting events, concerts, productions, community events, and more. The basic questions I asked were:

- What should the superintendent know about you and/or the group you belong to?
- What is working well and should be sustained?
- What needs attention and improvement?
- How can the district best serve your group’s educational interests?
- What can you or your group do to help advance the district?

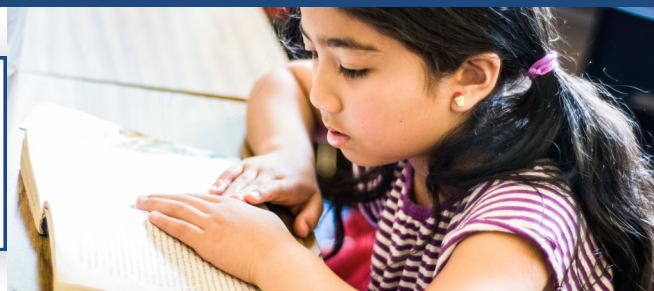
This report includes a synopsis of key themes that emerged and strategic plan updates. The information gained was used as part of constructing new objectives within the strategic plan in June, 2014.

Thank you for the opportunity to share what I have heard and learned through these important dialogue sessions. To a person, everyone was committed to assisting the Riverview School District in supporting our students’ success!

Sincerely and respectfully,

Dr. Anthony L. Smith

Phases



The entry plan has three distinct phases that follow:

Phase I: Pre-Entry

Activities Designed to
Prepare for Seamless
Transition into
Superintendent Role

2012-2013 School Year

Phase II: Entry

Priorities to Ensure
Successful First Year
of Superintendent

July, 2013 through March, 2014

Phase III: Post Entry

Development of
Summary Report and
Strategic Plan Updates

April through June, 2014

SUMMARY REPORT

Overall high satisfaction with the school district from internal and external stakeholders

During interviews with students, parents, staff, and community members, individuals and groups, high satisfaction with the Riverview School District was expressed. People spoke to the past ten years and overall dramatic improvements in student performance, openness to parent and community participation and input, opportunities for students, and increased positive relationships and communication with the district and its schools. Respondents talked about the Riverview community and its schools being a special place where all stakeholders go the extra mile to ensure student success.

The following comment was offered from a long-time community member and parent:

"I like almost everything about the district and community. The quality of education has gone up and facilities have improved, as well as an increase in activities and events...great alternative programs for the size of district – one size does not fit all. The Riverview School District is now a destination. We now have people moving here because of its schools."

Partnerships



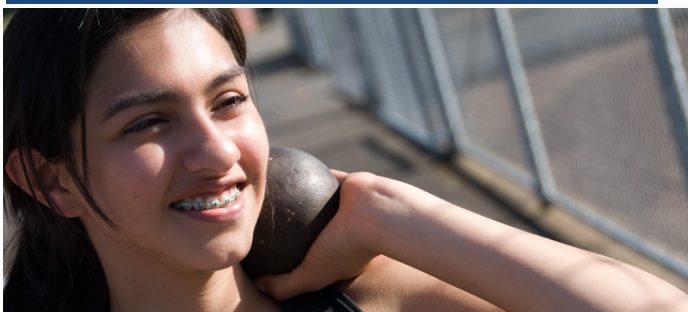
Partnerships with organizations and businesses have increased dramatically. Continue to expand these opportunities to benefit students while at the same time supporting staff and the community.

The school district and its individual schools have mutually cultivated rich partnerships with businesses and organizations locally, regionally, and nationally to benefit students and the community. Teachers and administrators have been seeking more opportunities for students to apply what they learn in a real world context as aligned to the curriculum. It was suggested that the district continue to expand these partnerships in all curricular areas. This ranged from ideas such as bringing scientists and mathematicians as guests into classrooms, to student volunteer experiences, to expanding opportunities for college credit or certification while attending our public schools.

The following comment from a local engineer and parent characterizes this area:

"I appreciate the considerable technology improvements and building improvements as well as creating more school and community opportunities across the district. Please partner with me and my business around technology, it provides a great local opportunity for students. Continue to work on partnering even more in this way."





Opportunities for all Students



Clearly communicate educational opportunities and alternatives for students in multiple ways.

Information is much more readily available on the district and individual school websites. The district has significantly expanded educational opportunities and alternatives over the years which is commendable. The opportunity here is to communicate the information in a variety of ways so it is consistently accessible to more students and parents.

The following comments from parents and community agencies characterized input in this area:

“Make sure opportunities for struggling students are communicated out in a variety of ways.”

“Would help to know/understand additional supports/areas where students can thrive.”

“Please put the list of after-school clubs and opportunities throughout the system for easy access and so parents can take advantage of these great programs.”



Continuing Improvement

Continue to develop, evaluate, and improve prevention and intervention efforts to meet all students' needs

District-wide, from early childhood through high school there is a renewed emphasis on improving prevention and intervention programs for students that struggle. This has included continued restructuring of what we are doing to meet all students' needs throughout the system. Our assessment practices are more consistent and timely, and our intervention programs are more data-driven and targeted. We are working toward doing this at all levels on an individual and collective student basis.



The following comments on the importance of prevention and intervention efforts came from elementary, middle, and high school teachers in the district:

"It is the only way we are going to get kids to where they need to be. It is our responsibility to make our programs such that all students will achieve and meet standard and be successful in life. It is my new mantra now as I am reading research on how students are entering kindergarten in some cases already two to three years behind."

"One compliment that a parent has given our school is that we don't give up on kids. As students enter the secondary phase of their academic lives, students' challenges can grow more complex and our district's intervention practices must be there to support students. Of course, there is the obvious academic struggle that we address through assessment and support, but even students who do not seem to struggle academically can carry weighty issues from their homes into our classrooms. While it's best to start with the least intensive intervention possible, I feel confident as I go about my daily life as a teacher that we have a more layered set of interventions in place than ever before. Monitoring and evaluating these interventions allows us to serve individual student needs and continue to seek the best for our students."

"Our mission is to educate children, - ALL children; therefore, increasing the academic achievement of all students is everyone's goal. At the secondary level, meeting this promise is facilitated by identifying struggling students from previous assessment data from multiple sources and designing and monitoring appropriate interventions."





Opportunities



Continue to improve upon efforts to decrease the opportunity gap among struggling students while increasing the opportunities for all students

Students struggle for a variety of reasons including socio-economic status, learning challenges, language barriers, disabilities, motivation, substance abuse, lack of positive role models, homelessness, loss of a friend or relative, mental health concerns, personal, social, family, or other issues. Generally, these students need additional supports, whether school, home, community, and/or agency help. As part of the entry plan I visited with students, staff, parents, and community agencies on this topic. To assist with language barrier challenges in the district, we also facilitated the district's first Hispanic Forum, which resulted in clear feedback and recommendations from 31 Hispanic parents and guardians. We will set a plan in place to improve current services to address these needs. In addition, we will be working on adding new extended learning programs to improve student learning, thus reducing the opportunity/achievement gap. An example of reducing the opportunity/achievement gap is our summer school program. Students entering fourth and sixth grade respectively shared their insights on the difference summer school program made toward their skills and future:

Students entering fourth and sixth grade, respectively, shared their insights on the difference a summer school program made toward their skills and future:

"I'm reading!" - entering first grader.

"I'm learning what to look for when I can't read a word. I am getting better at sounding out." - entering fourth grader.

"After working on Math 180, I now have a growth mindset. I know I can do whatever I put my mind to." - entering sixth grader.

"Using an array model for multiplication was very helpful." - entering sixth grader.



Strategic Plan



Strategic Plan Updates to Elevate Student Achievement

Note: For specific tasks and measures of success, refer to the strategic plan available via the following link:
http://www.riverview.wednet.edu/districtinfo/strategicplan/strategic_plan.pdf

- Improve student learning growth for all students in all areas.
- Development of a plan to implement free all-day Kindergarten for the 2016-2017 school year to help our students keep pace with the new Common Core State Standards for Learning.
- Completion of a three-year plan for further implementation of rigorous Common Core State Standards for students.
- Significantly increase students' access and understanding of technology, including targeted plans for mobile devices, standards alignment, and 1-to-1 types of initiatives.
- Increase interpreter services, communication, and parent education for members of our Hispanic community and other families where English is the second language spoken at home.
- Proactively identify concerns impacting the learning of individual students and continue the expansion of prevention and intervention options.
- Review elementary school boundaries with an inclusive committee and recommend any changes to the Riverview School Board to prevent overcrowding in any one school.
- Student Safety: Implement emergency operations field guides at each school and continue to establish the foundation for future simulated drills that involve students, staff, parents, first responders, and the community.
- Develop and implement an "Ambassador Program" where parents and community members can receive training on the knowledge and skills it takes to become a school board member.
- Conduct the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan Community Forum where all Riverview patrons will be invited to participate in a process to provide input in the establishment of future district goals and objectives.
- Continue to improve the communications program by facilitating an external audit and adding a Twitter account to enhance district social media.
- Continue to create a fiscally responsible budget.
- Continue long-term planning for quality facilities that meet student needs as our population grows.